

Psychoeducational Group:
Creating a Bully Free Environment



By
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Topic

The topic for this prevention program is bullying. I chose this topic because bullying is becoming more of a problem in schools everyday. I will identify what bullying is and isn't. I will identify the characteristics of the bully, the bullied, and the bystander. I will present strategies for the victims of bullying and bystanders to aid them in coping with and helping to end bullying in their environment.

Target Group and Audience

The target group for this program is grades four to six, children between the ages of nine to twelve years old. It will be presented in a regular education classroom, which includes children of both genders.

Length of Program and Number of Sessions

This psychoeducational group will meet once a week for six weeks. Each session will be one hour in length. The group will meet during the regular school day in cooperation with the regular classroom teacher.

Sources

Barboza, G, Schiamberg, L., Oehmke, J., Koreniewski, S., Post, L., & Heraux, C., (2009). Individual characteristics and the multiple contexts of adolescent bullying: An ecological perspective. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38 (1), 101-121.

Beane, A. (2005). *The Bully Free Classroom* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Colorosa, B. (2008) *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander. From Preschool to High School – How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Sullivan, K. (2011) *The Anti-Bullying Handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE Publications Inc.

Websites

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AUCIVdSims>

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032600/vp/41928090#41928090>

Key Factors Contributing to Bullying

Beane, A. (2005). *The Bully Free Classroom* Minneapolis, MN: Free Press Publishing.

Cognitive: They will be able to identify characteristics of what bullying is and isn't. They will know the effects of bullying on the bully, the bullied, and the bystander. Be able to name bullying behaviors. Identify appropriate ways to deal with bullies.

Interpersonal/Intrapersonal: Increase low self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Lack of social skills increases the likelihood of being a bully and being bullied.

Build acceptance: when they accept each other, they are less likely to bully each other and more likely to defend victims of bullying.

Teach Friendship Skills: Some kids become bullies because they don't have friends, feel lonely, and seek attention by bullying. Some kids become victims because they're isolated and easier to pick on.

Build Empathy: Empathy is the ability to identify with and understand another person's feelings, situation, motives, and concerns. They also need to empathize with people who are very different from them.

Assertive Skills: Bullies tend to be aggressive; they behave as if their rights matter more than anyone else's rights. Victims tend to be passive; they behave as if other people's rights matter more than theirs. Assertive people respect their own rights and other people's rights.

Teamwork: Student's who participate in group activities are more likely to have positive feelings about other people.

Conflict Resolution: Students trained in conflict resolution are more likely to face conflicts, use problem solving to negotiate solutions and have a more positive attitude toward school in general.

Social Factors: The media often glamorizes bullies, and their actions frequently go without consequences and may actually be rewarded. Studies show that children watch programs that have violent content that they can then transfer to real life. Bullying is a form of violence against others, whether physical (hitting, kicking, pushing) or emotional (rejection, put-downs, threats), it can leave victims feeling powerless and abused.

Step-by-Step Procedures

I will get administrative support and clearance, explain the scope of the program to teachers, let them know what grade level it is targeted for, set up dates and times with each teacher to implement the program. I will coordinate with the teacher to get parent information letters out to each classroom targeted to get parental consent and support.

Since this will be done in a general education classroom and every child will participate, I will peak the interest of each class by strategically placing posters, announcements and teasers in each classroom two weeks prior to the start of the program.

I will help each target grade understand the problems of bullying by showing them some of the faces of children who have committed suicide because of being bullied, have them identify some of the times in their own life that they have been a bully, been bullied or been a bystander and how they felt as each one. I will give them information on how it affects a person now and for the rest of their life. They will recognize the signs of a bully and a victim and will be able to use the intrapersonal skills they learn to help prevent bullying from continuing.

They will see that this is a problem for everybody because everybody sometime in the course of their life will be a bully, will have been bullied, and will participate in being a bystander.

Some specific things that students can do to make things better:

- Begin thinking and talking positively about themselves and others.
- Notice similarities and appreciate differences.
(addresses the inter/intra personal: building acceptance)
- Work together
- Treat each other with kindness and respect
- Give each other support and encouragement
(addresses the inter/intra personal: teamwork and friendship skills)
- Respond to bullying in ways that work
(addresses the cognitive: identifying appropriate ways to deal with bullies and inter/intra personal: assertive skills)
- Resolve conflicts appropriately and effectively
(addresses the inter/intra personal: conflict resolution)
- Build empathy and realize that other people have feelings, wants, and needs that are just as real and valid as their own.
(addresses the inter/intra personal: build empathy)

Reinforcement of skills learned will be incorporated into each session with visual images, role-playing, small group discussions, solution brainstorming, worksheets, creating charts and pictures illustrating concepts, question and answer sessions, watching video clips depicting bullying and discuss what they would/could have done to help the victim.

Termination of the group will take place at the end of the program by reviewing what has been learned about being a bully, being bullied, and being a bystander. The children will be challenged to use the skills that they have learned to help their classroom and school to be a bully free zone. We will have a question and answer session for any questions or concerns the children may still have. I will have a short evaluation form for them to fill out so they can give creative suggestions on how to make the sessions better in the future. Each child will then be given the opportunity to sign a classroom contract committing to help their school and classroom to be bully free. Each student will be given an award for participating in the group.

