CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This research details the pilot study implementing the Olweus Bully Prevention Program. The study took place in a third – eighth grade school setting during the 2005-2006 school year. The program was based on evidence of bullying behaviors occurring in the school. The goal was to reduce, if not eliminate, the existing bullying /victim problems and prevent the development of new cases of bullying. This chapter describes the components of the program and the implementation methods used at the school, in the classroom, and at individual and community levels.

Demographics

Data was collected from a kindergarten - eighth grade Christian school located within the perimeters of a mid-sized coastal city. With a third principal appointed in July 2004, the school had been in operation for four years with seventeen certified teachers and ten support staff (specialist teachers including music, art, physical education, etc.). Of the 155 boys and 182 girls enrolled at the school, three hundred sixteen were Caucasian, four African American, seven Hispanic, six Asian, and four American Indian. The students whose parents were obliged to provide daily transportation came from predominately middle to upper class socioeconomic levels. Stating that they would fulfill a minimum of thirty volunteer hours per year, each family signed an agreement at the beginning of the year. For the 2004 – 2005 school terms 7,800 volunteer hours were documented in a communication log. In the last three years, the student average attendance for the entire school was 96% with pupil/teacher ratio averaging one to twenty - four across the grades. A total of twenty-one discipline referrals were on file with the

principal including seven after - school detentions, one out – of - school suspension, two in - school suspensions and five expulsions. When the referrals were read and categorized by the principal to determine the reason, all but five were for bullying incidents. Notably, the five expulsions involved students who were asked by the principal to leave the school for bullying reasons. Also, of importance to this study is the fact that three families voluntarily left the school because they felt their children were victims of bullying at the school.

Instruments

To determine whether this pilot study was successful in the implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, three separate indicators were analyzed. One indicator was the 39 - question Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996) given at the on-set of implementation. In addition, the perceptions of school personnel who participated in this specific program before and after implementation were analyzed. Furthermore, a comparison of the number of discipline referrals before and after implementation was examined.

The thirty-nine question Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire was administered to all 176 participants (grades three - eight) to gain pre-data information about bullying perceptions from the students involved in the study. Then the thirty-nine questionnaires were placed on a CD-ROM containing both the student survey instruments and the reporting software for the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. This software tabulated the survey information about the amount and type of bullying: where it occurred, what it involved, and how the school was responding. After the administration of the questionnaire, the results were hand-entered into the reporting software and tabulated to obtain information on the amount and variety of bullying in a school.

In addition to the questionnaire, informal questioning was completed to gain a perspective of the administrator and teachers' perceptions about the type and the severity of bullying taking

place at this particular school before implementing the Olweus Bully Prevention Program. The principal, classroom teachers, and other school personnel (specialist teachers, counselor and nurse) were asked open –ended questions during oral interviews to determine if these educators thought bullying to be a problem in their school and if so, the type of bullying they had observed among students.

Following the implementation of the program, a post written survey was evaluated where teachers who participated were asked the following questions:

1. Have you observed any changes in the frequency and type of bullying in the school /classroom?
2. Do you feel the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has had an effect on bullying and the school environment at your school?
3. What would you like to see for next year regarding the program?

Lastly, the third indicator was the comparison of discipline referrals from the 2004-2005 school years to those of the 2005-2006 school year. The referrals were read, analyzed, and categorized by two school personnel to determine if they constituted bullying actions. The referrals categorized as "bully "were then counted and compared numerically from the year before implementation to the year after implementation.

Program Components

The Olweus Bullying Program is a multi-component, school-based program designed to prevent or reduce bullying in elementary, middle, and junior high schools involving students aged six to fifteen years. School staff, largely responsible for introducing and implementing the

program, directed their efforts toward improving peer relations to make the school a safe and

positive place for students to learn and develop. Through restructuring the school environment,

the staff reduced the opportunities for bullying and the rewards experienced by those doing the

bullying.

It is important to note that the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is not a curriculum.

Rather, it is a school-wide, systems change program with interventions at several levels - school-

wide interventions, classroom interventions, individual interventions, and community

involvement. For example, at the classroom level, instead of a set of eighteen or thirty-six one-

hour lessons typical of a "curriculum," the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program asks for the

school to designate 20 minutes once a week for classroom meetings for students to discuss

bullying and peer relations. Olweus outlines the components and action needed to implement the

program in the following four tables: School – Wide Components, Classroom Components,

Individual Components, and Community Components.

