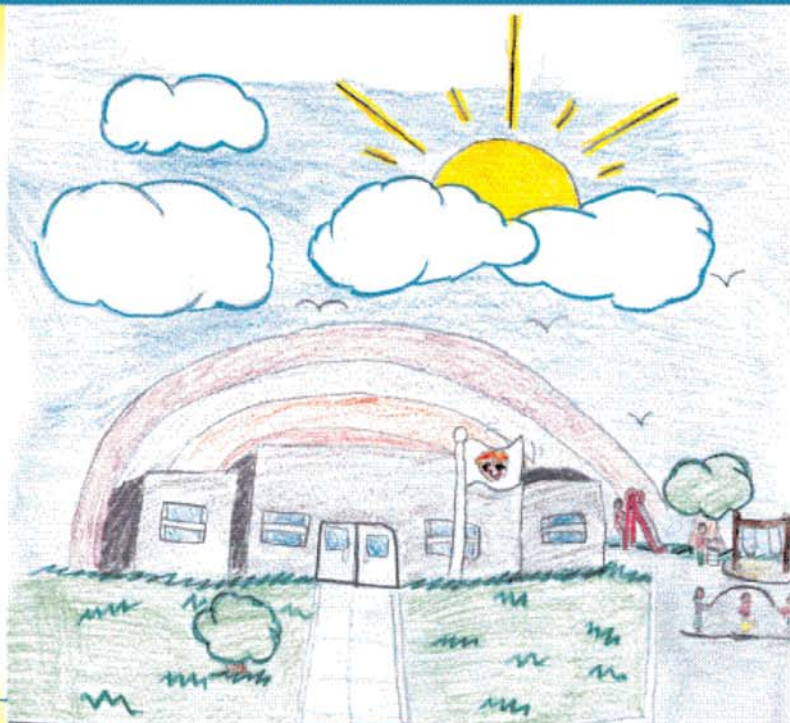


Imagine... A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention



Grade 8 Student
St. Joseph School, Cambridge



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH



September 2004



June 30, 2004

Enclosed is a copy of *Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention*. This resource was produced by the partnership of Region of Waterloo Public Health, Waterloo Catholic District School Board and Waterloo Region District School Board to further prepare local elementary schools in building safer, healthier school communities.

Many people think that bullying is just part of “kids being kids”. We are implementing this fresh approach to ensure that everyone knows that it is not. Bullying is a form of violence, a learned behaviour where one child learns to take power over another by creating fear in the other. We know that a child’s ability to learn is facilitated by an emotionally and physically safe learning environment. When children live in fear of being intentionally teased, embarrassed, intimidated or threatened (ie. bullied), they have more difficulty achieving their academic or developmental potential.

Imagine has grown out of a successful pilot project that has been implemented in four local elementary schools over the last three years. Based on the *Focus On Bullying* resource from British Columbia, this resource takes a “made in Waterloo Region” tack as learnings from the pilot project in Waterloo Region Schools are highlighted in the resource, making it immediately practical and applicable for Waterloo Region schools. This resource is pertinent to all members of the school community and includes training and resources for teachers, school administrators, staff, volunteers, parents and students. The lesson plans for students are linked to the Ontario Curriculum Expectations for English Language Arts, Physical Education and Guidance, as well as to the Catholic Graduate Expectations, and actively engage students in discussions about bullying and in devising solutions to stop bullying behaviours when they occur.

Each school that participates will develop its own bullying prevention action plan, tailored to meet its needs, according to its own school culture. All plans will include the basic elements of a successful, school climate approach to bullying prevention:

- The awareness and involvement of adults, including teachers, school staff, parents, and the community
- Clear and logical consequences for those students who bully
- Support to those students being bullied; and
- Instruction to all students that emphasizes respect and compassion for others, and positive ways that children can resolve disagreements or conflicts.

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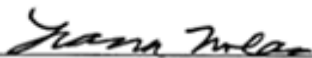
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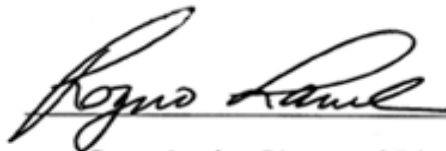
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We expect that as more and more schools adopt the school climate approach to bullying prevention, a synergistic effect will develop, and bullying prevention concepts and skills will spread to more and more schools in the region. We also expected that a spill over effect will take place in the broader community, since children and their parents may transfer their learnings and stop bullying in other areas where children congregate, for example, in recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds, neighbourhoods and homes. The vision we see is to help create a community without bullying for our children.

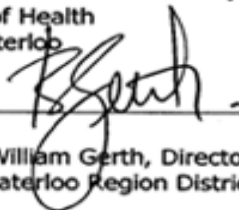
This resource is one part of a bullying prevention initiative being implemented in elementary schools in Waterloo Region. At this point in time, this bullying prevention initiative has not been evaluated. Therefore The Waterloo Catholic District School Board, The Waterloo Region District School Board and the Region of Waterloo Public Health make no claims regarding the success of this initiative, and accept no liability should readers implement the learning from this resource.



