

NO PLACE FOR BULLYING

**Leadership for Schools That
Care for Every Student**

JAMES DILLON



Contents

Foreword	viii
Acknowledgments	x
About the Author	xiii
Introduction	1
<i>Section 1: The Will</i>	11
1. The Blind Spot of Bullying Prevention	12
Public Perception and Reaction	13
The Missing Piece	13
The Blind Spot Described	14
The Consequences of the Blind Spot	15
The Under/Over Barrier	15
School Leaders' Role	16
Summary	17
Activities to Address the Blind Spot Problem With Staff or Other Members of the School Community	17
2. The Moral Purpose and Obligation of Bullying Prevention	22
Reasons for Staff Reluctance and Strategies to Address Them	23
Priming: Preparing the School Community to Commit to Bullying Prevention	26
Summary	29
Activities to Strengthen Moral Commitment and Purpose	29
3. How We See It Is How We Solve It	34
Choice Gives Us a Better Chance	35
Bullying: Technical or Adaptive Problem?	36
Default Mode of Most Schools	38
Bullying Is an Adaptive Problem	39
The Technical Solution That's Not Complete	40

Conducting Focus Groups	111
Analyzing the Data From Assessment Instruments	115
Analyzing the Data From Focus Groups	116
Working With the Bullying Prevention Team to Interpret the Data	117
Sharing the Assessment Findings	119
Summary	121
Activity for “The Human Face of Data”: Two Sides of the Story	121
9. “Of the Students, by the Students, for the Students”:	
What School Leaders Need to Know	123
A Rare Glimpse	123
The Necessary Shifts	124
The Social Nature of Bullying	126
The Real Challenge for School Leaders	129
Begin With the End in Mind	130
Leadership and Responsibility	130
Summary	133
Activities for “Of the Students, by the Students, for the Students”	133
10. “Of the Students, by the Students, for the Students”:	
What School Leaders Need to Do	137
Implications for Practice: ABC	138
Autonomy Practices	138
Belonging Practices	141
Competency Practices	145
Coaching in the Social World of Bullying	148
High Leverage (ABC) Practices Not Specifically Designed for Bullying Prevention (but Worth the Investment)	152
Summary	153
Activities to Support Students’ Response to Bullying	154
Section 3: The Follow Through (Infrastructure)	157
11. Leadership for a Change	158
Getting Started	158
Stumbling and Struggling: The Rule, Not the Exception	159
Guiding Principles	159
The Balancing Act of Leadership: How to Respond to Teacher Bullying	162
Leadership Practices That Promote Leadership and Learning (and Prevent and Reduce Bullying)	166

Summary	173
Activities for “Leadership for a Change”	173
12. Policies, Programs, and Practices	178
What’s the Policy?	178
A Review by the U.S. Department of Education/Center for Safe and Supportive Schools of Provisions in State Laws	180
Memo to the Field: Issues of Civil Rights Violation	181
Caution: Words Matter	183
Bullying Prevention Practices and Programs	183
What Research Says About Best Practice	183
The Top Ten Practices: A Reliable Source	184
Best Practice for Best Practice	185
Practical Wisdom: Making Policies, Programs, and Practices Work	187
Practical Wisdom for Using Programs and Practices	188
Finding Effective Programs/Practices	188
Summary	189
Activity for “Policies, Programs, and Practices”: Practical Wisdom	190
13. Discipline in the Right Climate: Rules, Consequences, Supervision, and Intervention	192
The Best of Both Worlds	192
Applying the Three-Tier Intervention Model to Bullying Prevention	193
Rules: Look Closely	194
Supervision of Students	195
Consequences: Caveats	200
Guidelines for Meeting With Students Involved With Bullying	203
Bullying: Blending In or Standing Out?	206
Summary	207
Activities for “Discipline in the Right Climate”	208
14. Beyond the School Building: Parents, the School Bus, and the Digital World	211
Who’s to Blame?	211
Leading From Between a Rock and a Hard Place	212
No One Is to Blame, but We All Are Responsible	212
School Leaders’ Main Task: From Finger-Pointing to Working Together	212
A Parallel Case	214
Implications for School Leaders	214

Procedure

Following the clip, ask staff to discuss (break into small group and assign roles as in the previous activity) the following:

Why does the bus driver have a difficult time spotting bullying?