Table 1. School-Wide Components

1. Form a bullying prevention coordinating committee to foster the initiative in the school. The composition of the committee generally should consist of a school administrator, an on-site coordinator, a teacher representative from each grade, a guidance counselor, a school psychologist/school –based mental health professional (if applicable), a parent, and a member of the non-teaching staff. In addition, schools are encouraged to include the school's resource officer and a member of the community (e.g., coordinator of after-school programs for the school district), if appropriate.

2. Schedule a two –day training for all members of the bullying prevention coordinating committee and provide the coordinating committee members time to meet each month for approximately 60 minutes. This group becomes "expert" in their understanding of bullying and will provide continuity of the program year after year.

3. Schedule a one-half to one –day training for all staff after the coordinating committee training and prior to the launch of the program. The bullying prevention coordinating committee will train all school personnel (administrators, educators, counselors, ancillary staff, bus drivers, playground supervisors, lunch room supervisors, custodians, etc.) about bullying and program interventions.

4. Administer the anonymous Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire for baseline data and to determine progress through comparison data as the program progresses. The questionnaire is used for students in grades 3-12.

5. Develop district policies and adopt school rules against bullying behavior. (Basic rules are provided in the Olweus Program.)

6. Increase supervision in " hot spots" for bullying.

7. Work to actively engage parents in bullying prevention efforts.

8. Hold school –wide "kick-off "events that inform students about no bullying policies.

9. Provide kick-off information for new students and train adults new to the school system each year

Table 2. Classroom Components

1. Post and discuss school rules.

2. Use consistent positive and negative consequences.

3. Hold regular classroom meetings.

4. Incorporate bullying themes across the curriculum.

5. Hold class-level parent meeting (whenever possible).

Table 3. Individual Components

1. Intervene on- the- spot when bullying occurs.

2. Hold follow –up discussions with children who are bullied.

3. Hold follow-up discussions with children who bully.

4. Share information with staff.

5. Involve parents of children who are involved.

Table 4. Community Components

1. Look for ways to engage the community in your school's bullying prevention efforts.

2. Examine strategies for spreading anti-bullying messages beyond the school's doors.

Implementation

The particular school, which piloted the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, underwent training to learn the program through staff development. The teachers in grades three-eight, who were responsible for piloting the program in their individual classrooms, attended nine separate staff development sessions during the first year of implementation. During these staff development sessions, the faculty examined the school-wide, classroom, and individual components of the program mentioned previously. A discussion of how each component taken from the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was implemented in the pilot school explaining the methodology for this study follows.

The Establishment of a Coordinating Committee

The school first had to establish a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee that had the overseeing responsibility for implementing the intervention program. Members of this committee were supposed to participate in a special two-day training with a certified program trainer prior to the onset of the project. However, the training did not occur because of time restraints in regards to this research. Training is now scheduled prior to implementing this program for a second year.

The developers of the Olweus program recommends a coordinating committee composed of specific individuals with clearly defined responsibilities. The committee should include a representative from the school's administration (principal or assistant principal), the leaders of the staff discussion group, one teacher from each grade level, and a school counselor and/or school-based mental health professional. At least one parent, as well as a representative from the before – or after- school program, in addition to a student representing the middle school should serve on the committee.

The coordinating committee has several responsibilities. The members are responsible for making plans to implement the various components of the program including the administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. In addition, the committee is responsible for communicating these plans to other faculty and staff. Ensuring that the program was coordinated with other programs and activities in place at the school was another goal. Two other important jobs of the committee included obtaining feedback from faculty and staff about the progress of the program and presenting the intervention program to parents, the local community, and the media.

Recommendations suggest that the coordinating committee meet at least once a month. More frequent meetings are required with the initiation of the program and fewer meetings with its progression. A responsibility of the principal is to have written minutes for each meeting. The faculty at the school under study has agreed that the committee meetings be held the second and last Wednesday of each month. From the coordinating committee one member to serve as the coordinator of the school program was assigned. This individual was responsible for preparing a meeting schedule of the discussion groups for the entire year. To date, a total of nine meetings have been held during the first year of implementation. In implementing the intervention program, the coordinating committee has played a major organizational and administrative role at the school.