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A NOTE ABOUT THE ARTWORK

The artwork used to enhance this resource was created and donated by students who have participated in a school climate approach to bullying prevention with the consent of their parents/ guardians. Students were asked to “Imagine...A School Without Bullying...” and then draw what that thought would look like to them. Acknowledgements go to students at these schools:

Alpine Public School – Kitchener

Manchester Public School- Cambridge

Cedarbrae Public School - Waterloo

St. Joseph Catholic School - Cambridge

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Thank you to all those who were involved with the Region of Waterloo's Bullying Prevention Project, more widely known as the *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project, which was the catalyst for the creation of this document. Included in this group are: staff from the Violence Prevention/Mental Health Program and the Youth Health Program at Region of Waterloo Public Health; staff from Waterloo Catholic District School Board; staff from Waterloo Region District School Board; and various community members. Special thanks for their participation in the pilot project goes to Alpine Public School, Kitchener; Cedarbrae Public School, Waterloo; Manchester Public School, Cambridge; and St. Joseph Catholic School, Cambridge.

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Finally, special acknowledgement is due to Tori Fitton, R.N. and Julie Hill, R.N., Public Health Nurses, Region of Waterloo Public Health, Youth Health Program, who advocated for the development of this resource, formed and facilitated the advisory committee and did the actual adaptation and expansion of the content of *Focus On Bullying* to create this new document entitled *Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention*.



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PREFACE

The Ontario Safe Schools Act gives force to the Ontario Code of Conduct, which states “All students, parents, teachers and staff have the right to be safe, and feel safe, in their school community....Insults, disrespect, and other hurtful acts disrupt learning and teaching” (Ontario Schools Code of Conduct, 2000, pages 1-3). *Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention* is a resource document designed to assist educators and school administrators to create more supportive environments through which children better learn to respect and support one another. It will help launch a comprehensive school wide initiative, the goal of which is to prevent bullying situations from developing. However, it is expected that it will also help to decrease the incidence of aggressive behaviours that are enacted, since pro-social behaviour will be explicitly outlined and reinforced, and students will have consistent and explicit support to develop better interpersonal skills.

A school that provides a safe learning and teaching environment is one in which there is deep personal commitment to the core social values of justice, respect, compassion, inclusiveness and equity. Children must be able to observe and encounter these values in action in their daily lives, especially in the school setting, if they are to internalize and act upon them. Supporting a more physically and emotionally safe learning milieu makes a critical contribution to the quality of their overall education. In other words, along with learning “reading and ‘riting and ‘rithmetic”, the students will better learn about a fourth “r”, relationship literacy.

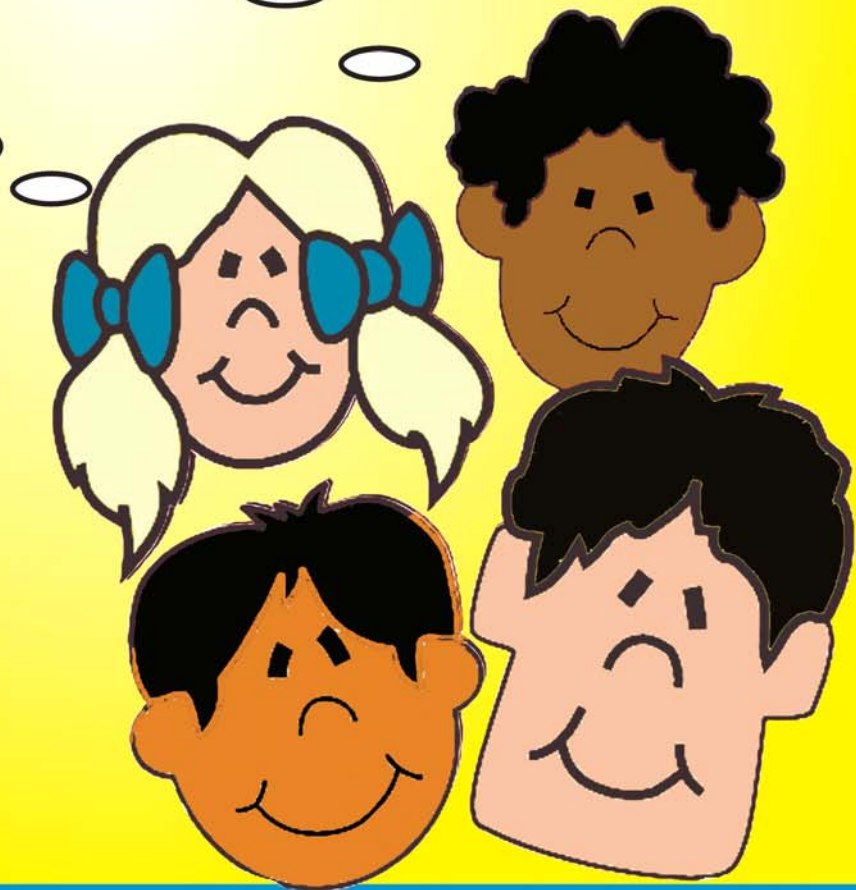
Section 1: Introduction



Grade 4 Student
Alpine Public School



Grade 3 Student
Manchester Public School



**Imagine... A School Without Bullying:
A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention**



INTRODUCTION

NOTE:

Commonly, literature on bullying uses the terms “bullies” and “victims” when referring to children involved in bullying. As many children at some point may take on both roles, and because the terms “bullies” and “victims” label the children rather than the behaviour, these terms have been avoided in this resource. Rather, children are referred to as “students who bully” or “students who are bullied”. While this may appear to be mere semantics, this terminology is intended to avoid polarizing children and entrenching the behaviours that led to the bullying.

