

Promoting Positive Relationships through Peer led Programs

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peer
support
foundation



Peer Relations

“Children’s peer relations are important not only because they can and do bring happiness or misery to particular children but also because they help to set the pattern of interaction between adults in years to come, and have far reaching implications for the healthy functioning of men and women and families.”

Ken Rigby, 1994
University of South Australia



Research

Bullying in schools

Research says peer support helps

Research from the University of Western Sydney presents some bad news and some good news: bullying remains rife in our schools, but peer support programs could significantly reduce the problem. With an estimated twenty per cent of all students being bullied regularly at school, research that shows something works could be good news indeed.

Doctoral student Louise Ellis, from the UWS Self-Concept Enhancement and Learning Facilitation (SELF) Research Centre, has completed a three-year study into the effectiveness of a Peer Support Foundation anti-bullying program.

The program, currently running in 3,000 schools across Australia, is designed to develop students' self confidence, the ability to make important decisions, and the assertive skills to say 'no' to harmful pressures. More than 3,000 Year Seven students from schools across New South Wales took part in the research, funded through an ARC Linkage Grant.

While most educators agree that bullying at school remains a significant issue, Ellis says

the problem is that debate continues on the best way to solve it. 'Many programs, such as the Peer Support Program, have been operating in schools for some time but apart from anecdotal evidence there's been no real scientific data to say whether they actually work. The SELF Research Centre's study is the first of its type to provide an independent assessment of the program's effectiveness.'

The Peer Support Program matches trained Year Ten students with groups of between eight and twelve Year Seven students for regular meetings. The sessions give the younger students the opportunity to talk about any problems they may be experiencing, or receive support or guidance on more general issues. 'The program is designed

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A longitudinal study conducted by the University of Western Sydney (2003) to determine the efficacy of the **Peer Support Program** found it **successfully changed attitudes to bullying behaviours**



Research

Conducted by the University of Western Sydney 2003.

Significant findings included:

- **skilling students** to successfully negotiate transition
- **enhancing relationships** with peers and teachers
- **attitudinal change** towards bullying behaviours



Research

The Peer Support Program

- **powerful strategy** in managing bullying
- **increases in perception** of bullying
- **immediate impact** on attitudes
- **impact sustained** over time



Research

Conducted by James Cook University, 2005.

Significant findings included:

- **constructing** a common language
- **developing** social relations and interactions
- **contributing** positively to whole school activities
- **demonstrating** understandings of abstract concepts
- **applying** understandings to concrete instances



Statistics

Girls' games 'covert aggression'

Rise in bullying
School torment

School bullies still out of control

Text message bullies prey on children

By LEAH CREIGHTON
TEXT MESSAGE bullying is becoming a serious problem for Australian children, experts warn after a study in Britain.
"You're not sure who's sending the message, or whether it's even a friend."
Dr. Hughes said text message bullying had not been researched in Australia.
"The Parents' Choice awards of bullying... made aware of their own... complaints..."

Switching off power to the cyber-bullies

School bullies put kids at risk

Picked on for being different



Statistics

- 1 in 6 students between 8-17 years of age is bullied at least once a week
- verbal bullying becomes more frequent with age
- 80% of students act as bystanders, teachers are rarely present
- group bullying is more likely to be encountered by girls



Statistics

- 30% of depression could be prevented if we could stop bullying
- 21% of bullying incidents are reported to a teacher or other adult
- 57% of bullying stops when peers intervene
- 14% of 4-17 year olds suffer from mental health problems



Statistics

- no evidence there is a difference in the level of bullying between co-educational and single sex schools
- 40% of boys and 25% of girls tell no one when they have been bullied
- majority of bullying commences between the ages of 7 and 13



Bullying Behaviours

Bullying behaviours can be direct or indirect

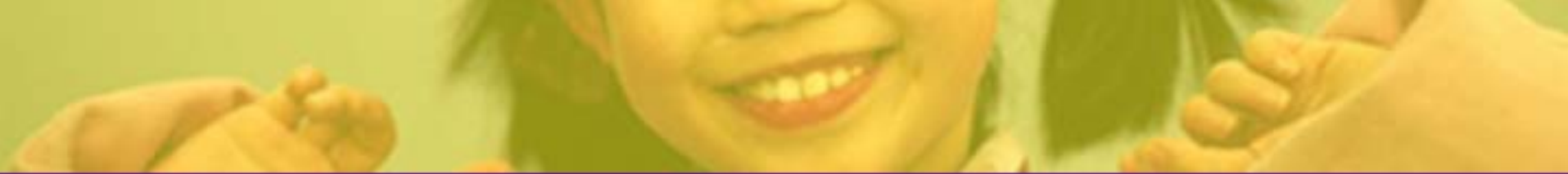
- physical
- verbal
- social
- psychological



Bullying Behaviours

Bullying behaviours are learned

- family environment
- school culture
- sport
- media
- electronic



“...schools do not create bullying;
at best they merely import it from the communities
they serve, at worst they allow it to flourish by not
giving it the constant attention it deserves.”

