



Components of an Effective Bullying Prevention Approach

Bullying (including relational aggression) is repeated, aggressive, harassing and severe. It is destructive not only for the person being bullied but also for those who exhibit bullying behaviour. Bullying is a learned behavior, and the behaviour is generally developed over time.

This fact sheet provides an overview of the components that make up a positive, research-based bullying prevention approach.

There is no simple solution to bullying. No one program, resource or approach will prevent and stop bullying. It will take a concerted, sustained effort by all of us to prevent and stop bullying in our schools and communities.

Use these components to:

- Select resources for your school and/or community.
- Select activities and approaches to preventing and dealing with bullying.
- Continue to build an inventory of resources for a well-rounded approach.

An effective bullying prevention approach

is positive, planned and sustained over time. In selecting a bullying prevention approach within your school and community, make sure to choose one that:

1. Emphasizes a shared responsibility for preventing and dealing with bullying.

Bullying is everyone's business and it will take an ongoing community effort to stop it.

2. Assesses the scope and specific nature of bullying behaviours in your school or community.

Do an anonymous questionnaire. Findings can help you tailor your strategy and serve as a baseline for future information gathering.

3. Focuses on changing the social environment.

People must notice when a child is bullied or left out and incorporate ways of changing attitudes and behaviours about bullying into their daily lives. Bullying is not a normal part of growing up.

4. Builds support for bullying prevention.

Bullying prevention should not be the sole responsibility of one individual. Work with members of the community or school first to ensure buy-in from the majority. Involvement of children and youth is an important part of identifying effective approaches for dealing with bullying.

5. Is a coordinated, intentional approach.

Form a group to coordinate bullying prevention activities in schools or communities, and meet regularly to sustain momentum.

Need to talk to someone about bullying?
Call 1-888-456-2323 (24 hours, toll-free in Alberta).

Children and Youth Services and Education are proud to lead Alberta's Cross-Ministry Strategy for the Prevention of Bullying.

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6. Builds a school or community-wide understanding of bullying prevention.

Training will help everyone interested to understand prevention and intervention, the nature of bullying and its effects, how to respond if they observe it and how to prevent bullying from occurring.

7. Uses positive and appropriate language.

Consistent positive language and messaging provides people with examples of how to respond in a given bullying situation.

8. Establishes and enforces rules and policies related to bullying.

Developing and posting simple, clear rules about bullying can help to ensure that children are aware of the expectation to refrain from bullying and to help those who are bullied.

9. Increases adult supervision in hot spots where bullying occurs.

Bullying tends to thrive in locations where adults are not present or are not vigilant. Identify the locations through the questionnaire and then look for effective ways to increase adults' presence in these locations.

10. Intervenes consistently and appropriately in bullying situations.

Intervene effectively on the spot to stop bullying, and have designated individuals hold sensitive follow-up meetings with children who are bullied, and then separately with children who bully.

11. Teaches and reinforces specific skills in preventing and stopping bullying behaviours.

Children and youth need to learn how to prevent, stand up to, and stop bullying. As they learn these skills, they gain confidence to deal with bullying situations.

12. Continues these efforts over time.

There should be no end date for bullying prevention approaches. They should be regularly reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness in changing behaviours and adjusted accordingly.

Effective Assessment of a Bullying Prevention Initiative

Assessments are the starting point for understanding the nature and extent of bullying problems and must address the following issues:

- **Bullying is a relationship problem.**
Focusing on only the child who is being bullied or only the child who bullies is not sufficient – include other children who may have witnessed the bullying and significant adults. Comprehensive assessments involve peers, parents, other significant adults and communities.
- **Assessment of bullying problems requires a focus on children's development.**
Bullying changes as children grow older and can differ between girls and boys. Assessment tools must be sensitive to children's different developmental needs and capacities.
- **Adult leadership is the foundation for addressing bullying problems.**
Adults need to understand bullying problems and their significance, and any adult leaders are responsible to ensure that the commitment, communications and resources are provided.

For more information, visit www.bullyfreealberta.ca.

Information adapted from "The Heart of the Matter", published by Alberta Education and the Council for Exceptional Children, www.cec.sped.org

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