RATIONALE

Incidents of bullying are frequent occurrences for many children at school and in the community. Children struggle with name-calling, with being picked upon, and with exclusion from their peer group. Frequently, children who are bullied do not know how to respond to this aggressive behaviour. Children who are bullied fear coming to school, and they believe school to be an unsafe and distressing place. Bullying in schools is a serious problem for a critical minority of children. It has a detrimental impact on the overall school climate and, in particular, on the right of students to learn in a safe environment.

In 1997, the National Crime Prevention Council of Canada reported that, in a survey of 4000 children in grades 1 through 8, 6% of children admitted bullying others “more than once or twice in the past six weeks”. About 15% of children in the same grades reported that they had been victimized at the same rate (Pepler and Craig, 1997).

Children who witness bullying incidents report that they want to do something about it (Smith and Sharp, 1994). School communities have the capacity and the assets required to strengthen the school culture by “winning the active commitment” of the 80% of young people in schools who do not engage in bullying behaviour (Ross, 1998).

While bullying is not limited to physical or aggressive behaviour, an increasing number of researchers point to possible links between this early form of aggressive behaviour and later criminal activity.

Bullying behaviour has been a long standing concern for schools in Waterloo Region. Over the years, many elementary schools have put significant energy and resources into many good efforts to try to address this issue including conflict resolution programs, anger management programs, social skills development initiatives, peer mediation programs and classroom teaching units about bullying and teasing. However, through their work with many of the school



communities, public health staff in Waterloo Region continued to hear many concerns raised about bullying behaviours from teachers, principals, parents and most importantly, children. In 1998, Region of Waterloo Public Health identified the need to address the issue of bullying as a priority for their violence prevention/mental health/youth health programs.

Through a thorough search of the literature, public health staff found that the research on bullying-prevention initiatives clearly shows that school communities who implement a comprehensive school wide program that emphasizes a positive school climate and that challenges bullying behaviour of school community members can make a significant difference in reducing bullying behaviour (specific research is reviewed in the next section, “The Nature of Bullying”). The literature confirmed that there was a compelling need for a partnership of teachers, school administrators, students, parents and school support staff to develop effective strategies and policies, along with established and new programs, which would create a school climate that reinforces the safety and success of all children while at school.

School staffs are well positioned to play a significant leadership role in enhancing the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of children. However, **schools cannot do it alone. The combined effort of all members of the school community working together is required to develop a school climate where students and staff feel respected and within which the input from parents and community members is welcomed.**

A school without bullying is a school:

- where diversity is obviously valued and celebrated
- where positive, socially responsible behaviour is emphasized
- where a school-wide plan is in place that details clear and consistent behavioural expectations for all members of the school community
- where students are encouraged to use constructive ways to solve problems
- where consequences for bullying behaviour are clear and consistently enforced
- where those who bully are given opportunities to make restitution to individuals and to the school community.

Bullying is learned behaviour, and it can be unlearned. (See Bibliography, page 554, for resources that support this premise.)



BULLYING PREVENTION AND THE ONTARIO CULTURAL CONTEXT

In the late 1990's, the Government of Ontario identified safety in schools as a priority for their policy development. In 2000, the Ontario Schools Code of Conduct was introduced, which prohibits bullying behaviour in schools. In 2001, the Safe Schools Act was passed which gave legal authority for schools to give standard, and in some cases, substantial consequences to breaches of the Code of Conduct. Together, these policies gave further impetus to the need to prevent bullying behaviours which are often a factor in unsafe situations in schools. Coincidentally, during this time, bullying became a highly publicized issue throughout North America; newspapers, books, magazines and television programs presented the issue and community requests for information and action dramatically increased. Many different sectors of communities across Canada mounted efforts to address the issue of bullying by creating information websites, brochures and displays, holding forums and conferences, developing lesson plans for classrooms and implementing targeted social skills programs for students. Some school districts began to develop comprehensive school wide initiatives towards preventing bullying behaviour.



THE GOOD KID SID BULLYING PREVENTION PILOT PROJECT

In 1999, Region of Waterloo Public Health held a meeting to generate interest amongst Waterloo Region schools in order to implement a pilot project that would promote a comprehensive school-wide approach to bullying prevention. The pilot project would be based on the 'Blueprints for Violence Prevention' program that was produced by the University of Colorado in 1999 and was being implemented widely across several states. It came to be called the **Good Kid Sid Bullying Prevention Pilot Project**. (*Good Kid Sid* was the cartoon character used to represent anti-bullying messages and initiatives in the school.) In the spring of 2000, the Waterloo Region District School Board, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and Region of Waterloo Public Health formed an official partnership and the *Good Kid Sid* Bullying Prevention Pilot Project was launched into four elementary schools.