Establishment of Staff Discussion Groups

Another important tool for effective implementation is the use of special staff discussion groups. With the establishment of one or more staff discussion groups at each individual school, there should be an established " leader" of each discussion group. The primary purpose of each staff discussion group, is to lead a thorough and interactive discussion of the materials described

the intervention program, primarily *Olweus' Core Program Against Bullying and Antisocial Behavior: A Teacher Handbook* (2001) and the book *Bullying at School* (Olweus, 1993). The material has been divided among a number of meetings with one chapter or part of a chapter in the handbook providing the focal point for a given meeting. During the discussions the participants have been encouraged to ask questions, make comments, and describe their own relevant experiences.

Based on the Olweus Handbook, the major goals of the staff discussion group are several. Initially, the group is responsible for providing a more detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the intervention program and its various components to the participants in addition to providing them with several testing methods and practical solutions to problem situations. The group also works to stimulate fast implementation of the various components of the program. In addition, the members share experiences and viewpoints with the school personnel in similar situations to facilitate their learning from others' experiences. As a motivating force, the group works to create and maintain motivation and commitment to the program while also stimulating cooperation and coordination of the program components and activities to develop a whole-school policy.

For the purpose of this study, the coordinating committee was the staff discussion group because of the limited time and personnel resources of the small school.

The developers of the program under study believe learning about the program should be an active process. Therefore, the goal of the study was to introduce most of the program measures within three to four months after the initial meeting of the staff discussion group. Olweus also feels it crucial that staff discussion group leaders be experienced in leading discussions with adults in addition to having credibility with their peers. Of utmost importance is the individuals

also feeling comfortable in their leadership roles. As a result, the program recommends a leadership model based on the "train-the-trainer" model. Using this model, the school under study should have selected key people from their own personnel to participate in the initial two-day training with other members of the school's bullying prevention coordinating committee by a certified program trainer. A certified program trainer would also give ongoing consultation by direct contact and via regular telephone and /or Internet contact throughout the school year. For this particular pilot research, training by a certified program trainer did not occur; however, the coordinator provided the necessary staff development.

During the staff development, the nine chapters of the *Olweus' Core Program Against Bullying and Antisocial Behavior: A Teacher Handbook* (2001) served as the discussion topics at the first nine staff discussion group meetings. The topics presented to the faculty for this project included the following: "Conditions and Background for Implementing the Intervention Program," "Adequate Implementation of the Intervention Program," "The Many Faces of Bullying," "The Supervisory System," "Class Rules," "Class Meetings," "Role-Playing," "Meetings with Parents," and "Measures at the Individual Level."

The Administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnarie

The optimal approach to program implementation involves selecting the onsite coordinator and administrating the Bully/Victim Questionnaire Survey in the spring, training staff in August before the school year begins, and holding a school - wide kickoff at the beginning of the fall semester. However, due to timing of this research, the implementation of the program began in October of 2005. After establishing the coordinating committee and the staff discussion group, the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, which is one indicator of the type and severity of bullying, was administered to 176 students in grades three – eight.   The questionnaire was given

to 176 students in grades three-eight. There were two versions of the questionnaire a junior and a senior version, designed for use in grades 3-5 and 6 through 10 or higher, respectively. Each student in grades 3-8 received a copy of the survey that the teachers administered the survey to their homeroom class simultaneously. In the lower grades

(3-5), the complete text of the questionnaire was read aloud by the person administering the survey. With students in higher grades (6+), only the introductory text was read aloud; then the students responded to the questions independently.

Development of Rules Against Bullying

An important strategy against bullying and the promotion of a good social climate in the classroom is the establishment of concise rules related to bullying. The pilot school currently has in place general rules pertaining to student conduct. However, rules aimed particularly at bullying and worded in very concrete terms are important (Olweus, 2001).

In Bullying *at School* (Olweus, 1993), the evaluation of the first" Bergen Project Against Bullying" (Olweus & Alsaker, 1992), found that teachers with class rules against bullying achieved a greater reduction in student bullying in their classes when compared to teachers without such rules.

