

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

In conclusion, this pilot study took place because a school needed an intervention for bullying behaviors. Questions were posed in Chapter 1 that needed answers: (1) What bullying prevention programs are available for this school to implement? (2) What types of bullying behaviors are present in this school? (3) Are particular grade levels subject to greater bullying than are others? (4) What specific interventions can be undertaken to diminish bullying in this school?

Based on the questions needing investigation from Chapter 1, the study was successful. For example, in Chapter 2, various proven bullying programs already gaining results in other schools are discussed. Various schools dealing with the same problem can easily gain more information and follow-up on one of these anti-bullying programs for resolve, if faced with a bullying problem. Chapter 2 also provides research regarding the extent of bullying in schools, the effects bullying has on students, the characteristics victims and bullies portray in a classroom, and the type of family backgrounds fostering such students. Furthermore, in Chapter 3, the intervention components of the program chosen for the study, The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program are outlined in detail. Any school with similar anti-bullying goals could easily incorporate the program components with little expenditure of time and money.

Moreover, the type of bullying behaviors students were demonstrating as well as the dominant grade levels involved can be found in Chapter 4 with the findings from the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. Results from the survey show that a very small percentage of students were bullies and/or victims in the pilot school population. Although there were a small number of students demonstrating antisocial behaviors, the overwhelming percentage of students

in the building responded with a very positive well-adjusted outlook toward school. Less direct forms of bullying such as using mean names and excluding others were taking place to a greater extent than the more direct forms of bullying such as stealing, hitting, and pushing.

Questionnaire results showed that eighth grade students were doing most of the bullying; however evidences of bullying occurred in the lower grades, especially in grade three. Because of this information, the Bully Coordinator recommends that the study be expanded next year to include kindergarten through second grade. Then the research could be expanded to identify the actual grade these anti-social behaviors are beginning to demonstrate themselves.

Answers to the fourth question in Chapter 1 about the specific interventions to be used in this school to stop their bullying problem are discussed in Chapter 3. These interventions are detailed well enough so that a staff member, if needed, could continue the program with staff development.

Recommendations

This particular program, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, did indeed fulfill its program goals, which Hazelden Publishing had addressed in the initial phase of investigating different programs. The goals of the program were threefold: (1) to reduce, if not eliminate, existing bully/victim problems among elementary, middle, and junior high school children in and outside of the school setting, (2) to prevent the development of new bully/victim problems, and (3) to achieve better peer relations at school and create conditions that encourage students to respect each other and to function better in and outside of the school setting.

One recommendation to the pilot school includes their continuation of commitment and awareness of the seriousness of bullying in schools today and most importantly in their school. In addition, they must support the position that bullying will not be tolerated. Since the Olweus

Program is one of the best-proven programs that schools have the opportunity to implement, the pilot school is using some of the best intervention strategies to diminish their problem of bullying.

In addition, the program should continue with the monthly staff discussion groups, the parent school-wide meetings, and the weekly classroom meetings with all the other vital components of the program. For the success of the program more funds need to be allocated to provide training by a certified trainer during the summer before the second year of implementation. Also, a staff member who would assume the role, as on-site coordinator for the program is needed. An on-site coordinator would ensure that the program was being implemented as it was intended and that the program was adhering to the optimal timeline for implementation mentioned in Chapter 3. In addition, the school should invest in a primary grades anti-bullying program for the Kindergarten through the Second Grade. Research suggests that the percentage of bullied students decreases with increasing age/grade (Olweus, 1993). It is safe to say this anti-social behavior does not suddenly appear in the third grade. Another recommendation suggests the committee investigate the bullying prevention program called *Quit –It* (K-3) from Hazelden Publishers, the same publishers for the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The *Quit-It* (K – 3) program has ten interactive lessons as well as supplemental games, activities, role-plays, and stories to help students explore the issue of bullying. The last recommendation is that the administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire occur either at the end of the 2005-2006 school year or the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. The results would give post - data feedback to how well the implementation of the program is taking place. Perhaps, these recommendations could serve as a deterrent to later bullying behaviors.

Professional Development

Evident from this research, bullying is a serious threat not only to those involved, but also to the entire school environment. With 30 percent of children reporting involvement in a bullying situation, it is obviously an urgent problem that negatively affects the lives of many children (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993). Therefore, it is imperative that teachers be trained in interventions to reduce the bullying in their classrooms.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has been evaluated in multiple studies that show how the program utilizes sound professional development standards. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program moves away from past models of professional development that took place on in-service days, on weekends, or during the summer to new models of job- embedded professional development incorporated into the daily lives of teachers. Moreover, Olweus supports the implementation of the bullying prevention program on teachers' "paid time."

Some curriculum developers suggest that teachers are more likely to apply new instructional strategies with immediate feedback and support as they are trying the new strategies in their classrooms. This statement bears merit since teachers working with the program get this support by working in the staff development groups and by the collaboration in the supervisory component of the Olweus Program. One could consider the staff discussion groups Olweus discusses in this program as "learning teams" of teachers in the school.

In addition, professional development linked to overall school improvement will need the involvement and support of the whole school community (Fine, 1994). Olweus' Program requires involvement of all staff including support staff members, parent representatives, and student representatives serving on the coordinating committee for successful implementation to take place.

Curriculum Specialists implementing a good program need to consider the data to implement the agenda of their professional development program. This task is workable with the standard baseline of reliable and valid data coming from the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. This instrument provides a vivid picture of where, what, when and how bullying is taking place.

In conclusion, this research was motivated to a large degree by an e-mail received from one of the program implementers and evaluators of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Dr. Sue Limber, from Clemson University. She wrote, “ If you decide to implement the program you will be making a difference in the life of a child.” This simple statement can have a profound effect of why professional development for anti-social behaviors needs to begin and to be implemented for the social well - being of all children.