BULLYING:
Support for Teachers

What is bullying?

Bullying happens when someone hurts another person physically, socially, or emotionally. Bullying can look different at different ages. Sometimes bullying can be obvious but usually it isn't. Often, it is very subtle and may not seem like bullying, even to the person doing it. Whatever it looks like, it is a problem that affects the people involved even after the bullying is over.

What kinds of bullying are there?

Physical bullying: hitting, pushing, kicking, etc.

Verbal bullying: insulting, name-calling, belittling, threatening, mocking, etc.

Social bullying: spreading rumors, gossiping, ignoring, excluding, destroying relationships, etc.

Cyber bullying: using technology to bully (texts, Facebook, emails, etc).

What should I know about bullying?

- Bullying happens in all cultures.
- In Canada at least 1 in 10 kids bully others regularly.
- 1 in 3 children have been bullied.
- About one-third of bullied children will go on to bully others.
- Even if a child isn't being bullied, they can be affected by it. No one can thrive in an environment that is unsafe and unpredictable.

Why does bullying happen?

Bullying is a relationship problem – to self, others, and the community. Bullying is an abuse of power. It can be totally random, but can also be brought on by differences in ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disabilities and abilities or anything that creates a difference between one child and another. **Bullying can stop when everyone involved makes an effort to stop it.**

Consequences of Bullying

On the child being bullied: Being bullied can affect everything about a child: how they see their friends, school, future and themselves. This can lead to bad grades, depression and possibly a child hurting him or herself.

On the bully: Children who bully can become isolated and lose their ability to connect with others. This can lead to trouble at school and/or with the law.

On others: Even if a child isn't being bullied, they can be affected by it. No one can thrive in an environment that is unsafe and unpredictable.

What are some signs that a child is being bullied?

Look at both the child and their relationships. A child who is being bullied will often show changes in behaviour. They may be:

- Isolated with no friends.
- Withdrawn, anxious, irritable.
- Missing school; grades dropping.

- Complaining of headaches and stomachaches.
- Showing physical signs – injuries, bruising, torn clothing.

How can I address bullying in my class?

Teachers play a very important role in preventing and stopping bullying. The first thing you as a teacher can do is understand this fact. Other ways of dealing with and preventing bullying are:

- Know your students and classroom dynamic. The better you do, the easier it is to notice trouble.
- Make time to be available to your students so they feel comfortable coming to with any problems.
- Take it seriously when it happens. If a student comes to you, help and support them. Follow up and make sure it's not continuing.
- Create opportunities for students to learn about and develop positive relationships.

Focus on healthy relationships

Bullying is the opposite of a healthy relationship. Though it is important for students to understand bullying – its impact and how to prevent and deal with it – moving forward the focus needs to be on creating and maintaining health relationships. Try to:

- Role model positive behavior.
- Create opportunities for students to develop positive relationships, like games and group activities.
- Be positive. Reprimanding students frequently makes them think focusing on the negative is the norm.
- Make your classroom a place of open discussion – talk about healthy relationships (and bullying).

NAHO has developed three lesson plans to help teachers talk about bullying with their students. There are also tip sheets for students and parents: **www.naho.ca/bullying**

How can I address bullying in my school?

Bullying can happen anywhere in a school. Consider the following:

- Get your colleagues involved. Talk with them about their experiences with bullying, how to deal with it and prevent it. Develop a school bullying policy.
- Get students' input on a school bullying policy.
- Get parents involved in a bullying policy.
- Be present in the school. Bullying often happens away from authority. Being out on the playground and in the halls gives you a better sense of what's happening so you can reduce the opportunities for bullying to happen.
- Stick with it. Don't make it something that you talk about once or only when it's a problem. Change takes a long time.

What does the Indigenous way of thinking say about bullying?

Bullying is inconsistent with the Indigenous worldview. Indigenous knowledge sees all creation as being equal and connected. All living things should be in balance and harmony with each other. Bullying exists in an environment of individualism where a person puts himself above others.

A child who understands healthy relationships will understand the value of others and their responsibility to others. Respect is at the heart of Indigenous values. Respect and kindness is necessary to live in balance and harmony with yourself, others, and the community. By being kind to others, a child can learn the importance of community, family, and themselves.

Where can I get information and help?

Kids Help Phone is a great resource for parents and kids 5–20 years old. Counsellors are there 24/7 to help kids talk about their problems. **www.kidshelpphone.ca** 1-800-688-6868

Prevnet has excellent parent and teacher information and research findings. **www.prevnet.ca**

REFERENCES:

- Dumont, J. (2005, February). *First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS) Cultural Framework*. Ottawa (ON): RHS.
- Kids Help Phone. www.kidshelpphone.ca.
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation. (2005). Stand up for yourself and for others. *Anti-Bullying Newsletter, 1(*1).

For more information: www.naho.ca/bullying

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