

Concluding Discussion

Briefing Paper 10 concludes that not all bullies are alike and that there are contradictions in their behaviour and attitudes. For example, while many (40%) reported psychological problems many (44%) also reported feeling very happy. We hope that findings like these help to emphasise that bullying is a complex issue with causes that are often difficult to understand and consequences which are difficult to predict. We invite you to complete the "Views" table once more and to discuss with the person next to you any of your views which have changed as a result of this workshop.

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK ?

– ABOUT BULLYING AND HEALTH

A Discussion Paper to Accompany CAHRU Briefing Paper 10 – Bullying: Health, Well-being and Risk Behaviours

Introduction for workshop organisers

Research underpins and informs anti-bullying work in schools but its value is diminished if research findings are not accessible to, and discussed by, those people who are responsible for tackling bullying in school and the wider community. The HBSB Briefing Papers about bullying have been distributed to all Scottish schools and published on the Internet (<http://www.education.ed.ac.uk/cahru/publications.html>), thus making the findings widely accessible.

This Discussion paper is intended to be used in workshops for parents and accompanies HBSB Briefing Paper 10. It is intended as a tool to encourage parents and adult members of school communities (including teachers) to engage with the findings of the research, and then to reflect on anti-bullying work in their own schools and settings.

Depending on the amount of time available for such workshops, copies of the briefing paper could be given to each participant or the findings could be presented section by section using display copies of the graphs. The second option is probably a better way of presenting the findings if the workshop is an evening event lasting just a couple of hours. It is also a good idea not to try to complete all of the activities if time is short but to leave plenty of time for participants to explore selected findings in depth.

Before Reading the Briefing Paper

The main focus of Briefing Paper 10 is on young people who admit to bullying others (for the sake of brevity we will call them "bullies") rather than those who say they are bullied (i.e. "victims"). On your own, complete the following table now, giving your views before you read Briefing Paper 10. If you have already read it try to be honest about what your views were before you did!

MY VIEWS AFTER READING HBSB PAPER 10			
	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Victims are less likely (than most of their classmates) to feel healthy.			
Victims are more likely to report psychological distress and to feel unhappy.			
Peer pressure makes it more likely that victims will smoke, drink or take drugs.			
Bullies are unhappy people.			
Bullies are as healthy as their peers.			
Bullies are more likely to smoke.			
Bullies are no more likely to take drugs than the rest of their classmates.			

Has this Discussion Paper helped you to reflect on practice in your school?

We would welcome constructive comments on this Discussion Paper. The kind of feedback that would be useful is as follows:

- ☞ Ways in which it was used
- ☞ Any actual or hoped for outcomes from those activities
- ☞ Specific suggestions on what might have made the Discussion Paper more useful

These should be sent by e-mail to abn@education.ed.ac.uk
Thank you!

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Definitions

There are many different definitions of the word "bullying". Talking about definitions can help people to understand and tackle the problem better. It can also help them to decide which incidents should be recorded or logged. The following definition of bullying was used in this study:

We say a pupil is **BEING BULLIED** when another pupil, or a group of pupils, say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a pupil is teased repeatedly in a way he or she does not like, or when they are deliberately left out of things.

It is **NOT BULLYING** when two pupils of about the same strength or power argue or fight. It is also not bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way.

In groups of 4 or 5 discuss this definition.

Q Is there anything you would like to add to the definition or take away from it?

Q On a large piece of paper write the definition of "bullying" preferred by your group and display it on the wall.

Q Compare your definition with those of other groups.

A scenario: *Mr and Mrs Brown are angry with their daughter's teacher. Sarah is staying in her bedroom a lot and doesn't want to go to school because she says girls in her class are picking on her and calling her names. Her teacher agrees that there is a problem but says that "it's just girls squabbling – they do that".*

Q All workshop participants should now try to agree which of the definitions on the wall would be most helpful to parents and teachers. You should be looking for a definition which is clear and which will help avoid a situation where parents and teachers are arguing about behaviour which the parents see as being "bullying" but which teachers see as being something else - such as "conflict" or a "relationship problem".

General Health

Look at Figure 1.

This shows significant differences between feelings of general health among bullies as compared with those not involved in bullying. Brainstorm some possible reasons why:

Bullies are less likely to feel healthy than young people not involved in bullying.

Girl bullies are much less likely than boy bullies to feel healthy (remembering that in general, more girls than boys report their health to be fair or poor, and that this is the same for adults.)

Mental Well-Being

Look at Figure 2.

Q Are any aspects of the results surprising? Can you think of any reasons why bullies might suffer psychological problems because of their bullying behaviour?

Q Can you think of any psychological problems which might cause some people to bully others?

Q In general, which do you think came first – the psychological make-up some bullies have or their bullying behaviour? (Research has not yet given the answer to this.)

Note the large proportion of bully/victims (i.e. pupils who said that they had both bullied others and been bullied themselves) who reported psychological complaints. Bully/victims are a very small group in our schools but their reported psychological distress means that they cannot be ignored.

Now look at figure 3.

Q Why do you think bullies might be less likely to be very happy than young people not involved in bullying?

List some possible reasons why more than 40% of bullies reported feeling very happy.

Smoking, Drunkenness & Cannabis

Look at Figures 4,5, & 6.

Young people are often said to indulge in these risky, health damaging-habits because of peer pressure. After studying these results form groups of 4 or 5 and discuss and complete the following sentences:

1. *Bullies are more likely to smoke, drink or take cannabis because...*
2. *Victims are less likely to indulge in risky behaviours because...*
3. *The main connection between bullying and risk behaviours is...*

Q Research suggests that bravado or the need to impress others might help to explain some bullying behaviour. Do you agree with this? If so this implies that being a bully should make you feel better about yourself: by boosting your public image you boost your self-image and sense of well-being. Is there anything in the report to support this theory?