Throughout the three years of the pilot project, the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire-1996 was administered to the students by public health staff each April to measure the incidence of bullying behaviours which would give some indication as to the success of the pilot project. Learnings from this pilot project were gathered by public health staff through regular interactions and informal surveys with school staff and parents.

In 2002, as the end of the *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project in Waterloo Region neared, those involved with the project looked at the successes that were emerging and realized the potential benefit that could result from the dissemination of a school climate approach to bullying prevention to more schools in the Region. Public health staff began to gather information and materials to create a resource that would assist other school communities in Waterloo Region to implement this approach. One notable resource that the British Columbia Safe Schools Initiative had already created was a manual called *Focus on Bullying, A Prevention Program for Elementary School Communities*. An advisory committee, made up of members from both local school boards and public health, most of whom had been involved with the *Good Kid Sid* Project, reviewed the manual and made recommendations for its adaptation for a Waterloo Region application.

Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention is a combination of what was considered to be the best information from these two bullying prevention projects, British Columbia's *Focus on Bullying* and Waterloo Region's *Good Kid Sid*. The former provided the background and practical components for the resource. The latter provided more practical tools and the experiential learnings about what worked well in implementing a school climate approach to bullying prevention in Waterloo Region, as identified by teaching staff, administrators and public health staff involved with the *Good Kid Sid* Bullying Prevention Pilot Project.

Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention provides a series of Kindergarten to Grade 8 lesson plans that allow all elementary students an opportunity to explore their questions about bullying, learn to understand the problem, and begin to reflect upon their own attitudes and behaviours toward peers.



Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention is intended to aid in fostering a positive school climate and culture, to encourage a sense of belonging among all members of the school community, and to teach students how and when to seek help from adults and other children. Together these actions will help to reduce the number of bullying situations that may occur, thereby creating a safer school environment.

OVERVIEW: USING THIS RESOURCE

Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention is a framework to assist schools in developing and implementing a detailed action plan in order to create a school climate and culture that strengthens the physical, social, and psychological safety in schools and reduces the incidence of bullying.

The following table outlines the three main objectives of *Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention* and states in which section the information to help achieve each objective is located.

OBJECTIVE	STAFF PROCESS	STUDENT PROCESS
To provide the school community with information about bullying	The Nature of Bullying in Elementary Schools	Module A in Classroom Lessons
To provide a process/framework for creating a school plan for bullying prevention	Develop a School Plan for Bullying Prevention	Module B in Classroom Lessons
To provide strategies for students, parents and staff to respond to bullying incidents	Respond Directly to Bullying Situations	Module C in Classroom Lessons



If your school has previously initiated strategies to prevent bullying, your school may choose to select sections of this resource to strengthen that work. If these kinds of bullying prevention strategies are new to your school, you may choose to employ a few of the strategies initially, and then add to them as your school progresses. Different schools have different circumstances, resources, climates and cultures that must be considered when employing a school climate approach to bullying prevention.

Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention is divided into the following sections:

- **The Nature of Bullying in the Elementary Schools:** provides important and current information about the nature of bullying in schools.
- **Developing a School Climate Plan for Bullying Prevention:** outlines a detailed ten-step process for developing a school climate plan for preventing bullying:

- **Step 1:** Engage Commitment of School Staff
- **Step 2:** Establish a School Climate Committee
- **Step 3:** Involve Parents
- **Step 4:** Involve Students
- **Step 5:** Create and/or Amend Your School Statement for a Respectful School Environment
- **Step 6:** Build a Supervision Plan
- **Step 7:** Construct a School Climate Enhancement Plan
- **Step 8:** Develop a Response Plan
- **Step 9:** Promote and Implement the School Plan
- **Step 10:** Monitor and Reassess the School Plan

NOTE:

The use of the term “parents” includes all those that have primary responsibility for student, biologically related or otherwise.

Each step is accompanied by an “Action Checklist” to facilitate the planning process and incorporates learnings from the *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project.

It is important for all members of the school community to have an opportunity to contribute to the initial development of their school plan for bullying prevention. A practical way of doing this is by



establishing a small working group to lead the school through the development and implementation of the plan. The working group can either be a new group established for this purpose, or an existing group such as the school behaviour team. The *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project demonstrated that a critical success factor for the approach is having one of the school administrators become a supportive part of this working group.

- **Respond Directly to Bullying Situations** - details specific interventions that support children who have been bullied, and outlines a three level system for responding to students who bully. It also suggests ways of using “restorative interventions” to give the child who has bullied an opportunity to make amends to the child who has been bullied.

- **Address Bullying through Classroom Lessons** - contains lesson plans in support of the school-wide bullying prevention plan that contribute to the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training Curriculum Expectations. The linkages to the curriculum are detailed at the beginning of each lesson plan. The lesson plans are designed to be implemented once the school plan is in place. The lesson plans are provided in five grade groupings:
 - Kindergarten
 - Grade 1
 - Grades 2-3
 - Grades 4-5
 - Grade 6-8

At each grade grouping, the lessons are divided into three modules:

- **Module A:** Defining Bullying
 - **Module B:** The School Plan
 - **Module C:** Dealing with Bullying
-
- **Resources** - categorizes print and multi-media resources, community agencies and websites that can be used to support implementation of the school-wide plan.



IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

For those school communities in Waterloo Region that are keenly interested in adopting the framework detailed in *Imagine...A School Without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention*, support is available from your board of education and department of public health. Contact your school's superintendent for details on implementation support.

Networking/Mentoring

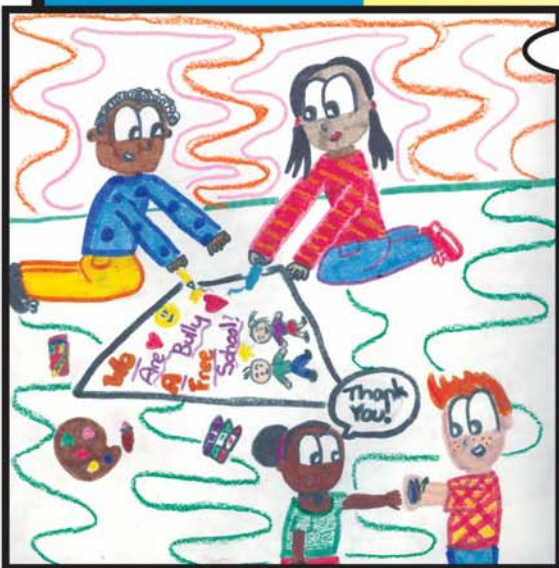
Educators and administrators who participated in the *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project have made their names available for consultation on different aspects of implementing the approach e.g. classroom meetings, assemblies on bullying prevention, tracking systems, etc. (see list in Section 6: Resources, page 487).

It is hoped that those who receive training/support and who implement the school climate approach to bullying prevention will freely share their knowledge and experience with others who share the vision of a community without bullying for our children. In this way, many educators and administrators will become familiar with the approach over time and will carry it from school to school and from community to community.

Section 2: Nature of Bullying



Grade 3 Student
Manchester Public School



Grade 5 Student
Cedarbrae Public School



**Imagine... A School Without Bullying:
A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention**



NATURE OF BULLYING

Bullying among school children is not a new phenomenon. References to bullying behaviour abound in historical accounts of childhood (Ross, 1996) and in the fictional works of Charles Dickens (*Oliver Twist*, 1837; *Nicholas Nickleby*, 1838) and Thomas Hughes (*Tom Brown's School Days*, 1857).

Much of what we know about bullying in schools comes from two groups of research: studies that ask teachers their views about the nature and incidence of bullying in schools, and direct inquiries with children and adolescents about the levels of bullying and other antisocial behaviour present at school. Canadian studies of bullying in elementary schools indicate that up to 15% of students report themselves severely/seriously stressed by peer abuse (Craig and Pepler, 1997). While this level of bullying behaviour is remarkably similar to studies conducted in Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia, it is higher than many teachers and parents perceive (Olweus, 1991; Smith and Sharpe, 1994; Fried and Fried, 1996). Bullying in schools is generally hidden from adults, and children who are bullied keep quiet about it. Children under-report bullying (Stephenson and Smith, 1989).

Most children's aggression normally diminishes with age, but children who persistently bully retain their aggressive tendencies past the time where others in their age group have learned pro-social conflict resolution strategies (Marini, 1998). **Several longitudinal studies conducted over two decades have recognized bullying behaviour in the elementary school as a precursor of violent behaviour, and show significant links between this behaviour and criminal activity in adult life.** Recent Canadian investigations in the elementary school point to the connection between bullying and sexual harassment and violence in later years (Craig and Pepler, 1997).

While the majority of elementary school children are not directly involved in bullying, children who bully cause a great deal of suffering to the children they bully, and the effects of this harassment can last well into adulthood. This behaviour also affects the physical, social, emotional and psychological safety of children at school, and can create a climate of fear that becomes an obstacle to learning.

BULLYING : AN OVERVIEW

Bullying is not just
“kids being kids”.
Bullying behaviour is
intentional and repeated.

The most widely accepted definition of bullying comes from the work of leading Norwegian researcher, Dr. Dan Olweus (1991):

A person is being “bullied” when “he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons”. (Pg.411)

This quotation is from
*The Bully, The Bullied
and the Bystander*,
Published by
HarperCollins Publisher
Ltd. copyright
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Coloroso

Barbara Coloroso (2002) further describes the nature of bullying:

“Bullying is not about anger. It’s not even about conflict. It’s about contempt---a powerful feeling of dislike toward somebody considered to be worthless, inferior, or undeserving of respect. Contempt comes packaged with three *apparent* psychological advantages that allow kids to harm another human being without feeling empathy, compassion, or shame:

1. A sense of entitlement---the privilege and right to control, dominate, subjugate, and otherwise abuse another human being.
2. An intolerance toward differences---different equals inferior and thus not worthy of respect.
3. A liberty to exclude---to bar, isolate, and segregate a person deemed not worthy of respect or care.