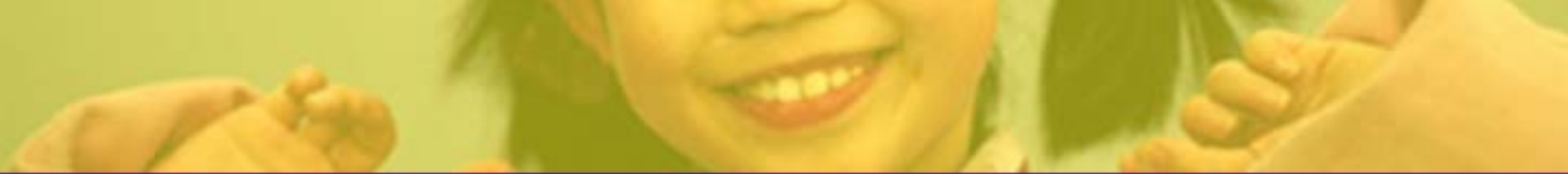
Peter Randall, 1996



Definition

“Bullying behaviours are about an imbalance of power where there is deliberate intent to cause harm or distress. It is not considered to be bullying if people of equal power have a difference of opinion. Bullying behaviours impact on the person being bullied, those doing the bullying and those looking on. Bullying can be isolated or repeated.”

Peer Support Foundation, 2006



“Long term sustained bullying can result in low esteem, increased anxiety, depression, even suicidal thoughts. It’s important that...we teach kids effective coping strategies.”

Dr John Irvine, 2001



Creating Change

Don't be a silent witness, have courage to take a stand

Curbing bullying **begins at home**

**Speak up and
banish bullies**

anti-bullying

can be **successful**
programmes in schools

**Blow to
bullies**

Code for schools

**Putting
fear of
peers in
bullies**

**Dos and don'ts
of dobbing in**



Creating Change

- common understandings
- power of language
- parents
- gathering information
- beliefs and attitudes
- modelling



Bullying Triangle





Whole School Approach

Student Welfare / Pastoral Care

Anti-bullying Policy

Positive Steps

Procedures

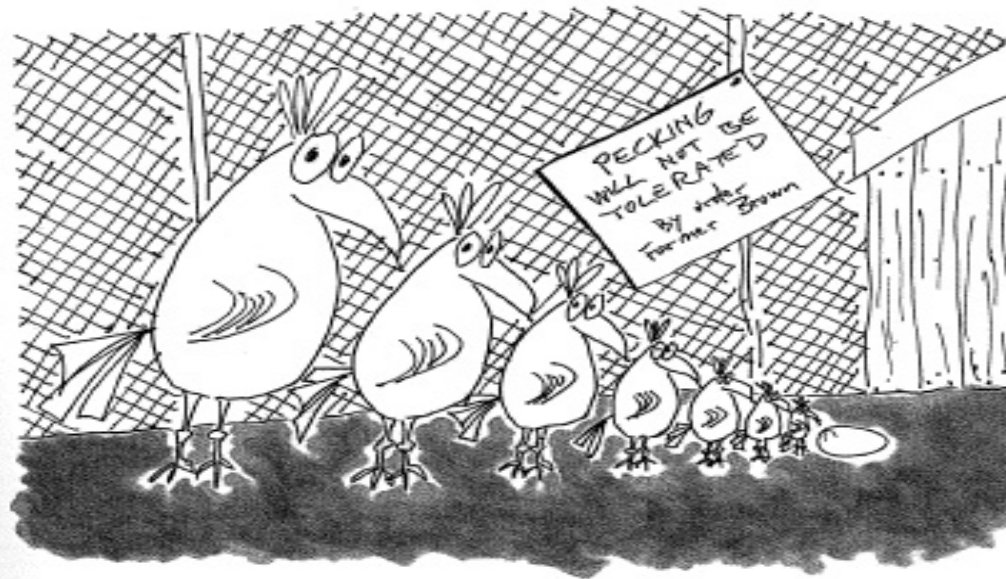


Anti-bullying Policy

1. school's stand
2. definition
3. rights
4. responsibilities
5. procedures
6. positive strategies
7. evaluation strategy