The book *Bullying at School* (1993) presents four main rules for the classroom and the school. These are (1) We will not bully others, (2) We will try to help students who are bullied, (3) We will make it a point to include students who are easily left out, and (4) If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell the homeroom teacher (or other teacher) and an adult at home.   The first three rules cover both direct bullying with relatively open attacks on the victim as well as the more indirect forms of bullying, including social isolation and exclusion from the peer group (see definition of bullying in Chapter 2). The fourth rule is based on the fact that many of the

bullied students who are bullied (about 30-60 percent) do not tell any adults either at school or at home (Olweus & Solberg, 1998). Research indicates that even fewer students among those who witness bullying who report the bullying to a teacher or their parents. Clearly, there is a need for open communication regarding bullying problems among the students. Rule number four had been created specifically to stimulate such communication (Olweus, 2001). These four rules strive to reduce the occurrences of bullying in the school environment.

For the implementation of the pilot, teachers explained the four school rules noted above to their students at one of their initial classroom meetings through class discussions. All third – eighth grade teachers   then posted the four rules in their classrooms. In addition, the rules were posted in the lobby, in the cafeteria, and at the top of the main stairway leading to the second floor of the school. In summation, clarifying the content of the school/class rules about bullying for all of the students was most important. Through the explanations and discussions the entire student body would gradually understand how the rules were to be interpreted, what was acceptable or desirable behavior and what was less adequate or unacceptable behavior (Olweus, 2001).

Increased Supervision in "Hot Spots"

Research suggests there are certain " hot spots" where bullying occurs. Both in Norway and in several other countries a large portion of bullying takes place during recess/breaks and on the playground (Olweus & Solberg, 1998; Sharp & Smith, 1991). For example, in " The New Bergen Project Against Bullying," where the first data collection was undertaken for this program in 1997 (Olweus & Solberg, 1998), as many as 65 percent of the bullied students reported that the bullying had occurred.

Likewise, in the first "Bergen Project Against Bullying" from the 1980s, a clear link between " teacher density" during recess/breaks and the occurrence of bullying exists: the more teachers (e.g. per 100 students) during recess/breaks, the lower the level of bullying at the school (Olweus, 2001). Definitely, teacher visibility or lack thereof has an impact.

At the pilot school, the supervisory system was reviewed extensively. In one of the staff discussion meetings, a distinction was made between the expression " rough and tumble " play and real fighting and bullying. In addition, the committee discussed the design of the school in regards to potential " hot spots" for bullying. By analyzing the data from the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, the committee identified the areas of the building that needing more supervision to be the playground, the hallways/stairwells, and the lunchroom. Each area was thoroughly discussed with the staff proposing action plans to supervise these areas better.

For the supervisory system to function well, the teachers were taught to exchange information about any negative behaviors in their classrooms or in other parts of the building including the " hot spots." Teachers observing bullying or any other undesirable behavior were instructed to report their observations to the relevant homeroom teacher or grade level. Observations of students often spending recess/breaks completely alone or appearing to be socially isolated needed to be reported to the appropriate personnel. In addition a bullying log or notebook was given to each teacher to be used to desk record observances or incidents of bullying by their own homeroom students. Having a well-coordinated system of supervising adults in place will have both a problem-reducing and preventive effect in regards to bullying and other undesirable student behavior. In addition, tendencies towards antisocial behavior will be easier to discover and counteract at an early stage (Olweus, 2001).

School-Wide Meetings with Parents

Most people agree that parents play a significant role in children's general development as well as in their behavior and success or lack of success at school. In a recent survey including questions about potential measures to prevent and solve the school's behavior and discipline problems (Ogden, 1998), more than 88 percent of the approximately 3600 participating teachers answered that " strengthening contact and cooperation with the parents" was "very important." Out of a total of 25 possible proposals, parent communication received the greatest support (Olweus, 2001).

The pilot school has made a commitment to increase its efforts against bullying by introducing this program the school (Olweus, 1993; Olweus & Limber, 1999). Informing the students' parents about the issue of bullying was deemed important enough to invite their cooperation and interaction through a parent meeting for the entire school. One invitation to attend a nightly school -wide meeting addressing this particular intervention program was sent to each family two weeks in advance. At the meeting, a guest mental health speaker along with the principal gave a brief overview of what recent research has said about bullying, its extent, its characteristics, the mechanisms, and the causes. The overview included a presentation of the key components of the program to be used at the school both in classes and on individual levels. In addition, the main results from the documented research regarding the positive effects of the program in reducing and preventing bullying and antisocial behavior were addressed (Olweus, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1999; Olweus & Limber, 1999). The information used in the introductory presentation was taken from two resources- *Bullying at School* (Olweus, 1993) and the *Blueprint on the Bullying Prevention Program* (Olweus & Limber, 1999). In addition, the results for the school as a whole and for the various grades from the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996) were presented to the parents. Plus, the video *Sticks and Stones: The Truth About*