In other words, bullying is arrogance in action...

...Just as bullying can range from mild to moderate to severe, so contempt can range from disregard to scorn to hate. The biases at the foundation of this contempt are often deeply rooted attitudes found in our homes, our schools, and our society. Any bias or prejudice related to race, gender (including sexual orientation), religion, physical attributes, or mental abilities can and will be used by a bully to validate and justify contempt for an individual child or a group of children.” (Pages 20-21)

Noted Canadian researchers Pepler and Craig (1998) identify **four critical conditions** that distinguish bullying from other forms of aggressive behaviours:

Power

Children who bully acquire their power through physical size and strength, by status within the peer group, and by recruiting support of the peer group.

Intent to Harm

Children who bully generally do so with the intent to either physically or emotionally harm the other child.

Distress in the Child Being Bullied

Anticipatory terror develops in the mind of the child being bullied that can be highly detrimental and have the most debilitating long-term effects.

Frequency

Bullying is not a random act. Rather, bullying is usually characterized by frequent and repeated attacks. However, in some situations, one severe incident of bullying behaviour can traumatize and create the fearful conditions that a series of less severe bullying incidents might achieve.

Bullying can be physical or verbal, or can involve social alienation

Bullying can start out in seemingly playful ways, consisting of pranks, jokes, and some “roughhousing”. The incidents soon become more hurtful, degenerating into name-calling, ridicule, personal attacks, and public embarrassment. Rough and tumble “play” gives way to punching, kicking, restraining, and beatings (Ross, 1998).

Research literature into bullying at school distinguishes between “direct” and “indirect” bullying. Direct bullying involves a great deal of physical and/or verbal aggression. It consists of open assault on another student, slapping, hitting, punching, kicking, throwing things, jostling, or poking (Ross, 1998). It can also include verbal taunts or open and overt threats to harm the other individual. Indirect bullying is usually hidden behaviour, and takes the form of taunting, criticism, gossiping, spreading malicious rumours, threatening to withdraw

NATURE OF BULLYING

friendship, social isolation, or exclusion from the group.

The following chart, though not exhaustive, outlines examples of aggressive behaviours that may be involved in bullying situations.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS THAT MAY BE INVOLVED IN BULLYING SITUATIONS

BEHAVIOURAL CATEGORIES <small>(Identified by Marini, Fairbain & Zuber, 2001)</small>	BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN <small>(Note: these may also fit under the second column, depending on the circumstances)</small>	BEHAVIOURS OF SERIOUS CONCERN
Physical Aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ pushing ▪ shoving ▪ spitting ▪ kicking ▪ hitting ▪ making obscene or derogatory gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ threatening with a weapon ▪ defacing/destroying property ▪ stealing
Cognitive Aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ mocking/laughing at ▪ name-calling ▪ taunting ▪ mimicking ▪ insulting ▪ bossing ▪ making sarcastic remarks ▪ making derogatory noises ▪ swearing at ▪ ethnic/racial slurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ intimidating telephone calls ▪ racist, sexist, or homophobic taunting ▪ verbal threats against property or relatives/friends ▪ verbal threats of violence or inflicting bodily harm ▪ coercion ▪ extortion
Emotional Aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ gossiping ▪ ignoring/shunning ▪ sending derogatory notes ▪ embarrassing ▪ spreading rumours ▪ excluding from group ▪ telling lies about person or their friends/relatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ inciting hatred ▪ alienation due to prejudice of any kind (e.g. due to race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, ability, appearance, etc.) ▪ malicious rumour spreading ▪ public humiliation
Social Aggression <small>(involves groups, cliques or gangs)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ making a person the object of group jokes ▪ setting up a someone to look foolish in front of a group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ daring another to do something dangerous ▪ setting up someone to take the blame

THE EXTENT OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

Evidence about bullying in Canadian schools comes from research conducted by the Toronto Board of Education (Zeigler and Rosenstein-Manner, 1991), and more recently by the work of Debra Pepler, Wendy Craig, and their associates from York University (Pepler, Craig, Zeigler & Charach, 1995, 1997). In these surveys, 20% of children in grades 1 through 8 reported that they had been involved in bullying more than once or twice during the term, either as the child bullying or the child being bullied. About 15% of students acknowledged bullying others more than once or twice during the term, and 23% of boys and 8% of girls reported bullying. Boys and girls were equally likely to be bullied (Zeigler and Rosenstein-Manner, 1991).

In a Toronto study, Pepler and her associates made naturalistic observations of bullying on elementary school playgrounds. They found that boys and girls engage in bullying at approximately the same rate; that 404 bullying incidents occurred during 52 hours of taping; that 26-33% of the children in a school bullied 18-22% of the other children; and that the majority of bullying occurred close to the school buildings.

The results of Canadian research are notably similar to the information obtained from a large scale Scandinavian study conducted in the early 1980s. The Scandinavian investigation was triggered when three young boys committed suicide because of severe bullying by peers. A nationwide anti-bullying campaign was initiated, and information was obtained from students in 715 schools (Olweus, 1987).

Adults are generally unaware of the extent of bullying among children.