Session One

Focus

The focus of this session is to get to know each other, what the purpose of the group is and the expectations and goals. To expose the myths of bullying, define bullying and name bullying behaviors.

Activities

- Give the students time to fill out the “True or False?” handout before the session begins.
- Icebreaker: The Balloon Game: Each student is given a balloon and a small piece of paper. Sitting in a circle, they are asked to write something interesting about themselves, to roll the paper up, insert it into the balloon, blow it up and it its end. The balloons are then thrown into the circle and each student grabs one. Taking turns, they bust their balloons, extract the paper and read it to the group. They then have to guess who this is about.
- Setting expectations: Divide the group into 2-3 smaller groups and have them come up with a list of rules that they think the group should have. Come back together and have each group share what they have. Write each suggestion on the board and then as a group decide on which ones to keep and which ones to get rid of. Write the chosen rules on a poster and hang in the room.
- “True or False?” handout discussion: Read each statement and get feedback for the students on whether they think it is true or false. Have a discussion about why each statement is a myth.
- Divide the group into smaller groups and have them work on a definition for bullying. Write the definitions on the board and together come up with a class definition. To keep students on track introduce the following concepts.
 - Bullying takes at least two people: the bully and the victim.
 - Bullies like to feel strong and superior.
 - Bullies enjoy having power over others.
 - Bullies use their power to hurt other people.

The class definition should include these basic ideas: Bullying is when a stronger, more powerful person huts or frightens a smaller or weaker person deliberately (on purpose) and repeatedly (again and again). **(addresses cognitive: characteristics of what bullying is and isn't)**

- Ask “What do bullies do?” List their responses on the board. If they focus on only physical bullying introduce some of the other behaviors listed below. They need to understand that bullying encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviors. **(addresses cognitive: identifying bullying behaviors)**
 - Act like they rule the world
 - Act rude and mean
 - Attack people
 - Boss people around
 - Brag about being tough
 - Break people’s things
 - Cheat
 - Embarrass people

Frighten people
Humiliate people
Ignore people
Intimidate people
Laugh at people
Leave people out
Make people feel helpless, inferior, invisible, and uncomfortable
Name-calling
Pick on or attack people because they're different in some way
Reject people

When they have finished the list make it into a class pledge. Write on a poster board "As a class, we pledge NOT to...." Then let students add words, phrases, illustrations, pictures, etc. Have them sign their names at the bottom.

- Write down two things you learned today that you didn't already know.
- Homework for next session: Handout: "Bullying on TV" (**address social factor: media influence**)

Materials

Handout: "Bullying on TV"

Pencils

Paper

Balloons

Poster Board

Glue

Scissors

Tape

Markers

Magazines (for pictures)

Goals

Get to know each other better.

Learn about what is expected from the group and the rules of conduct.

Discover what some of the myths of bullying are and what kinds of behaviors to look for in a bully.

Define Bullying.

Session Two

Focus

The focus of this session will be to identify the bullying behaviors learned from last session. They will view a video, identify the bullying behaviors, and suggest more appropriate ways to handle the situation.

Activities

- Ask some of the students to share results from their homework sheet. Discuss the bullying behaviors that were mentioned in each television show. Point out that each person in the class can be a bully, a victim and a bystander. **(addresses social: media influence)**
- Show one of the clips from the Dateline NBC bullying program and have each student write down some of the bullying behaviors that they see. Have them get into small groups and make a collective list. Bring the list back to the whole class and share what they have. Show them the rest of the clip that shows how the actors solved the problem with more acceptable ways of handling the situation. **(addresses cognitive: identify bullying behaviors)**
- Divide the student's into small groups of 5 or 6. Give each group a scenario to act out. They must work together to assign each person a role and practice acting it out. Come back together and have each group act out their scenario for the rest of the class. Each group will write down the bullying behaviors that they see. Discuss each group performance and have the students make suggestions on how they could have acted in a more appropriate way. **(addresses inter/intra personal: teamwork)**
- Write down two things you liked about today's session
- Homework: Fill out the "What should you do?" handout

Materials

Computer and Projector to show video clips from Dateline NBC

Paper

Pencils

Different Scenarios for role-playing

Handout: "What should you do?"

Goals

Identify bullying behaviors.

Apply more appropriate behaviors.

Session Three

Focus

This session will focus on what the student's should and should not do if somebody is bullying them or they witness it happening to somebody else.

Activities

- Discuss the homework handout from last week: "What should you do?"
- Explore ways to deal with bullies, have students consider possible responses to bullying. Have them come up with their own responses and discuss each response and why or why not it would be acceptable.
- Show the youtube video clip of how a victim responded to the boy that was bullying him. After the clip discuss whether they thought it was a good way to handle it or not and why. **(addresses inter/intra personal: build empathy)**
- Have the class design and make a "Notes to the teacher" box as an option to report bullying.
- Write down three acceptable things you can do if somebody is bullying you.
- Homework: Share with your parents what you are going to do to stand up to a bully.

