Preventing Bullying Behavior within the PBIS Framework

Catherine Bradshaw, Ph.D., M.Ed.
Associate Professor, Department of Mental Health
Deputy Director, Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence (CDC)
Co-Director, Johns Hopkins Center for Prevention & Early Intervention (NIMH)
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
cbradsha@jhsph.edu

Overview

- Research on bullying
  - Defining and describing bullying behavior
- Role of school staff in bullying prevention
  - Strategies for preventing bullying

Defining Bullying

- Aggressive behavior that \textit{Intends} to cause harm or distress
- Usually is \textit{Repeated} over time
- Occurs in a relationship where there is an imbalance of \textit{Power} or strength

Prevalence of Bullying

- Being bullied 1 or more times \textit{in the last month}
  - Elementary – 48%  
  - Middle – 47%  
  - High – 39%
- Frequent involvement in bullying (≥ 2 in last month)
  - Elementary – 31%  
  - Middle – 31%  
  - High – 26%
- Ever bully someone else
  - Elementary – 24%  
  - Middle – 45%  
  - High – 54%
- Witnessing bullying \textit{during the last month}
  - Elementary – 58%  
  - Middle – 74%  
  - High – 79%

N=25,119 (Students grades 4-12; December 2005). Also see: Bradshaw et al., 2007, 2008; Nansel et al., 2001; O’Brenan, Bradshaw & Sawyer, 2009; Spriggs et al., 2007; Finkelhor et al., 2010.

Is Bullying on the Increase?

- Some recent national data suggest a slight decrease in bullying (e.g., Finkelhor et al., 2010; Spriggs et al., 2007)
- However, cyberbullying may be on the increase
  - May be due to greater access to technology (phones, Internet)
  - Issues related to ‘sexting’ also appear to be on the increase

"Remember this, my child. The world is a lot safer than it ever been is."

Reprinted from Better Homes and Gardens\textsuperscript{\textregistered} magazine. Copyright Meredith Corporation, 1944. All rights reserved.
Forms of Bullying
How were you bullied within the last month?

Ethnicity And Diversity Factors
• Ethnic minority youth more likely to be victimized, but may not label it as ‘bullying’
  – Cultural differences in conceptualization of the term ‘bully’
• LGBT and gender non-conforming youth at increased risk for victimization
  – Victimization estimates range from 40-85%
  – Issues around parental support
  – Suicide concerns
• Students with disabilities experience high rates of bullying
  – Victimization may be as high as 94% (Little, 2002)
  – Perpetration also a concern (15-42%)

Perceptions of Safety By Frequency of Involvement in Bullying

Response to Bullying
When you were bullied, what did you do?

Response to Bullying
When you were bullied, what did you do?
**Student vs. Staff Perceptions**

**Students (N=15,185)**
- Seen adults at school watching bullying and doing nothing
  - Middle – 43%
  - High – 54%
- Believe adults at their school are NOT doing enough to stop or prevent bullying
  - Middle – 58%
  - High – 66%
- Believe that teachers who try to stop bullying only make it worse
  - Middle – 61%
  - High – 59%

**Staff (N=1,547)**
- Said they would intervene if they saw bullying
  - 97%
- Believe have effective strategies for handling bullying
  - 87%
- Believe they made things worse when they intervened
  - 7%

(“% agree” to “strongly agree”)
(Bradshaw et al., 2007, SPR)

**Recommended Strategies**
- Talk with child
  - Directly state that bullying is wrong
  - They or the target do not deserve to be treated this way
  - Directly state that aggressive retaliation is not right
  - Listen to child’s concerns
  - Coach on possible strategies
    - Peer support, avoid situations where bullying might occur, when appropriate tell bully that the bullying should stop (better among younger kids)

**NOT Recommended Strategies**
- Minimizing problem
- Telling the target they deserve the abuse because of …
- Telling student to ignore situation
- Telling student to hit or bully back
- Parents of victim contacting perpetrator or his/her parent
- Corporal or physical punishment
- Grouping students who bully together
- Zero tolerance (i.e., automatic suspension) policies
- Conflict resolution/peer mediation
- Providing details on bullying-related suicides
- Simple short-term solutions

