

POSITIVE APPROACHES TO BULLYING – WHAT OSHC SERVICES CAN DO!

**Tips and Strategies adapted from “The Bully Free Classroom”
by Allan L. Beane, PH.D.**

- ***Build acceptance***

Work with children to come up with a list of “acceptance statements” that everyone (or most) can agree on. Have children make posters, collages, bulletin boards, or displays to illustrate the statements.

Our outside School Hours Care Service is a Place where..

We don't all have to be the same.
We don't all have to think the same.
We don't all have to act the same.
We don't all have to talk the same.
We don't all have to dress the same.

We don't all have to believe the same things.

We have the right to be ourselves.

We like it that people are different.

We know that our differences make us interesting and UNIQUE.

We honour different ways of being, acting, and believing – even when we don't agree with them.

We do our best to solve problems peacefully.

We speak up if we see others being treated unfairly.

We treat each other the way we'd like to be treated.

We treat each other with respect.

- ***Talk about bullying***

Have discussions with children about bullying. Ask children open ended questions such as:

What is bullying?

What happens to people who are bullied?

How do you think they feel?

How do you think bullies feel?

What happens to people who are around bullies and victims?

What is it like to see someone get bullied?

How does that make you feel?

Do you think there is a problem with bullying at OSHC?

What makes you think that?

What would it take to make OSHC bully free?

Ensure talks and discussions with children are kept general if the whole group or many children are involved. Avoid naming others or pointing fingers. General discussion is not a time for blame or accusations.

- ***Share facts about bullying***

There is much research about bullying. Sharing some of these facts may dispel some of the mistaken beliefs that children have about bullying.

Be aware of the implications that sharing some of these facts may have and only share facts that are appropriate for the child's level of understanding. Avoid making judgements or assumptions with particular facts or pieces of research.

- ***Name bullying behaviours***

It may be possible to ask children to make a list or put ideas into a suggestion box regarding the types of behaviours that bullies demonstrate. This can assist children in understanding that bullying encompasses a broad range of behaviours, none of which are acceptable.

Bullies may:

Act mean
Act rude
Attack people
Boss people around
Hit
Humiliate
Make fun of people
Laugh at people
Insult people
Leave people out
Name call
Put people down
Say nasty things to people
Others?

- ***Share stories about bullying***

Ask children to share stories about bullying. Encourage children not to use names as this may affect children's ability to share personal information and may make them feel uncomfortable.

Questions you may ask include:

Describe a time when someone's words or behaviour hurt you.

Describe a time when you said or did something to hurt another person.

Describe a time when you saw/heard bullying but didn't do anything about it.

Describe a time when you saw/heard bullying and either got help or tried to stop it.

- ***Take a survey***

How much bullying goes on in your service, and what kinds? You've probably noticed specific instances, and children might have told you about others. But most bullying goes *unnoticed* and *unreported*.

- ***Set Rules/Agreements***

– for rules to be effective they should be:

- ✓ Created with children's input
- ✓ Short and simple
- ✓ Easy to understand
- ✓ Specific
- ✓ Agreed upon and accepted by everyone
- ✓ Enforceable
- ✓ Enforced consistently and fairly
- ✓ Communicated to and supported by parents, the community and all staff
- ✓ Reviewed periodically and updated with needed.

Our OSHC agreements!

1. Bullying is not allowed in our OSHC service.
2. We don't tease, call names, or put people down.
3. We don't hit, shove, kick, or punch.
4. If we see someone being bullied, we speak up and stop it (if we can) or go for help right away.
5. When we do things as a group, we make sure that everyone is included and no one is left out.
6. We make new children feel welcome.
7. We listen to each other's opinions.
8. We treat each other with kindness and respect.
9. We respect each other's property. (OSHC property, too)
10. We look for the good in others and value differences.

- ***Designate your service/area bully free.***

Ask children how they can formalise their commitment to maintaining a bully free OSHC environment. They may decide to display a poster or sign, publish information in the service's newsletter etc.

