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School Bullying Resources



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Hilda Graham is an accomplished educator, international trainer, national keynote speaker, and published author. Hilda offers the following materials solely for the use of conference participants.



Responding to School Bullying As A Multifaceted Phenomenon

Don't Limit Your View. Thinking broadly about school bullying as a multi-faceted phenomenon helps to inform more effective approaches to preventing, mitigating and responding to the problem; as well as to heal from the consequences of bullying acts. Focusing narrowly on the bully, the victim or the heinous consequences of the behaviors limits a school community's view of the complexity of a larger bullying problem.

Taking a Social-Ecological Perspective on prevention and intervention activities helps to uncover interrelated relationships and Influences on the problem. Consideration can then be given to influences on the problem including:

- the bully, bully-target, target, and bystanders
- family relationship styles
- school culture
- peer culture and norms
- community and society norms
- culture and diversity

The Ecology of Bullying informs us that bullying problems do not occur in isolation. They are encouraged and or inhibited as a result of complex and interrelated relationships and systems. Each school displays a unique ecology of bullying that must be discovered and considered when selecting or designing options for response. It is important to realize that preventions efforts will also be carried out within ecologies of bullying that exist in families, the larger community and society.

A Systemic Thinking Approach encourages school communities to:

- Consider the influences of all relevant systems on bullying problems.
- Integrate all relevant school systems to support unified and consistent efforts to prevent and respond to bullying.
- Pursue systemic equity in which all programs, resources and efforts serve all members of the school community with consistent intent and effect.

Thinking About Bullying-Related Problems

It is an advantage for the school community to step back and take a bigger picture look at the triggering behaviors or antecedents that may be part and parcel of the bullying problem. Educators should consider the potential relationship between bullying problems that happen at their schools and the patterns of conflict, cruelty, name-calling, the use of foul language and sports trash talk that also occur. These may then be identified as **disinhibitors** or behaviors that feed or make bullying problems possible or worse.

Taking the big picture view of bullying response can help establish that the prevention of one kind of social abuse or violence is a potential response for similar behaviors. Bullying prevention strategies can then be seen to offer **diffuse benefits** to other problems based on acts of harassment, coercion and other incivilities. These problems include sexual harassment, bias/hate behaviors, hazing, gang activities, cyber-bullying and teen dating violence.



Recognizing the Differences Between Teasing, Conflict and Bullying

Members of the school community, who are working to address bullying, must be able to distinguish between acts of teasing, authentic conflict and bullying. Doing so is part of such activities as:

- ◆ preventing bullying problems.
- ◆ educating about bullying behaviors,
- ◆ discovering and assessing patterns of bullying problems,
- ◆ responding to and documenting reports of bullying,
- ◆ choosing strategies and resources for response to bullying problems, and
- ◆ working with students and parents to resolve bullying problems.

Bullying is carried out with **malicious intent** some **advantage of power** in favor of the bully. The power can be physical, social, relational or circumstantial. The power is used in unjust and hurtful ways. Bullying behaviors are typically repeated, and result in reward for the bully and injury on the part of the target.

Conflicts may or may not be carried out with an imbalance of power and the actions involved may or may not be hurtful, but they are basically resolvable even if the end agreement is to not agree, but to do so in safe and respectful ways. Not all conflicts and aggressive interactions that happen among children and youth have negative outcomes. Some are authentic disagreements brought about by differences of opinion, relationship styles or even by competition. These types of authentic conflicts happen most often among friends and for that same reason are more easily resolved when they happen.

Not all students in a class or school are friends. Conflicts that happen among non-friends are more difficult to resolve. Conflicts among students who are not friends or lack any type of connection may remain unresolved without any agreement of any kind. With no resolution in place it is possible that the conflict may give way to malicious intent and the wielding of unfair power and eventually cross over to bullying.

It can be an advantage when resolving conflicts to be working with students who, while not friends, have been bound together by shared learning experiences that have helped develop a sense of community; a community that shares a common purpose and basic respect for the contributions and individual differences of others.

Teasing can be rough and aggressive or passive. In most cases, teasing occurs between friends. While the verbiage and physical actions can get intense, there is **no malicious intent to do harm**. There is **no desire to use personal power to do injury** to a relationship in irresolvable ways. Students who tease one another are often able to even regulate their own behaviors. Many students who tease and are not fast friends, still have the capacity to respond favorably to an adult who helps to point out that their behaviors:

- ◆ are creating a hostile environment.
- ◆ may be hurting a persons feelings.
- ◆ are breaking school rules.
- ◆ if continued will lead to undesirable consequences.



Creating Bullying Resistant Schools: The Anatomy of Bullying

Recognizing the various elements that constitute the acts and consequences of bullying can help to inform effective planning to prevent, mitigate, respond to and recover from bullying problems. The following chart offers such a view of bullying as it manifests itself in the school setting. The chart features the collection of bullying elements, put forth by Dr. Ken Rigby of Australia (a respected expert on school bullying). Rigby believes that for true bullying to occur, it must display certain attributes. He also claims that “in the definition lie nuances for prevention and response.”

