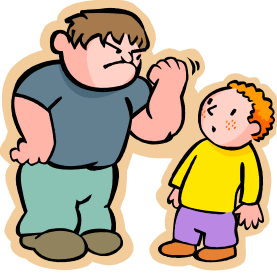


Reducing Bullying Through Collaboration



Dan Olweus first defined this type of peer-to-peer abuse: “a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students.” Over the years he has identified three types of bullying: physical aggression (hitting, kicking, pushing), verbal harassment (threatening, teasing, calling names, making faces, dirty gestures), and indirect/relational mistreatment (ignoring someone or purposefully excluding him/ her from activities). Put simply, bullying is when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending himself or herself.

There is significant research indicating that children and adolescents who participate in bullying, as bullies and/or victims, are more prone to illness than their classmates who are not involved in this form of mistreatment. Adolescent bullies and/or victims are at higher risk for injuries, suicide attempts, and mortality.

Prevalence of this public health problem is high. Data collected in 1998 estimated that 30% of U.S. adolescents in grades 6–10 were involved in bullying incidents, sometimes several times per week, as bullies and/or victims.

Bullying can disrupt the “school’s ability to educate its students in a safe environment.” It has been linked to vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, and the use of drugs and alcohol. Further, it “can directly affect a student’s health and well being, and thus contribute to excess absences from school, physical sickness, mental and emotional anguish, and long term mental and social consequences.”

It’s time to take action.

After significant research into evidence based programs to reduce bullying, a collaborative effort is being piloted by the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Missouri Center for Safe Schools(MCSS), and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services(DHSS).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a multilevel, multicomponent school-based program designed to prevent or reduce bullying in students 6 to 15 years old. The program is in place in over 2,000 schools in the U.S. The Olweus model has strong results when implemented with fidelity. This is supported with research. Currently designated as a *Best Practice Blueprint Program*, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program utilizes a whole-school approach. This involves school administrators, staff, parents, the community, and students. Program components and details are available at: www.clemson.edu/olweus/

This program offers tangible advantages when implemented with fidelity, with both short term and long term results; it is relatively inexpensive to incorporate once the training is complete; it is easily understood; it has appeal for parents, students, teachers, Legislators; and it is a clearly defined opportunity for interagency collaboration. Nearly everyone recognizes the impact of bullying, whether from personal experience as a bully, a victim or an observer. The Olweus program addresses all roles.

Similar to an initiative in the state of Virginia, it is Missouri's intent to gradually place a cadre of individuals trained in the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program throughout the state and make them available at little cost to support schools choosing to implement the Program.

Some schools in Missouri have already begun to implement this program; others would like to do so. The Olweus Training of Trainers held in Kansas City in early April of 2008 has prepared the first "wave" of the cadre of trainers. These trainers will support approximately 35 schools during program implementation which will begin in August of 2008. Schools who are concerned about bullying and are prepared to take action can apply for training assistance.

References:

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- Due P, Holstein BE, Lynch J, et al. *Bullying and symptoms among school-aged children: international comparative cross sectional study in 28 countries*. Eur J Public Health 2005;15(2):128 –32.
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- Olweus D. *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 2003

For Additional Information:

Glenn A. Berry, Director	Dottie Mullikin
Missouri Center for Safe Schools	Director of Prevention
Union Station, Suite 401	Department of Mental Health
30 W. Pershing Road	1706 East Elm Street
Kansas City, MO 64108	Jefferson City, MO 65102
P: 816-235-1042	573-526-3701
http://education.umkc.edu/safe-school	dottie.mullikin@dmh.mo.gov

The attached application to be an Olweus site will cover the costs of having a certified Olweus trainer facilitate the process of implementing the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in your school building. Supplies must be provided by the school and are generally @ \$2000/year for a school of 500 students. Some trainer travel may need to be reimbursed as well.

Send completed applications to:

Glenn A. Berry, Director, Missouri Center for Safe Schools Union Station, Suite 401 30 W. Pershing Road Kansas City, MO 64108 <http://education.umkc.edu/safe-school>

APPLICATION



For Support to Implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Within Your School

1. Name of School District: _____

2. Name of School Building interested in implementing the Olweus model: _____

3. Implementing the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program with fidelity requires significant support within the school building. An original signature is required and indicates support for program implementation. Please obtain as many of these signatures as possible:

Superintendent: _____ Printed Name: _____

Building Principal: _____ Printed Name: _____

School Nurse: _____ Printed Name: _____

Building Counselor: _____ Printed Name: _____

Parent: _____ Printed Name: _____

Parent: _____ Printed Name: _____

Parent: _____ Printed Name: _____

Parent: _____ Printed Name: _____

Parent: _____ Printed Name: _____

Teacher: _____ Printed Name: _____

Teacher: _____ Printed Name: _____

Teacher: _____ Printed Name: _____

Teacher: _____ Printed Name: _____

Teacher: _____ Printed Name: _____

Olweus works best when at least 75% of the teachers support implementation. Do you have that degree of support? Yes No If no, @ _____% support implementation.

4. Number of students expected to enroll 2008-2009: _____ in grades: _____

5. Please give us a profile of your school:

6. What kind of issue has bullying presented at your school in the last two years?

7. Have you implemented Positive Behavior Supports? Yes No

8. Approximately what per cent of students had a parent for the last parent-teacher conferences? _____

9. What is the most significant positive event that occurred within your school during the current school year? (academic or behavior related)

10. What is the most significant negative event that occurred within your school during the current school year? (academic or behavior related)

11. Will your school be able to commit @ \$1500 to support implementation of this program?

Yes No

12. The first step in implementation is to form a Bullying Prevention Committee of 12-15 persons from your school community. They will be asked to participate in 2 days of training to ensure the philosophy of the model is understood by all. Do you see any difficulty with this? Yes No

13. Do you have local businesses with whom you enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship? Yes No
Would they be interested in contributing to the Olweus Bullying Prevention initiative at your school?

14. Contact information for the person to be contacted relative to this application:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ Best times to call: _____

e-mail address: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Zip code: _____

14. Any other information you would like to share with us?

Send completed applications to:

Glenn A. Berry, Director
Missouri Center for Safe Schools
Union Station, Suite 401
30 W. Pershing Road
Kansas City, MO 64108

<http://education.umkc.edu/safe-school>