Bullying, which overviewed the entire program, was shown. After the introductory presentation and a discussion about key issues, the parents adjourned to the individual classrooms for small group discussions with the homeroom teacher. Each individual classroom was given the following question to discuss: " How can the school and the home work together to prevent or counteract the occurrence of bullying in the class / at the school?"

The school-wide informational meeting was a combination of a parent meeting for the entire school and a class parent meeting. Additional topics for future class parent meetings can include the rules for the consumption of media violence and those about the buying pressure as regards to " brand –name clothing," good manners, curfews, etc. (Olweus, 2001). One of the main purposes of parent meetings is to mobilize the rich resources represented by parents and guardians in relation to an active involvement in the work against bullying (Olweus, 2001). As pointed out in *Bullying at School* (Olweus, 1993), awareness and active involvement on the part of adults (first and foremost school personnel but also parents/guardians) are crucial for successful work with the Olweus Bully Prevention Program. The program recommends several arranged meetings with parents during the course of a school year. For the pilot, the school-wide meeting with the parents was considered the "kick-off event" described earlier under the school-wide component criteria.

Positive and Negative Consequences

Research shows when a certain behavior is followed by a positive consequence for the individual, the likelihood that the behavior will occur or become more frequent in similar situations in the future increases. In the behavior analytical literature when one says that the activity has been "reinforced," "rewarded," or "confirmed," the positive consequence is called a positive reinforcer (Glasser, 1969). Praise and friendly attention such as verbal encouragement

and recognition, friendly smiles, nods, and a pat on the shoulder by the teacher are examples of positive reinforces. However, a number of studies indicate that in a normal classroom situation, teachers give relatively little praise while issuing more reprimands, criticism and negative attention. This imbalance in the praise/criticism ratio becomes more and more accentuated in the higher grades (White, 1975; Walker et al., 1995). Definitely a need for positive reinforcement is needed on all grade levels.

With this research in mind, teachers implementing the pilot were taught in staff discussion groups to use several positive reinforcers. The teachers were encouraged to give praise or use other positive consequences for the entire class, for smaller groups, or for individual students in recognition of behaviors that conformed to class/school rules against bullying. For example, teachers were encouraged to use positive reinforcers if their students demonstrated positive behaviors such as intervening when one or more students were bullying another student or condemning malicious teasing/kidding in the classroom or during recess/breaks. Taking the side of and defending a student who is teased in an unpleasant and hurtful manner or condemning the use of hurtful nicknames were noted positive student actions. In addition, calling the teacher's attention to an acute bullying situation or telling the teacher and parents that the student himself/herself or another student is being bullied was awarded with positive reinforcers. Students gained recognition that initiated or participated in activities that included all of the girls/boys in the class without excluding anyone or took the initiative to draw lonely students into joint activities. By providing an opening that allows an " outsider" to become part of a group or participate in a activity or by generally showing helpfulness and friendly behavior, particularly towards students who have a tendency to be bullied or socially isolated were actions observed by

the teachers to be worthy of positive reinforcement (Olweus, 2001**).** Both in the classroom and on the playground, teachers have numerous opportunities to reward good behavior.

In most cases, using frequent praise and other presumably positive consequences to get aggressive, externalizing students to change their behavior is not sufficient (Olweus, 1993). Research shows that one must also resort to a form of negative consequences or sanctions when faced with undesirable behavior (Patterson, 1982; Walker et al., 1995). Two main types of negative consequences have been employed and researched in behavior analytical and pedagogical literature. One type consists of the removal of positive reinforces while the other relates to use of negative or unpleasant stimuli.

During the implementation of the pilot, teachers were taught different types of negative consequences to use with students not submit to the set of "No- Bullying Rules." For example, teachers were encouraged to use a technique in the category of " removal of positive reinforces," usually called " response cost" (Glasser, 1969). In the school context, the use of this technique means that the student loses a privilege or something positive that he/she expects to do or participate in, such as a special program. Time –out is an example of the removal of positive reinforces. Additionally, rebukes and verbal reprimands illustrate a negative consequence using an unpleasant situation for the student.