What constitutes school bullying?	What bullying looks like at school	Consequences of bullying for the school community
Bullying is a behavior based on the intention to hurt a person or group(Rigby)	The bully deliberately targets selected individuals or groups of students for physical or emotional harm doing.	The physical and emotional safety of targeted students is jeopardized. Bystanders may choose to become participants, passive observers or to risk intervening.
Bullying is a behavior demonstrated by a hurtful action (Rigby)	The bully perpetrates direct and indirect acts of violence, aggression and harassment. Some bullying acts break the law.	Targets are physically or emotionally injured. Targets are killed. Student relationships are exploited and manipulated. Bullies are disciplined, suspended or expelled. Bullies are sent to juvenile detention centers or jailed as adults.



What constitutes school bullying?	What bullying looks like at school	Consequences of bullying for the school community
Bullying is a behavior based on an imbalance of power (Rigby)	The bully asserts him/herself using real or perceived power based on social status or class, physical strength, age or other abilities or advantages.	Targets are abused on the basis of their social status, differences, their inability to fight back or the likelihood that they will not report the abuse.
Bullying is a behavior that provides satisfaction for the aggressor (Rigby)	The bully derives personal fulfillment based on gains in personal power, social status or reputation, servitude or material gain.	Bullies interpret their behaviors in the school setting as rewarding and worth the risk
Bullying is a behavior that creates a sense of being hurt on the part of the target (Rigby)	Targets are physically injured, emotionally stressed, socially oppressed or excluded.	<p>Targets suffer injuries that require medical or psychological care.</p> <p>Targets avoid or refuse to attend school or participate in school activities.</p> <p>Targets become depressed and/or suicidal.</p> <p>Targets fight back in violent ways, hurting or killing the bully, innocent bystanders and/or themselves.</p>
Bullying is a behavior that compromises the social climate of a school and undermines the academic and safety missions of the school	<p>Teaching and learning are interrupted and compromised</p> <p>Parents express concerns and demand action</p> <p>Students, staff and parents live in anxiety and fear.</p>	<p>The risk of truancy, violence, crisis and liability increases.</p> <p>Academic achievement and safety are compromised</p> <p>The school's reputation is diminished.</p>



What Are We Doing Right?

Directions: Use the *Stop Bullying Now Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention* to identify existing groups of people, practices, activities, events or programs on your campus that may also be used to address bullying problems. Consider your list a big picture view of added value to what you already have in place.

Stop Bullying Now: Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention	What Are We Already Doing Right? or... From Everyday Practice to Best Practice
Promising Practice 1. Focus on the social environment of the School.	These practices, activities or programs target and help build a positive social climate at our school. These could also be used as bullying response strategies.
Promising Practice 2. Assess bullying at your school.	These kinds of activities, surveys or sources of data help us assess issues, trends and behaviors related to social climate and violence at our school. These could also offer us information regarding bullying, harassment or other patterns of incivility at our school.
Promising Practice 3. Garner staff and parent support for bullying prevention.	These individuals or groups of people currently promote the effectiveness and safety of our school. They could also advocate for bullying prevention/intervention.
Promising Practice 4. Form a group to coordinate the school's bullying prevention activities.	These individuals possess the kind of knowledge, interests, skills, and resources that could serve anti-bullying efforts. They could be invited to help assume local guardianship of our bullying problems.

<p>Promising Practice 5. Train your staff in bullying prevention.</p>	<p>These people have skills and knowledge related to social violence issues and, also have credibility in our school community. They could be invited to train on the topic of bullying.</p>
<p>Promising Practice 6. Establish and enforce school rules policies related to bullying</p>	<p>These venues and practices are currently used to communicate and enforce our school policies and rules. These could also be used to do the same for bullying.</p>
<p>Promising Practice 7. Increase adult supervision in hot spots where bullying happens.</p>	<p>These are the effective practices and strengths of our current supervision program. These could also be applied to bullying prevention and intervention.</p>
<p>Promising Practice 8. Intervene consistently and appropriately in bullying situations.</p>	<p>This is the degree to which our staff members currently share responsibility for responding to behavior problems. This same commitment could address bullying problems.</p>
<p>Promising Practice 9. Focus some class time on bullying prevention.</p>	<p>These are the activities, programs or curricular areas that currently teach about personal dignity, rights and responsibilities, or build personal and social skills. These could also be used to educate about bullying and its consequences and our school expectations.</p>
<p>Promising Practice 10. Continue your bullying prevention and intervention efforts over time.</p>	<p>These are the current strategies we use to institutionalize effective practices and long-term intentions. These could be used to promote a long-term commitment to bullying prevention and intervention.</p>

The practices you were able to record as part of this activity should begin to give you a sense of momentum or a “foot-up” on bullying prevention and intervention efforts at your school.