- ***Teach anger management skills.***

See the handout "20 Things to do instead of hurting someone back" on the last page.

- ***Respond effectively to reports of bullying.***

As much of the bullying occurs where adults can't see it, you need to rely on children for information about bullying that you don't witness personally. Encourage children to come forward by responding quickly and effectively and maintaining confidentiality.

- ***Intervene immediately when you witness bullying.***

As a carer of school age children, it is your responsibility to intervene immediately with any bullying you witness. When you intervene immediately you:

- (a) Put a stop to that particular bullying incident.
- (b) Make it clear that you won't tolerate bullying.
- (c) Show that you're an adult who will do something about bullying, not just ignore it.

(d) Act as a role model and demonstrate behaviours that encourage other victims and witnesses to tell you about bullying that you don't witness personally.

- ***Encourage friendship skills.***

Decide on ways that you can use these tips in OSHC to encourage children to develop friendship skills.

See also "Mates Traits" a resource available from St Lukes innovative resources. These cards and stickers have many applications for OSHC services.

- ***Welcome new children.***

New children are more likely to be accepted when they start at the beginning of the school year. When new children join throughout the year, make a special effort to welcome them.

Consider making a welcome banner, encourage other children to be 'buddies' etc.

- ***Explore expectations.***

Children will have expectations of each other, how they will respond to different situations, whether they are helpful and co-operative, friendly or not. Explore these expectations and ideas with children and what they can do about them. E.g. if children are looking for someone to help them with something, they are more likely to ask children who have reputations for being friendly and helpful than those who frequently refuse to give assistance.

- ***Learn more about children.***

Keep records of information that children tell you about themselves. Ask children questions about themselves and get to know them.

Develop supportive and caring relationships with children.

- ***Identify role models.***

Find out who children see as their role models and why they choose them. Children will often take on the behaviours or attitudes of their role models because they think it will get them socially accepted and increase their popularity.

- ***Explore ways to deal with bullies.***

Give children some strategies for dealing with bullies such as:

Tell a friend

Tell an adult

Stand up straight, look the bully in the eye, and say in a firm, confident voice, "Leave me alone"

Say calm and walk away

Shout "Cut it out" as loud as you can

If other people are nearby, join them so you're not alone

- ***Use a suggestion box.***

Put a sign up near the suggestion box inviting children to tell you about things that may be happening at OSHC. This can be confidential and children don't have to put their names to the suggestion.

- ***Plan programs and encourage children to plan their own activities.***

Help children plan their time with activities. Ask them what they are going to do, who with, what next etc. (*Engage with My Time, Our Place and the Educator's Guide.*)

This can be a useful strategy for children who become disruptive when they are bored or looking for things to do.

- ***Provide supervision.***

Effective supervision may be one of the best bully prevention strategies available to carers.

- ***Build empathy.***

Encourage children to understand things from the perspectives of others. Children who have the ability to demonstrate empathy are frequently socially accepted and well liked by their peers.

- ***Reward/acknowledge co-operation.***

Thank children and actively show that you appreciate them. Merit awards may be suitable for some services.

- ***Use quotations as conversation starters.***

Quotes can be displayed on noticeboards or graffiti boards to invoke discussion.

- ***Encourage random acts of kindness.***

Observe and recognise children's random acts of kindness towards others.

- ***Teach children to use 'I messages'***

5 steps to an "I" message:

1. Always start with 'I' not 'You.' 'I' puts the focus on your feelings, wants and needs. 'You' puts the other person on the defensive.
2. Clearly and simply say how YOU feel.
3. Clearly and simply say WHAT the other person did (or is doing) that made you feel that way.
4. Clearly and simply say WHY you feel the way you do.
5. Clearly and simply say WHAT you want or need the other person to do.

- ***Teach assertiveness skills.***

Encourage children to know their rights. You may be able to display a poster on children's rights.

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child consists of 10 principles which focus on the child's rights as human beings to exist in a society where their needs for care are recognised and their development supported regardless of their abilities or cultural background.