In the staff discussion groups the participants considered the negative consequences. Suggestions from the Olweus Program provided negative consequences for students breaking class/school rules about bullying. Teachers were instructed to handle students that did not abide to the " No- Bullying Rules" with several consequences such as having the student apologize to the student who has been bullied or having the student replace damaged clothing and other possessions using their own pocket money. Reprimanding clearly specifying what is not

acceptable or conducting serious talks between the teacher and the student about what has happened and what is expected in the future. Other negative consequences include giving the student " time-out" or having the student sit outside the principal's office during certain recesses/breaks. Having the student stay close to a teacher who is responsible for supervision for a cretin number of recesses/breaks, contacting the student's parents, sending the student to a serious talk with the principal or deputy principal or having the student lose some privilege or attractive activity (Olweus, 2001). After learning the effective positive reinforces and negative consequences to use with students, the teachers discussed these specific topics during their weekly class meetings with their homeroom class.

The main objective for class discussions about negative consequences was to make students with bullying tendencies aware of the resistance and negative attitude toward bullying among their peers. This awareness functioned as a significant group pressure on students with negative tendencies (Olwues, 1978). In addition, class discussions were also beneficial for students who have been bullied. Finally, the discussions between the teacher and students most likely contributed to an increased understanding that bullying behavior is unacceptable and may result in a negative consequence (Olweus, 1978).

Weekly Classroom Meetings

It is important that classes have forums for discussion about the   development of rules against bullying and the choice of possible sanctions if the basic rules about bullying are violated. The class meeting is a positive forum, which can be used to counteract bullying tendencies and negative behaviors early on before they assume dramatic proportions (Olweus, 1993). In addition, the introduction of these regular class meetings can provide the opportunity for a systematic follow-up and evaluation of the social relations in the class, thus becoming a tool for

developing a better class environment (Olweus, 2001). The impact is validated through research. In the evaluation of the intervention program in the first "Bergen Project Against Bullying" (Olweus, 1993; Olweus & Alsaker, 1992), researchers found that teachers who used class meetings in their anti-bullying work clearly achieved larger reductions of bullying problems in their classes than did teachers who did not use such meetings (Olweus, 2001). However, the study shows a relatively low percentage of teachers using class meetings systematically for this purpose. Studies in connection with the new "Bergen Project Against Bullying" (Olweus, 1997) and data from a new, nationwide teacher survey (Ogden, 1998) indicate that few teachers take advantage of the positive effects of class meetings.

Teachers in the pilot study learned how to organize and lead class meetings with their homeroom class. The class meetings were expected to be held every week preferably on the same day of each week. They were to last for 30-45 minutes with students organized in a circle or half –circle and using established school-wide rules for discussion. The established rules were posted as a visual in each classroom where class meetings were held. The rules from the Olweus Teacher Handbook were the following: (1) We raise our hand when we want to say something; (2) Everyone has the right to be heard; (3) We let others speak without interrupting; and (4) We can disagree without saying bad things.

Role-Play

In the "Bergen Project Against Bullying" from the 1980s (Olweus, 1993; Olweus & Alsaker, 1992), the researchers noted that teachers using role-playing in their work against bullying achieved greater reductions of student bullying in their classrooms when compared with teachers not using role-playing. Therefore, the conclusion can be made that the systematic use of role-playing is a good and effective method for counteracting and preventing bullying (Olweus,

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2001). In the program, teachers were given role-playing scenarios with and without suggested

solutions for use during their weekly class meeting sessions.   As a result, role-playing provided

the students with opportunities to arrive at, test, practice and evaluate suitable solutions to

bullying situations.

   The Incorporation of Bullying Themes Across the Curriculum

   All specialist teachers (e.g. music, art, Spanish, physical education, etc.) at the pilot school

were encouraged to attend all staff discussion meetings to incorporate anti-bullying and positive

messages in their weekly lessons. For example, the librarian purchased children's literature and

supplemental supplies to foster the message that bullying was a theme throughout the building.

