



# HOW WE DEAL WITH BULLYING

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## **Direct reaction to an acute case of bullying.**

1. We gather as much information as possible about what's happened
2. We always carry out the talks two grown-ups and one pupil at a time.
3. One grown-up fetches the pupil straight from a lesson, without warning.
4. We sit down in a quiet room all three of us. The other grown-up starts the conversation, asking if the pupil knows why he is there.
5. If the answer is "no", he or she is told what we know has happened and is told to give his or her version. We all listen carefully.
6. After that we firmly state that this kind of behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school.
7. The pupil is asked if he or she can find out something to do to make amends to the bullied person. Very often they themselves can suggest a few moves (stop bullying, keep other classmates from doing it and so on).
8. We finish our talk by setting a new date for a "supportive talk" one week later. The pupil is told that he might keep quiet about our conversation when he comes back to his classmates. This talk is between him and us.
9. One week later we have a "supportive talk" with the bully. If this stops at that, there is no need for contact with his or her parents about this special case.
10. If the bullying continues, we contact the parents, too.

The reason for two grown-ups is that both the pupil and the teacher have witnesses to what's been said. One grown-up is merely an observer all the time, the other one is active and asks the questions. Let the pupil affirm that he has understood what it is all about: "Have you understood? Do you think you can handle this?" etc.

Short talks - 10 minutes- following the same structure all the time.



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### **Things to remember in contacts and talks:**

- \* YOU are the grown-up - the pupil is a child
- \* BE CALM - then you inspire security

### **TALKS:**

- \* It's most of all the pupil - not you - who shall talk
- \* Be honest in questions and answers
- \* Avoid moralising
- \* No "why?" - questions

Most of the material for friendship exercises and other exercises in the workshop are taken from the book; "Att stoppa mobbing går" (It's possible to stop bullying), written by Anucha Lagerman and Pia Stenberg, published by Gothia, Sweden.

The model we use for our talks with bullies is the so called "Farsta" method (by Karl Ljungstrom, teacher in Farsta, Sweden).



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## Kiva anti bullying programme

**KiVa** is a research-based antibullying program that has been developed in the University of Turku, Finland, with funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture. The effectiveness of KiVa has been shown in a large randomized controlled trial. In Finland, KiVa is a sought-after program: 90 % of all comprehensive schools in the country are registered KiVa schools implementing the program.

Link:

[www.kivaprogram.net/](http://www.kivaprogram.net/)



## Cooperative learning series

### Peer mediation

#### **Peer mediation is both a program and a process**

where students of the same age-group facilitate resolving disputes between two people or small groups. This process has proven effective in schools around the United States, changing the way students understand and resolve conflict in their lives. Changes include improved self-esteem, listening and critical thinking skills, and school climate for learning, as well as reduced disciplinary actions and less fights. These skills are transferable outside of the classroom.

#### **The process is voluntary for both sides.**

Peer mediators do not "make decisions" but rather work towards a win-win resolution for both sides in order to avoid further trouble. Administrators in charge of discipline incorporate this conflict resolution process into their strategies as well.

#### **Types of problems include**

- Social media improprieties
- Relationship difficulties/harassment
- Rumor and gossip
- Cheating and stealing
- Racial and cultural confrontations
- Vandalism
- Classroom or extracurricular disputes
- Bullying, minor assaults and fighting

#### **More serious problems require professional referral**

and are not appropriate for peer mediation. These include: sexual abuse, assault, suicide, drug use, weapon possession, and those that involve legal problems.

#### **Costs include materials, a dedicated location/facility for mediation**

and training, staff support and office space, rewards

#### **The following summarizes**

- the process for beginning a school program
- steps of a peer-mediated session

#### **Beginning a school program**

##### **A period of planning is critical:**

Peer mediation has as its foundation student empowerment, and students are critical to all stages of development and implementation.

##### **Students form a leadership team,**

facilitated by an experienced, respected coordinator, and a few trusted teachers and /or professionals. The team can be appointed or self-developed. The team:

- **Researches the basics of peer mediation,**  
the system of conflict resolution and discipline in the school,  
administrative and peer support
- **Develops and publishes a clear vision**  
of its conflict resolution program.  
This vision includes an overview of publicity, training, practice, modeling, and evaluation.



The goal is to educate various communities of the school on peer mediation, its expectations and limits toward building a commitment toward its implementation into a more comprehensive peace-based curriculum

- **The team secures commitment and support** from the school's administration, including agreements from all major school groups to follow this practice (including teachers and administrators)
- **The team commits to long term buy-in:** preparation meetings, practice mediation skills, and continued research about violence, its causes and prevention

**The coordinator acts as liaison between major groups, including:**

the leadership team, student body, administrators, parent groups, and outside trainers/professionals.