Teachers and parents are relatively unaware of individual student involvement in bullying episodes (Olweus, 1991; Pepler, Craig, Ziegler and Charach, 1993; Sharpe and Smith, 1994). In a 1994 Toronto study, 71% of teachers indicated they usually intervene in bullying problems, while 25% of students reported that teachers usually intervene (Charach, Pepler, and Ziegler, 1995). Studies in the U.K. found that children were unlikely to report bullying incidents to their teachers or supervising adults. Children fear reprisals and often feel pressure to cope with their own experiences. Children may also feel that adults are unable to protect them from future bullying (Garofalo, Siegel and Laub, 1987).

WHAT ABOUT BULLYING IN WATERLOO REGION ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS?

Little research is available specifically about bullying behaviour in Waterloo Region Elementary schools. Four elementary schools were professionally surveyed using the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire:1996 at the beginning the *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project and results from those surveys reflected basically the same patterns of behaviour as seen in the surveys done in Toronto by Pepler and Craig et al (as yet unpublished findings from the *Good Kid Sid* Pilot Project, 2000-03). Though much concern and action has occurred within many schools, calls for action to address bullying behaviour continue to come from students, teachers, administrators, parents, police, public health professionals and other community members which could indicate that bullying behaviour is a very present reality in school communities in Waterloo Region.

THOSE WHO BULLY AND THOSE WHO ARE BULLIED

Children who bully others often believe the other child antagonized them and therefore caused the problem.

Bullying behaviours begin at an early age. Pre-school teachers report that bullying characteristics are evident in some two-year olds and three-year olds (Fried and Fried, 1996). Left unchecked, these early patterns of behaviour remain constant and escalate rather than recede as the child gets older.

Robert Selman (1997) examined the thinking patterns of aggressive children. He observed that these children possess limited skills in managing relationship conflict, and this in turn leads to anger and aggression. Children who engage in bullying often process social cues inaccurately. They attribute antagonistic intentions to others. They perceive hostility where it does not exist and have strong needs to dominate. They have trouble understanding others' feelings, have difficulty expressing compassion, and believe that aggression is the best solution to conflicts (Fried and Fried, 1996).

Several longitudinal studies followed the lives of aggressive children into adulthood, uncovering some sombre findings. About 25% of adults identified by their peers at age eight as bullies had criminal records, as opposed to 5% of the adults who had not bullied as children

(Olweus, 1993). Studies have also identified bullying behaviour as a potential precursor of family violence later

in life. Recent Canadian investigations into bullying in the elementary school point to the connection between sexual harassment and violence in later years (Pepler and Craig, 1997). This information makes it clear that bullying is not only a serious problem for the lives of school children but also a significant problem for society at large.

Children who are bullied are usually more sensitive than their peers.

Children who are bullied are usually more sensitive, cautious, and anxious. They typically withdraw from confrontations, and when faced with conflict, they are gripped by fear. Their social isolation is what makes them vulnerable, and it is also the most damaging consequence of bullying. It deprives them of the opportunities to acquire and practise healthy social competencies. Children who are bullied often develop a negative view of school, and eventually their in-school achievement suffers.

Olweus (1991) recognizes another group of children who are bullied, “provocative victims”, known for being restless and quick tempered. These children exert pressure by irritating and teasing others, and are more likely to fight back when they feel provoked. Often these children have learning disabilities that prevent them from picking up social cues from other children.

There is some disagreement among researchers as to whether disabilities place children at greater risk for being bullied. Several researchers found no objective data to support this idea (Olweus, 1993, Pepler, 1997). However, Fried and Fried (1996), through extensive interviews with children who have special needs, found that they are primary targets and this finding is supported by other research (Doe, 1997). It is important to note, however, that not all children with special needs are bullied.

It is clear that early intervention in assisting both those who bully and those who are bullied is important, and that efforts must be made to stop bullying before it becomes an established form of dysfunctional peer relations (Marini, 1998). Dr. Zopito Marini, a Canadian researcher from Brock University, advises that those who are predisposed to being bullied could be taught assertive and social skills that could empower them to be more effective in their social interactions, thus decreasing their isolation and vulnerability.

Dr. Marini suggests that **those children who bully be given consistent, non-hostile consequences for their behaviour that are social in nature e.g. doing acts of kindness or assistance, as well as be given empathy training, for it is those interventions that have been proven to be most effective in changing behaviour.**

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BULLYING

Boys and girls are both involved in bullying but the prevalent type of bullying usually differs between girls and boys.

Both boys and girls tend to bully in ways that harm what each gender group values most. For boys, who tend to value physical dominance, power and status, bullying is more likely to take physical, cognitive and social forms i.e. kicking, hitting, threatening, making dares, and derogatory remarks. Girls generally value relationships and their bullying behaviours are more likely to involve acts of emotional alienation like spreading rumours, withdrawing friendship, and ignoring (Bosacki and Marini, 2002).

Craig, Pepler and Connolly (2001) investigated the development of bullying and victimization from childhood through adolescence. Results show that children involved in bullying are more likely to be involved in sexually harassing and physically aggressive behaviour when they reach adolescence and begin dating.