National Framework

Bullying in schools and the *National Safety School Framework*





National Framework

1. values, ethos, culture, structures and welfare
2. policies, programs and procedures
3. education and training
4. managing incidents
5. providing support for students
6. working with parents



National Framework

“The school develops programs and strategies to empower students to participate in a positive school culture eg peer support systems.”

National Safe Schools Framework, 2004

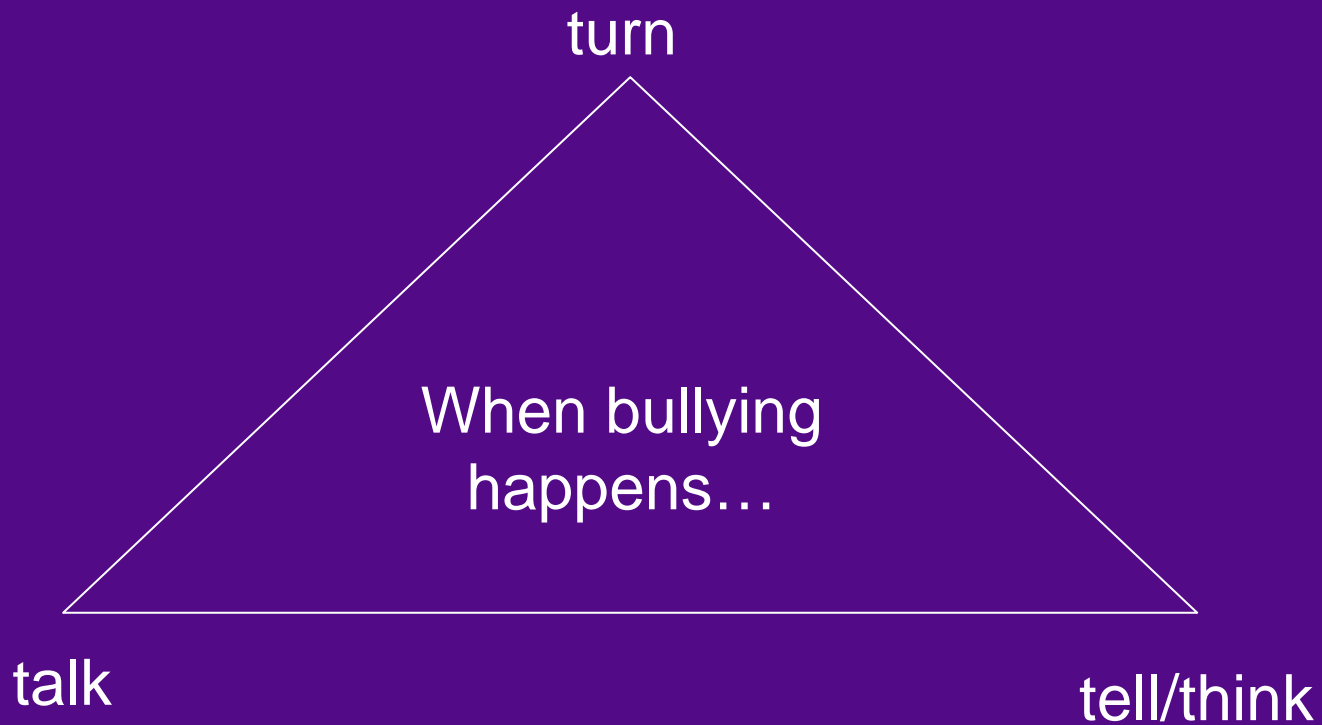


Positive Steps

- student welfare / pastoral care
- staff welfare
- positive regard
- awareness raising
- playground
- classroom



Model





Procedures

- reporting
- dealing with incidents
- procedures and support
- recording information



“...Schools with a supportive and inclusive school community, where students feel they belong and are appreciated, are less likely to have high levels of bullying behaviour.

Having a positive school environment that the entire school community has helped build, will prevent bullying happening in the first place.”

Dr Rob Moodie VicHealth, 2002