**Main duties include:**

- Develop a core group of adults within school community to carry out and model the mediation program
- Oversee the selection, training, motivation, debriefing of mediators
- Serve as a trained mediator for co-facilitation and program start-up
- Establish protocol for intake and referrals
- Select and schedule mediators with case load
- Keep records and report regularly to all communities/stakeholders whether via newsletters, web sites, ..
- Keep current with literature and research
- work aggressively to overcome attitudinal and structural resistance with their schools, developing and maintaining support from strategic groups, including parents

**Peer Mediator selection:**

- Mediators should reflect school's diversity including cultures, gender, behavior, academic social, race
- Selection procedure and process should be publicized and include recommendations and self-referral
- Commitments include continued skills development, willingness to co-facilitate sessions and mentor new trainers
- Rejection or deferral should be sensitively explained so as not to alienate the student

**Initially a system of "experience" must be developed.**

Peer mediators must be trained and monitored since they often lack maturity and experience, both in conflict management and negotiation skills. Strategies include role-playing, problem-based learning and active-learning. If possible, workshops should be conducted away from school to minimize distraction.

**Peer mediations sessions, core elements**

The goal is to move from mutual blame toward a solution acceptable to all parties

**Disputants fill out a pre-session questionnaire**

establishing ground rules, committing to solve the problem, tell the truth, and listen respectfully and without interrupting

**Disputants meet with mediators**

to see if chemistry is right and ensure there are no conflicts of interest



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## Mediators

- **Meet with disputants and explain exceptions**  
to confidentiality at the beginning of the mediation and ask if they wish to continue
- **Explain steps the mediators role:**  
using listening and communication skills to help fellow students resolve conflict and disagreements before they escalate and lose power over the situation
- **Solicit questions and clarifications**  
on the process before beginning

### The session, disputants:

- **Introduce themselves**
- **Each in turn tells their story to the mediator**  
focusing on issues, not on who did what, while the other concentrates on listening without interrupting
- **Parties change roles:**  
each repeats the other's story to their satisfaction to demonstrate they understand the other's position  
(not that they necessarily agree with it)

### The session, co-mediators:

- **Summarize the facts and feelings of both sides**  
for verification and agreement on the issues;  
leads a discussion of the issues and acknowledges the difficulty in dealing with its emotional baggage
- **Ask both parties if any solutions have come to mind,**  
or begins a brain-storming session without judgment.  
All suggestions noted and acknowledged.
- **Lead a discussion of the solutions**  
checking off only the solution(s) that both parties can agree to

### Disputants

- **determine implications of solutions**  
in selecting the best possible outcome
- **Select the best alternative**

### Co-mediators:

- **Verify the verbal agreement with all parties,**  
ensuring that no one is reluctant or afraid to speak out or dissent
- **Write a memo of understanding/contract**  
in parties' own words

### Co-mediators and disputants:

- **Sign contract**
- **Develop a process for follow up**  
Verify that all will be committed and monitor this process

**Co-mediators thank each person for their contribution to the process,**  
and for letting the mediation service help them



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**Cooperative learning series**

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***From Study Guides and Strategies Website***



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## The "No Blame" Approach to Bullying

### Aims:

The aim of the *No Blame* approach is to stop bullying episodes by having the bullies develop empathy for their victims and voluntarily change their behaviour as a result. They are encouraged to do this with the aid of a support group facilitated by a teacher.

### IMPLEMENTATION/DELIVERY

#### Details:

The *No Blame* approach is a 7-step process for stopping bullying episodes by forming a support group of bullies and peers. The approach protects the victim from further harm by having the teacher speak to the group on their behalf. Without apportioning blame, it uses problem-solving to stop the bullying by having the group come to understand the hurt that the victim has experienced and seeking from them actions they can take to help the person feel better. These actions are then monitored at a subsequent review meeting. The victim is also interviewed again to see if the bullying has ended. The review meeting consists of meeting each group member for a few minutes to check their success at putting their actions into operation.

#### Program Structure / Methods of Delivery:

Schools choose to implement the *No Blame* approach in a number of ways. Some schools designate individual staff members to conduct the No Blame groups and use a system of referrals and communication processes to ensure that the relevant teachers are kept informed. Other schools train all their year level coordinators who then conduct the *No Blame* groups as required with students at each specific year level. This option is often used in secondary schools. A third option that is common in primary schools is for each classroom teacher to conduct the *No Blame* groups, which involve students from their classes.

#### **Staff professional learning (PL):**

Many schools find it beneficial to take part in a practical training program that focuses not only on using the approach itself, but also on the implementation issues, which are relevant in Australian schools.

For more information on arranging training, contact Lyndall Horton-James at The Soaring Phoenix on (03) 9402 0756 or via email at [infotsp@optusnet.com.au](mailto:infotsp@optusnet.com.au).

#### Link:

[www.communicationandconflict.com/no-blame.html](http://www.communicationandconflict.com/no-blame.html)