This study also indicates that the developmental changes of adolescence were found to have an impact on boys who were bullied: those who matured early and became physically bigger ceased to be the target of bullying. Girl targets who matured early continued to be subjected to bullying and tended to become more involved with older boys, placing themselves at even greater risk of becoming victimized.

RACE AND ETHNOCULTURAL ISSUES IN BULLYING

“Bullying is often directed at children who look different: race, culture, ability/disability, social class: these are just some of the differences which attract bullying. However, the increasingly diverse population of the Region of Waterloo requires that we develop new approaches to deal with the problem.

Children who are targeted because of race and/or culture do not necessarily fit the profile of a typical child that is bullied. Often they are not passive or loners, but they are a very visible minority in our schools and are frequently left to deal with issues on their own. Many schools require additional support in addressing racism effectively. A school plan to deal with such incidents would need much more than a bullying prevention program. It would need to extend to inclusive curriculum and a school climate which visibly and audibly validates all cultures, all the time. Administrators and teachers would need to critically assess their resources, teaching style and activities to ensure that content was not mono-cultural and thus exclusive.” (Radlein, 2003).

THE ROLE OF THOSE WHO OBSERVE BULLYING

Kids have the power to stop bullying among their peers

As bullying is very much a group phenomenon, it is important to look at the role peer group onlookers play in relation to bullying episodes. While most children report that watching bullying makes them feel uncomfortable (Pepler, 1997), **85% of bullying takes place in the presence of others**. To understand why this is so, Olweus (1993) states we must better understand group dynamics. When children or adults see someone else they perceive as more powerful than themselves acting aggressively (physically or verbally), they are more likely to also engage in that aggressive behaviour. This effect is most powerful when those who observe bullying feel that they themselves lack status in their peer group.

Additionally, when children see the child who bullies being rewarded, their own inhibitions against such behaviour are reduced. Inhibitions are naturally lowered when several people are perceived to be involved. Olweus states that these dynamics combine to distort the observers’ perceptions of the child who is being bullied. As a result, more positive attention is paid to the child who bullies than to the child who is bullied (Craig and Pepler, 1997). These factors combine to lessen the feelings of guilt in the child who initiates bullying. The reverse of this phenomenon is the fact that, when onlookers do intervene, they are effective in stopping bullying (Craig and Pepler, 1997). In the end, we must be aware that several natural factors are at play when bullying occurs, and that **providing the skills and confidence to the silent majority plays a significant role in halting bullying behaviour by the minority. If active intervention by all**

members of the school community in bullying situations is valued and encouraged, students are more likely to challenge bullying behaviours than remain inactive (Smith and Sharp, 1994).

SCHOOL-WIDE INTERVENTIONS AND THE ROLE OF ADULTS

Adults can play a valuable role in preventing bullying.

School-wide interventions work! In Norway, a school with a comprehensive school-wide bullying-prevention strategy decreased bullying behaviour by 50% over a two-year period. There was a decrease in physical bullying as well as in more covert behaviours. The social climate of the school showed significant improvement, and the students “had more positive social relationships, and a more positive attitude to schoolwork and school” (Olweus, 1993).

According to Olweus, there are two components that must be present for a school-wide bullying-prevention plan to be effective:

- adult awareness of the extent of bullying at the school
- adult involvement in counteracting bullying problems.

It is worth noting that Olweus refers to “adults” rather than “teachers” or “staff.” Clearly, the role of parents is critical in preventing bullying. **Parents must be working in conjunction with the school in order for the bullying prevention initiatives to be effective.**

Researchers agree that a school-wide team approach involving teachers, administrators, support staff, students, and parents is required to ensure a consistent effort to prevent and stop bullying (Olweus and Limber, 1999, Pepler and Craig, 1998, Sharp and Smith, 1994). A successful bullying prevention program should be multifaceted, addressing school-wide codes of conduct, with links to the curriculum (i.e. classroom instruction in managing emotions, impulse control, and problem solving with specific instruction in how to respond to bullying situations). There should also be specific guidelines for adult intervention in bullying situations. Processes must be in place to support children who are bullied. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the bullying prevention program will ensure that the plan is achieving its purpose while meeting the changing needs of the school community.

Schools seeking to respond effectively to bullying should also work closely with community partners. Waterloo Region is fortunate to have community partners that are able to support the school's efforts (see Section 6: Resources). Public health workers can assist schools to develop and implement school-wide efforts for bullying prevention and health promotion. The police can confirm for students the serious nature of bullying and the consequences that may follow. Community program staff who work onsite with students outside of school hours (e.g. after-school programs, Scouts, Girl Guides, etc.) could be orientated to the school's plan for bullying prevention and could support it by encouraging and facilitating the same standards for behaviour in their programs. Access to social workers, counsellors, and community recreation programs can play a valuable role in assisting the school in preventing and dealing with bullying behaviour.

To implement an effective school-wide bullying prevention strategy, the school community must first realize the seriousness of the issue and encourage collective responsibility in addressing the problem. The school must secure the support of the parents and the "caring majority" of students to counterbalance peer power relationships (Garrity et al., 1994).