The librarian read the different children's literature and did follow up activities during each

scheduled class's library time.   In addition, the physical education teacher observed during class

time any student bullying behaviors considered acute, bullying situations or isolation techniques

falling under the definition of bullying. Lesson plans developed by the physical education

teacher, often employed games to give students practice in the social skills associated with

making friends and including all classmates in-group activities. Since the school is a private,

Christian school, daily lessons in religion were also taught to instill positive morals and values,

relating to the anti-bullying themes. For example, lessons on friendship, on becoming good role

models, and on growing up to be good citizens in society were taught.   As a result, this program

emphasized the value of staff cooperation and the coordination of program components and

activities. It was critical that the adults at the school emerged as a group with uniform attitudes,

rules and methods of reacting to students.

Interventions in Bullying Situations

From the onset, teachers at the school were taught to intervene promptly and consistently to any form of bullying that might occur. Then they documented in their personal Bullying Logs/Notebooks the occurrence and the action taken.

In addition, the teachers received training about how to intervene if bullying was a problem in their classrooms as an individual component of the program. Different approaches were suggested at staff discussion meetings about how to handle situations where there was a suspicion of bullying. For example, the program encouraged teachers to (1) intensify his/her observations of the student in question both on the playground and in other places; (2) confer with his/her colleagues about the student in question; (3) acquire more knowledge about friendships and well-being in the class by having students respond to written forms of anonymous journal prompts or personal interviews; (4) contact the parent(s)/guardians(s) of the students who are in question to gain a sufficient basis of information in making a careful evaluation (Olweus, 2001). Teachers were also trained how to structure serious individual conversations with victims and bullies.

Community Engagement

Several strategies were used to engage members of the community in the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Parents of students who were mental health professionals were contacted to be guest speakers at Parent Teacher Organization Meetings (PTO) to address topics related to anti-violence and social well –being. For example, a child psychologist spoke about children's self esteem issues. Furthermore, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) was contacted for supplemental materials that could be distributed to students and parents. For example, SAMHSA sent complimentary posters, bags, notepads, pens, and

pamphlets on bullying that the school used in its "kick-off" event to get parents and students excited about the program. Also, in the monthly newsletter sent out by the school the description of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was outlined and explained to the parents.

Optimal Timeline

Below is an optimal timeline for initial activities for implementation, assuming a program launch is at the beginning of the fall semester. The Hazelden Publishing Company that developed the program suggests this timeline.

Table 5. Timeline for Components

Spring	Select members of the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee and an on-site coordinator
April/May	Administer the student survey; hold a day-and-a-half to two-day training with members of the Bullying Prevention Coordination Committee
Summer	Input and analyze data from the student survey
August/September	Hold a half-day to full-day in service with all school staff
Beginning of the fall semester, following the school conference day	Plan, schedule, and launch other elements of the school wide project: • Establish classroom rules against bullying • Begin classroom meetings to discuss the nature of bullying and its behaviors • Increase supervision; review and coordinate supervisory system • Initiate individual interventions with students • Start regular teacher discussion groups (schedule these before school year starts) • Parent meetings

Limitations

    This study encountered multiple limitations during the research project. One great limitation was the absence of formal training by a certified Olweus Bullying Prevention Trainer. A two-day training is suppose to be offered to members of the school coordinating committee and the ongoing telephone consultation for a full school year was recommended to implement the program. In regards to this particular study, time and money were hindrances to accomplish the certified training. Money also played a role when ordering ample supplies for the program. Some "cut-backs" were done when ordering teacher manuals for the teachers involved. Materials were shared in preparation to ensure that this program was a "satisfactory fit" for the school. The financial constraints were a limiting factor during this research.

    Time restrictions also had a limiting effect on the project. More time was needed to administer the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire a second time to gain post results. The administration of this questionnaire has been recommended for next year since the time lapse between the pre- and post- administration is recommended by the program developers to be at least one year. Other components of the program were improvised because of time restrictions. For example, the program" kick-off "school wide assembly took place in the spring semester after the implementation had already started, contrary to a recommended fall " kick-off." This situation resulted from the staff learning the components for the initial year and feeling comfortable with the program before discussing it with students and parents.

Another component limitation was the combining of the coordinating committee with the staff development committee. To fulfill the recommendations by the Olweus program developers, various specialist staff personnel needed to be at staff discussion meetings, with additional parent and student representation. This was partly due to the limited number of members in a small school. In conclusion, most of the limitations that this study encountered came from two significant sources: time and money.