**Stereotypes of Youth Who Bully**

**Recommended Strategies (cont)**
- Foster open communication
- Encourage parents to reach out to school for supervision and support services (teacher, guidance counselor, administration)
  - Seek mental health services when needed
- Develop a behavioral matrix to monitor behavior at school and home
- Reward good, non-aggressive behavior
- Limit exposure to violent media and content (e.g., domestic violence, abuse)

**Reducing Bullying and Rejection**
- There are relatively few effective universal “bullying” prevention programs (Merrill et al., 2008; Taft & Farrington, 2011)
  - 23% decrease in perpetration of bullying
  - 20% decrease in victimization
- School-wide efforts, which involve all school staff and are implemented across all school settings show the most promise (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Taft & Farrington, 2011)
- Universal school-wide prevention models that prevent violence and disruptive behaviors may also impact bullying
Impact of SW-PBIS on Teacher-Reported Perpetration of Bullying Behaviors

Impact of SW-PBIS on Teacher-Reported Student Rejection

Ten Elements of Best Practice in Bullying Prevention & Intervention:
*With A PBIS Twist*

www.stopbullying.gov  www.pbis.org

(HRSA, Stop Bullying.gov; Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007; Ross, Horner & Stiller, 2007)

#1: Focus on the social environment of the school

- Requires a change in the school climate and in norms for behavior.
- A comprehensive, school-wide effort involving the entire school community is needed.
- PBIS is an excellent framework to launch a bullying prevention effort.

#2: Collect and review local data to determine need related to bullying, climate & violence

- Review SWIS/ODR data
- Administer an anonymous survey to students (e.g., MDS3 School Climate Survey)
  - Benefits of a survey:
    - Findings may help to motivate staff, parents to address issue
    - Findings will help to target specific interventions
    - Will provide important baseline data from which to measure improvement
#3: Garner staff and parent support for prevention

- Early and enthusiastic support from the principal is critical.
- Commitment from a majority (80%) of classroom teachers is essential.
  - Teachers who are committed to bullying prevention are more likely to fully implement programs

#4: Form a group to coordinate and integrate the school’s prevention activities

- Should be representative of the school community (or organization):
  - administrator
  - teacher from each grade
  - counselor
  - non-teaching staff (e.g., bus driver)
  - school-based health professional
  - parent
  - community member
- PBIS team / SIT / subcommittee?

#5: Train all staff how to intervene effectively

- Administrators
- All teachers
- Health & mental health professionals
- Support staff
- Custodians
- Bus drivers
- Lunchroom Supervisors
- Playground aides

#6: Establish and enforce school rules and policies related to bullying

- Many schools do not have explicit rules against bullying.
- Rules should guide the behavior of children who bully AND children who witness bullying.
- Monitor and acknowledge students for engaging in appropriate behavior both inside and outside the classroom.
- Provide specific instruction and pre-correction to prevent bullying behavior from being rewarded by victims or bystanders.
- Consistently use positive and negative consequences

Example of Linking Bullying Prevention with PBIS School Rules

- *Respect* means...
  - We will not bully others.
  - We will try to help students who are bullied.
  - We will include students who are easily left out.
  - When we know somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

#7: Increase adult supervision in “hot spots” where bullying occurs

- Focus on “hot spots” for bullying that are identified by students (e.g., survey) and through SWIS.
- All adults in a school community should be vigilant to all forms of bullying.
#8: *Intervene consistently and appropriately in bullying situations*

- Are all adults prepared to intervene appropriately on-the-spot, whenever they observe bullying?
- Do we have a plan for follow-up interventions with children who bully, victims of bullying, parents?
- Correct the problem behaviors using a consistently administered continuum of consequences.

#9: *Focus some class time on bullying prevention*

- Set aside a small amount of time each week (class meetings).
- Discuss bullying and peer relations.
- Use videos, story books, role-playing, artistic expression.
- Include bullying prevention in PBIS lesson plans and review of behavioral matrix.
- Integrate bullying prevention throughout the curriculum and in classroom management.

