**Educational Issues Presentation: Bullying**

*(Discussion thoughts are some of the questions that came up during the preparation of this document. The actual presentation may not address all of them directly, but they are intended at thought process starters.)*

What is bullying:

Bullying does not have a universal definition. There are many definitions and approaches to the issue based on often competing or contradictory perspectives. Because of this it is very difficult to find concrete or direct action advice in dealing with bullying.

Base definition: “A hurtful action carried out repeatedly over time.” (Froschl, Sprung, & Hinitz, 2005)

* *Discussion Thought: If the is only a single incident of a hurtful action, is it still a form of bullying?*

Differentiating the person and the behavior: “Bullying is a way of treating people that is mean and hurtful. People who bully are not bad people, their behaviour is what’s bad. A person can learn to stop acting like a bully.” (Beane, & Fox, 2009)

* *Discussion Thought: How is responsibility for one’s actions assigned? If two people engage in bullying behaviours, but were motivated to it for different reasons, do they hold the same responsibility?*

Who is an ‘Expert’?

Finding an appropriate ‘Expert’ to guide us though incidents of bullying is both subjective and situational.

* *Discussion Thought: Are the following people ‘Experts’ – Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Teachers, Parents, Day Home/Day Care supervisors, Lawyers, other?*

Example of a controversial expert: Izzy Kalman.

* *Discussion Thought: If an ‘Expert’ sounds reasonable 80% of the time, and the rest somewhat questionable, is it appropriate to continue to use the information, or do you risk people just presuming 100% of the information is appropriate.*

Purpose: To expose the difficulty in encompassing the full topic, the difficulty in reaching concrete examples or direction on how to address the issue, and who to turn to for advice.

Bullying in the classroom

Activity - Complement cards

Cards complement individual traits that are under the control of the individual. The cards also provide examples of respectful things to say and of appropriate behaviours for positive attention.

* *Discussion Thought: Are there potential shortcomings to this activity. Two modification have been made to this activity to fit Education 2500: 1. Pre-selected the ‘to’ and from’ names to ensure everyone would receive a card, and the sender would likely have experience with the receiver as they are place in the same school, and 2. Participants write their own complements, as opposed to selecting form pre-written ones.*

Purpose: To provide an activity that can be used to enhance a positive classroom community. To look at modification options in activities and where or why they may be used.

Bullying in the school.

Where a teacher may have direct control over behavior in the class room, general behaviours at school may be harder to monitor, and be subject to greater outside influence. On November 9, 2005 the 136th episode (Season 9, episode 11) of Comedy Central's series [*South Park*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Park)aired its episode titled “Ginger Kids”.

* *Discussion Thought: South Park is an adult satirical program. How should an adult explain this type of humour to a child/youth, and its actual intended moral message?*

Zero Tolerance: Zero tolerance is one of the few items that, superficially, appears to have a fair amount of consensus that it is not an appropriate or effective anti-bullying technique. However it also appears to have the same amount of support for its intent to treat everyone equally.

* *Discussion Thought: When do actions cross the line into criminal actions?(Ex.: Fighting in sport(Hockey)/Violent sports (Kick Boxing))*

Purpose: ‘Kick a Ginger Day’, is used to illustrates how a negative action can become a social norm even without the modern prejudice actually being prevalent. Zero Tolerance is used to illustrate the difficulty in reconciling policy and practice / Intent and outcome.

Addressing bullying

Incident Report Forms: Issues with the restrictions in recording incidents, where language, required neutrality, and privacy law, make it difficult to record or communicate whole incidents.

Relational (Indirect) bullying: “The most difficult to detect from the outside, relational bullying is the systematic diminishment of a bullied child’s sense of self through ignoring, isolating, excluding, or shunning.” (Coloroso, 2006)

Skit – “Sugar and spice and everything nice”

* *Discussion Thought: Issues when the words, “just kidding” or “it was a joke” are an attempt to avoid responsibility for a statement or action’s effects rather than an understanding that the statement or action may have been inappropriate?*

Purpose: To provide a ‘real life’ situation, on which to test various responses to a bullying incident.

Conclusion and Discussion

Video:Prejudice by Tim Minchin

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