

Bullying Prevention in School

A Major Paradigm Shift

- Grades 3-5, kids start to lie to test out how to lie. They get better at it in middle school, which is when bullying begins to peak.
- Kids are freer b/c they have access to social media and phones.
- They don't have the skills to understand how to be social (how things can hurt others).
- Kids actively construct a false reality to benefit themselves
- Reactive bully: Say mean things and only act like this when they feel revoked.
- Instrumental bully: big guy who shakes the nerd down. Rules the school by fear, wants to keep status. He is a bully by design.
- Two types of Victims:
 - Meek atypical victim, no social status.
 - Reactive victim that gets targeted but can be hostile towards others.
- Gossiping and social exclusion weren't impacted by the study.
- In the past, we have told students to tell someone and stick up for yourself.
 - Adults would then do their due diligence and saying they will "make it stop"
 - They would document it, bully should be disciplined.
 - But, now that bully is disciplined and more mad that the victim told on them. Hence, we are making it worse.
- Bullying victims want things to change immediately.
- If bullies don't get the reaction they want, they tend to move on.

Paradigm Shift:

- Bullying isn't the problem. It's a symptom of a larger problem. The larger and real problem is the unhealthy culture in which bullying and other negative behaviors are able to survive.
- Example of going into southern Baptist church and make a racist comment. That culture would look at him like he's crazy and ask him to leave. This is how bullying can be.
- We need to create a culture where everyone shares that strong value about being kind, dismissive, exclusive, etc.
- Bullies are smart and a dime a dozen. They recognize how to be on top and stay on top.
 - Be indifferent with them. They are filling in a gap in an unhealthy culture.
 - Let them know congrats for bullying, but we are trying to change their game.
 - Accountability and restorative justice
 - The only use for a bully is in how they can repair the culture they have affected. (form of restorative justice). You need to give back and understand why you need to give back to community and people.

- I don't care if you want to do it, just do it. I don't care if you see the value in it.
- If you have a bully in your office, expect accountability, relationship repair, and restorative justice from them – put on the forefront. You're not returning to this program until you've done....this.
- **Relationship pair process:**
 - When someone does something to hurt you...
 - *Sincere apology* – acknowledge when you did wrong and recognizing how the behavior hurt them
 - *An explanation* (not an excuse) – Explanation allows the other person to realize they have given it some thought. The person deserves the fact that you have thought it through.
 - *Commitment* – I need to make sure I will do better next time.
 - *Follow through* – easy to say, hard to do.
- **Implications for the victim:**
 - We need to help de-personalize this stuff for the victim
 - Feels so personal, but you're in the wrong place at the wrong time. If you weren't at school today, someone else may have been bullied. Yes, this sometimes hurts your self-esteem, but you have to tell them it's the bully's problem.
 - Validate the emotion (comes instinctly) and give emotional support
 - Ask them: "When this was going on, or right afterwards, was there anything different that could have happened that could have made you feel less traumatic or better?"
 - We know the answer to this, but you want to try to get the kid there.
 - *Answer:* "Someone could have stepped up and said something to help the situation" This helps them feel more supported.
 - *Answer:* If someone had supported him and saying "I'm sorry this happened, its about him being a jerk, just want you to be okay."
 - This support helps the victim feel less bad
 - Now we want to make a commitment: Since we know there are two things that could have helped you, so anytime you ever see anyone get bullied, you have to promise me that you will do both things to that victim. There's no enforcement or impact for the bully anymore.
 - We don't like to talk about the victim doing anything different, but that isn't constructive. It may seem insensitive, but we have to lead them in the right direction. We want them coming away being empowered, not worried.
- The bystander is the biggest problem because they aren't doing anything to help.
- The bystander is who defines the culture.
- Everyone hears the comment and no one says anything. Help me understand why.

- Interventions for Bystander
 - When we see behaviors that are unkind, every intervention should be to activate kind behaviors. Ask what they think of this “Is this the kind of classroom you want to have?”
 - Raise awareness, increase motivation, coach them
- Students are all out for themselves. They don’t know how to set up a healthy social structure.
- Courage, selflessness, perspective taking, helping those in need, cooperation, offering peer support – these are all values that we need to talk about early on.
 - Dodging Drama in a World Gone Bad (book)

“Be excellent at being kind”

“Extraordinary acts of kindness”

Person A talks smack to Person B about Person C. Person B must negate the comment, and that’s where it will begin to become healthy. Yes, Person B could be at risk, but you have to be that person that you want others to be.

The victim has to be part of the solution.