Materials

Computer and projector to show youtube video

Paper

Pencil

Box to decorate

Variety of art materials to decorate box

Goals

To give the student's a variety of acceptable ways to stand up to a bully.

To reassure the student's that they can tell an adult and something will be done about it.

Session Four

Focus

This session will focus on assertive skills. Some students don't know what to do or how to react when they're bullied. Assertive people respect their own rights and the other people's rights. Students who are naturally shy and withdrawn, and those who have been (or are) bullying victims need extra help learning and using assertive skills.

Activities

- Ask the students, "Do you have rights?" "Do you know what they are?" As they offer ideas, write them on the board. Make sure these rights appear somewhere on the list:
 - We have the right to think for ourselves.
 - We have the right to have and express our opinions, views, and beliefs.
 - We have the right to make decisions about our lives.
 - We have the right to say no.
 - We have the right to say yes.
 - We have the right to stand up to people who tease us, criticize us, or put us down.
 - We have the right to have and express our feelings.
 - We have the right to respond when someone violates our rights.
- Have the students create and illustrate a "Student Bill of Rights" poster for the classroom. **(addresses inter/intra personal: teamwork)**
- Explain to the students that body language speaks louder than words. Kids who slouch, mumble, fidget, avoid looking people in the eye, back off, and appear frightened and worried are more likely to be victims than those who express confidence and positive self-esteem. **(addresses inter/intra personal: assertiveness)**
- Divide the class into small groups and give them a short skit to perform that gives them practice being assertive and using assertive body language. **(addresses inter/intra personal: build self-esteem)**
 - Stand up straight. Stand with your feet slightly apart so you feel balanced and stable.
 - Keep your head up.
 - Keep your shoulders straight. Don't hunch.
 - Look people in the eye. Not over their heads, not at the ground – right in the eye.
 - Don't back off when you're talking to someone. Move closer – but not too close.
 - Keep a comfortable distance between you.

Combine assertive body language with assertive words, spoken in a firm, confident, determined voice. Don't mumble or whine. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Use "I messages."
- Use the ASSERT formula. Give students a copy of it and go through it with the student's and then give them practice using the formula in a role-play.
- Write down two ideas you learned today that you could use with somebody in your life right now.
- Homework: Check out assertiveness training programs and opportunities in your local community. Come to class next week with one resource to share with classmates.

Materials

Poster Board and Markers to make “Bill of Rights”

Scripts for each small group assertive skit

Copy of ASSERT formula for each student

Pencil

Paper

Goals

To learn assertive techniques to use when confronted by a bully.

Session Five

Focus

This session will focus on conflict resolution skills. Constructive conflict helps us learn, grow, and change for the better. We see things from other perspectives. We become more open-minded, tolerant, and accepting. We build stronger relationships with the people in our lives.

Activities

- Discuss the benefits of conflict resolution. (**addresses inter/intra personal: conflict resolution**)
 - Bullies discover the real power of solving problems without using force or intimidation.
 - Victims are empowered to seek solutions instead of giving up and giving in.
 - Students who are trained in conflict resolution are more likely to face conflicts, use problem solving to negotiate solutions, and have a more positive attitude toward school in general which benefits everybody in the classroom.
- Distribute handout: “8 steps to conflict resolution” and discuss each step
- Hand out a scenario to each small group, have them role-play using the 8 steps to solve the conflict they were given. (**addresses inter/intra personal: teamwork**)
- Show a PowerPoint of famous peacemakers like the Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, or organizations like Amnesty International, and the Red Cross. Link it to how they can be peacemakers in their own classroom, home, school and community.
- Write down two ways you learned today to solve a conflict with somebody.
- Homework: Research a Nobel Peace Prize winner or another peacemaker they admire and bring it to class next week.

Materials

Copies of the handout: “8 steps to conflict resolution”

Role-play scenarios

PowerPoint Presentation

Paper

Pencil

Goals

Learn how to resolve conflicts in a constructive way.

See how influential people and organizations use conflict resolution to bring peace to other people, countries, and communities.

Session Six

Focus

The focus of this session is to terminate the group.

Activities

- Homework from last session: Have each child give a brief explanation of who they chose for their Nobel Peace Prize winner or other peacemaker they admire and why. Have them tell one thing they will do to help find solutions to conflicts so that we can have a more peaceful classroom or school.
- Circle of Friends: Form two circles, one inside the other and have the students in the inside circle face the students in the outside circle. Have each student tell the student they are facing two things they like about that person. Ask the circles to take one step in the opposite directions so that everybody is facing a different person, have them tell the person they are facing now two things they like about them, continue to do this until each person has had a chance to tell everybody what they like about them. **(addresses inter/intra personal: build friendship and self-esteem)**
- Give each student an evaluation form to fill about the program.
- Present students with a certificate of participation and give them the chance to sign a pledge certificate saying they pledge to be bully free.
- Homework: Challenge each student to be a good example to the younger students in the school to be bully free.

Materials

Paper

Pencil

Evaluation Form

Certificates

Pledges

Goals

To encourage students to continue to be bully free and to set an example for other students.

To continue to use the skills they learned in their everyday lives.