Australia is one of the many countries in the United Nations who have committed to support and practice the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

Further information about this declaration may be accessed via the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website at www.hreoc.gov.au.

- ***Promote teamwork.***

Talk about the traits of good team members.

- ***Work together to solve a problem.***

Support children's efforts to solve their own problems. Ask appropriate questions and assist children to find their own solutions.

- ***Teach/encourage conflict resolution skills.***

Conflict between people is normal and inevitable. Not all conflict is harmful or bad. Destructive conflict damages relationships, constructive conflict builds relationships and teaches skills.

8 Steps to conflict resolution:

1. Cool down.
2. Describe the conflict.
3. Describe what caused the conflict.
4. Describe the feelings raised by the conflict.
5. Listen carefully and respectfully while the other person is talking.
6. Brainstorm solutions to the conflict.
7. Try your solution.
8. If one solution doesn't get results, try another.

- ***Set up a peace place.***

This could be a suitable place where children in conflict can go to talk or where children who want time on their own to think can go.

- ***Take photos.***

Display pictures of children working together, playing together and being co-operative.

- ***Affirm children.***

Provide children with encouragement and positive affirmations thus modelling the behaviours that you would like to see them demonstrate.

- ***Encourage children to affirm themselves.***

Make a 'scrapbook' of strengths. It may be possible to use resources from St Luke's innovative resources to generate children's ideas.

- ***Encourage children to affirm each other.***

Make a 'scrapbook' of strengths. It may be possible to use resources from St Luke's innovative resources to generate children's ideas.

- ***Assess the week.***

Analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the program and how well the anti-bullying messages are getting across.

- ***Encourage positive self-talk.***

Think of the story "The little red engine" – I THINK I CAN!

- ***Use humour.***

Humour is a terrific tool for making everyone feel welcome, accepted and appreciated. Talk with children about the difference between laughing at someone and laughing with someone.

- ***Get children involved in the service.***

Children are essential to the success of the program. Invite children's ideas and suggestions and involve them in the planning of the program and the service.

- ***Monitor the messages you send.***

Be aware of your own behaviour and interactions with the children.

- ***Celebrate special days and occasions***

Celebrate days including World Peace Day and Harmony Day as a means of promoting your service's anti-bullying policies. Plan a program of games and activities centred around this theme.

20 THINGS TO DO INSTEAD OF HURTING SOMEONE BACK

When someone hurts you, it's normal to feel angry. You might even want to get back at the person by hurting him or her. But you can choose not to do that. You can do one (or more) of these things instead.

1. STOP and THINK. Don't do anything right away. Consider your options. Think about what might happen if you try to hurt the other person.
2. Know that what you do is up to you. You can decide. You are in charge of your actions.
3. Tell yourself, "It's okay to feel angry. It's not okay to hurt someone else. Even if that person hurt me first."
4. Tell the person, "Stop that! I don't like that!"
5. Keep your hands to yourself. Make fists and put them in your pockets.
6. Keep your feet to yourself. Jump or dance or stomp.
7. Walk away or run away.
8. Tell the person how you feel. Use an "I message." Example: "I feel angry when you hit me because it hurts. I want you to stop hitting me."
9. Take a deep breath, then blow it out. Blow your angry feelings out of your body.
10. Find an adult. Tell the adult what happened and how you feel.
11. Count slowly from 1 to 10. Count backwards from 10 to 1. Keep counting until you feel your anger getting smaller.
12. Think cool thoughts. Imagine that you're sitting on an iceberg. Cool down your hot, angry feelings.
13. Think happy thoughts. Think of something you like to do. Imagine yourself doing it.
14. Treat the other person with kindness and respect. It won't be easy, but give it a try. This will totally surprise the other person, and it might end the conflict between you.
15. Draw an angry picture.
16. Sing an angry song. Or sing any song extra loud.
17. Remember that getting back at someone never makes conflict better. It only makes it worse.
18. Take a time-out. Go somewhere until you feel better. It only makes it worse.
19. Find another person to be with.
20. Know that you can do it. You can choose not to hurt someone else. It's up to you.