#10: *Sustain these efforts over time*

- Bullying prevention should have no “end date.”
- 3-5 years!!

**What the Research Says about Classroom Management**

- Poorly Managed Classrooms
  - increases opportunity for *bullying*
  - place *all students* at increased risk for behavior problems
  - *signals* to students that the class is out of control
  - are rated by students as having poorer *climate & unsafe*
  - limit opportunities for *learning*
  - use more *reactive / punitive* rather than *proactive / positive* management strategies

(Aber et al., 1998; Ialongo et al., 1999; Kirk, Bradshaw & Leaf, 2009; Mitchell, Bradshaw & Leaf, 2010)

---

**Preventing Bullying Behavior w/in PBIS Framework**

George Sugai  
University of Connecticut  
Center for Behavior Education & Research  
May 17 2012  
Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports  
www.cber.org  www.pbis.org
What is "bullying"?

Remember

Behavior

"Label behavior, not people..."

So, say, "bully behavior"

Verbal/physical aggression, intimidation, harassment, teasing, manipulation

Why do bully behavior?

Get/obtain

E.g., stuff, things, victim & bystander attention, status, money, activity, self-delivered praise, etc.

Escape/avoid

E.g., same...but less likely

Why is "why" important?

PREVENTION

Teach effective, efficient, relevant alt. SS

Remove triggers of BB

Remove triggers for alt. SS

Remove conseq. that maintain BB

Add conseq. that maintain SS

• De-emphasis on reactive consequence management

• Emphasis on function-based approach & antecedent management

Give Priority to Effective Practices

Less Effective

More Effective

Label Student

Teach All Specific SS

Exclude Student

Use Data

Blame Family

Actively Supervise

Punish Student

Reinforce Expect Beh

Assign Restitution

Individualize for Non-Resp

Require Apology

Invest Prev Sch Culture

Context or Setting

Continuum of Behavior Fluency

Target

Initiator

Bystander

Staff
4 basic strategies... if you do nuthin’ else.....

www.pbis.org

Conditional Probabilities of Bystander Responses to Problem Behavior

Integrated PBIS Response to Bullying

Bullying Requirements
- Bullying Coordinator
- School Climate
- Data Systems
- Event Reporting
- Response Team
- School & Community
- Staff Prof Dev
- Evid-base Practices

PBIS features
- Coach/Team Leader
- Preventive Tier I
- SWIS
- Continuous SWIS
- Leadership Team
- School & Family
- Local Behavior Expertise
- RCT & SSR Research

1. Teach all common strategy
   - “Stop-Walk-Talk”
   - “Talk-Walk-Squawk”
   - “Whatever”

2. Actively supervise
   - Move
   - Scan
   - Interact
   - Reinforce

3. Precorrect & remind
   - Re-teach
   - Arrange for success
   - In expected setting

4. Reinforce
   - Expected behavior
   - Expected setting
   - All students

MUST......
- Be easy & do-able by all
- Be contextually relevant
- Result in early disengagement
- Increase predictability
- Be pre-emptive
- Be teachable
- Be brief

www.pbis.org
Systems Guidelines

- Integrate into multi-tiered prevention approach
- Use data to guide decision making
- Develop local behavioral expertise
- Give priority to evidence-based practices
- Consider local culture & context

Data-Based Decision Making & Bullying Behavior: Example

1. Specify/define need
   - Two teasing, harassment majors (10/11-12)
2. Select right evidence-based solution
   - SW/CW booster
     - Increased active supervision, pre-corrects, bus-bucks
3. Ensure implementation fidelity
   - Classroom, home, & bus checklist
4. Monitor progress
   - Majors & minors
5. Improve implementation
   - Daily weekly
   - Driver recruitment

Data used to:

1. Specify/define need
2. Select right evidence-based solution
3. Ensure implementation fidelity
4. Monitor progress
5. Improve implementation

Catherine Bradshaw
cbradsha@jhsph.edu
http://www.jhsph.edu/preventyouthviolence

George Sugai
George.sugai@uconn.edu
www.pbis.org