

Promoting Positive Peer Relationships

Middle School Bullying
Community Education Resource
Facilitator's Guide Preview Extracts

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Instructions for Facilitator

Step One – Consultation

Bullying is a complex phenomenon requiring interventions on a number of fronts, so it is important to coordinate with schools when developing community bullying prevention efforts. It is advisable to consult with school principals and, if possible, relevant school-based support services staff (counselor, psychologist or social worker) in planning the Community Education session. It is important to determine if schools in your community have an established document detailing policies and procedures regarding bullying and victimization. If specific policies are not available then identifying relevant student conduct policies would be important. Such policies should be highlighted during the session.

Step Two – Select Options & Modules

Select the Session Option (see below) based upon the time available. If possible, the Ninety Minute session is recommended. For this session, consider which of the *Additional DVD Modules* to include, allowing time for discussion. The DVD also provides an option to “Play All” additional modules back-to-back (totaling approximately 11 minutes), however with discussion the session will run longer than ninety minutes.

Step Three – Select Film

Read both *Film One* and *Film Two* synopses (refer to *The Films* section) and watch the five minute previews for each film on the DVD to decide which film will be the most relevant to your community. The previews are accessed via the DVD’s *Preparation* menu.

Step Four – Reserve Room & Equipment

Make arrangements for a room of sufficient size for conducting the session, and ensure the audio-visual equipment will be available – either a DVD player and television, or for larger groups you may choose to connect the DVD player (or computer) to an LCD projector and sound system.

Step Five – Photocopying

As handouts for participants, photocopy the *Introductory Presentation* slides (refer to the *Additional Resources* section). If available, produce copies of relevant school policies regarding bullying and victimization. You may also choose to provide copies of other pages from the *Additional Resources* section, such as *Resources Available on the Internet* and *Books*.

Step Six – General Preparation

It is highly recommended that you view the chosen DVD material in full and read the general information about bullying in the *Additional Resources* section **before** the session.

The instructions for each Session Option should allow for the smooth running of the session. The main challenge will be to keep the session on schedule as the films will generate discussion.

You may also consider the possibility of providing snacks and beverages for participants.

On the day of the session, it is advisable to check that the audio-visual equipment is working in advance of the session, allowing time for resolving any last-minute technical problems!

Session Options

There are three options for the community education session, depending upon the time available. The content of the DVD modules is summarized in the following pages. For instructions for conducting the sessions, refer to the *Community Education – Sessions* section.

Ninety Minute Session

- View **Core DVD Module**
- Followed by discussion with prompt questions
- Followed by viewing a selection of the **Additional DVD Modules**

Seventy-Five Minute Session

- View **Core DVD Module**
- Followed by discussion with prompt questions

Sixty Minute Session

- View **Core DVD Module**

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Seventy-Five Minute Session

Core Objectives

- To provide a general introduction including defining bullying and its various types, bullying statistics and the main obstacles to reducing bullying in schools.
- To provide a rare insight into bullying from the students' perspective and explore some of the complexities to be faced in reducing bullying in schools.
- To highlight the important influences of bystanders, and why they often support (knowingly or unknowingly) bullying.
- To explain cyber-bullying and other forms of off-campus bullying.
- To examine how schools, students and the community can work together to promote more positive peer relationships and help to reduce bullying in schools.
- To discuss the points raised in the films.

Resources

- DVD
- Option: Copies of the *Introductory Presentation* pages and any other photocopied material.
- Option: Snacks and beverages for participants.

Commence Session

In preparation, load the DVD and navigate to the **Core DVD Modules** menu.

Stage One – Introduction



FACILITATOR (5 minutes)

- Explain to participants that the session is composed of a combination of watching a DVD and discussion. They will first view approximately 50 minutes of DVD material, followed by a short discussion.
- Explain that the 50 minute DVD is composed of three parts:
 1. A general introduction presented by three of America's leading specialists on bullying and school violence. This introduction runs approximately 10 minutes.
 2. This is followed by a 25 minute dramatized film developed and produced with middle school students.
 3. A more detailed examination of how to address bullying including: the role of bystanders; cyber-bullying and how to promote more positive peer relationships. This last section runs approximately 15 minutes.

- The dramatized film was created from the ground up with a class of 8th graders who collaborated in developing the script then performed in the film. Every word of dialogue is their own; every detail is approved by the students.
- The film and other material in this session are part of the *Stories of Us* bullying prevention program, which includes curriculum-based classroom resources. Because the film draws upon the students' collective experience, it holds a mirror to the reality of bullying with such authenticity that many students watching the film are convinced it is real (they don't realize that the students are "acting"). As a result these resources have been very effective in influencing behavior – supported by evaluation findings – and have been embraced by leading educators around the nation.
- After the 50 minute DVD there will be a short discussion.
- There were two films produced with middle school students. Participants will view one of these films in full. They will also see some material from the second film, including interviews with the "actors", incorporated in other parts of this presentation.
- Explain that the aim of this session is to help define and understand what is potentially happening for many of young people, and consider how they can help to create a safer and more supportive environment. The intention is not to arrive at definitive answers. Participants should be cautioned against looking for "right" or "wrong" answers, as many challenges and solutions are context specific.
- Hand out any photocopied material.

Stage Two – Viewing

- ▶ PLAY DVD – **Core Module (Film One)** or **Core Module (Film Two)**
(Approximately 51 minutes)

Stage Three – Discussion



FACILITATOR (10 minutes)

- Explain that they now have approximately 10 minutes for discussion. The following questions should prove useful in drawing out key points from the presentation and generating a constructive conversation:
 - Based upon what we have just heard, what are the main things we can do to support schools in reducing bullying and promoting positive peer relationships?
 - What are the main components of a climate that promotes positive peer relationships?

Some Key Points

In addition to the general information about bullying and its various forms, and an insight into bullying from the students' perspective, some of the key points covered in this session include:

- Bystanders are the key to creating a positive school climate; if bystanders do not support the bullying they witness, then the bullies do not have an audience.
- Bystanders worry that if they stand up to the bullies then they will become the targets of the students who are doing the bullying.
- Schools can develop policies and procedures that make it safe for bystanders to come forward and report the bullying they have witnessed.
- The increased use of cell phones and computers facilitates cyber-bullying.
- Most schools have a technology teacher – who could potentially educate students about the appropriate use of cell phones and computers.
- Parental education is key to reducing cyber-bullying.
- Parents can monitor their children's computer and cell phone usage.
- Creating a healthy climate where young people will talk with adults is vital for reducing bullying.
- It is up to all of us to foster, model, and create positive relationships in our schools and communities.