How would a parent of the one of the students excluding Forrest react if his or her child were disciplined for bullying him?

To whom did they pay more attention? To the students who did the excluding or the girl who welcomed him?

ACTIVITY 4: SOMETIMES YOU JUST CAN'T SEE AT ALL OR THE INVISIBLE GORILLA

Purpose

This activity allows staff to dramatically experience not seeing something blatant and obvious even when they are looking right at it.

Content

To experience this before using it with others, go to the www.invisible-gorilla.com website or YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGQmdoK_ZfY. It is also called "The Monkey Business Illusion." Initially, refer to it as "The Monkey Business Illusion" and avoid the *invisible gorilla* term until after the activity (Chabris & Simons, 2009; Simons, 2010).

Procedure

There is a brief video to watch that shows two teams of people passing a basketball. The directions to the audience are to count the number of times the white team passes the ball. (These directions are given as an introduction right on the video.)

SPOILER ALERT! Do not read until after you have viewed the video and followed its directions.

About halfway through the video as the basketball is being passed, someone in a gorilla suit walks through the circle where the two teams are passing the basketball. The gorilla even stops and pounds his chest and then walks out of the scene. When the video concludes, staff are asked to share the number of times the white team passed the ball. The viewers offer answers like fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen, and the correct answer is sixteen. After asking for the number of passes, the viewers are asked if they saw the gorilla. About half of the group typically sees the gorilla; the other half looks puzzled by that question: they did not see the gorilla.

3

How We See It Is How We Solve It

*"Two roads diverged in the wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all of the difference."*

—Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

At the conclusion of a workshop I conducted on leadership for bullying prevention, one principal asked me: "If we establish a bullying prevention program in our district, won't we be announcing to the public that we have a problem with bullying?" I was a little taken aback by the question, for I assumed that bullying was an acknowledged problem in every school, but I responded, "Yes, but so does every district; at least you can say you are doing something about it." My answer didn't seem to relieve his anxiety.

On another occasion, after a similar workshop, a principal with an exasperated look on his face raised his hand and said, "So just tell me now, what do I need to do?" Because I had just spent two hours explaining "what to do," I was again taken aback but replied, "You are doing it. You invested your time and energy to learn more about this problem." He looked even more exasperated; I did not give him what he came looking for.

I was caught off guard by the two questions because those principals and I had come to that moment having walked down totally different

consequences for exceeding those limits. Traditional disciplinary procedures continue to play a role, but they are integrated into a more comprehensive and multifaceted approach reflective of an educational mindset.

School leaders and staff are educators, not law enforcement officials. They are better equipped to work on the problem of bullying with an educational mindset than with a criminal justice mindset. Education works in changing people for the better; it does not need to be set aside for social and emotional issues. Chart 4.1 illustrates the key differences between the two mindsets.

Chart 4.1 Criminal Justice and Educational Mindset Toward Bullying

Bullying: A Criminal Justice Mindset	Bullying: An Educational Mindset
Discipline alone is the main method of addressing the problem. Rules and consequences properly and consistently used should sufficiently address the problem.	Discipline is one part of a larger comprehensive approach with strong emphasis on climate and culture as key elements.
Responds to bullying primarily after it happens	Tries to prevent bullying by educating students about bullying and the socioemotional world of schools
Administrators are the ones responsible for dealing with bullying.	All staff need to be involved in addressing problem and promoting positive skills and attitudes.
Accepts status quo of the school environment	Assumes growth and change in the school environment as part of the solution
Primarily concerns perpetrator and target	Concerns everyone including bystanders
Event specific. Case opened and closed	Ongoing process of learning about how people treat each other
Most reports involve severe cases that have escalated over time.	Greater likelihood of minor incidents being reported
School leaders limited in responding and often on the defensive when not able to act	School leaders are key people in changing the culture and school climate.
Doesn't involve knowledge and skills needed to deal with the problem	Acknowledges that students need social and emotional skills

ACTIVITIES TO “LEAD GROUPS TO LEAD”

ACTIVITY 1: SMALL GROUPS—WHAT NOT TO DO

Purpose

The purpose is to reflect on what small groups need in order to work effectively. Watching a negative model can be a fun way to see what happens when a group has no structure or operating principles.

Content

The four main characters in the *Seinfeld* TV series are well known to most people. They are infamous for their pettiness, insensitivity, shallowness, and inability to learn from experience, hence; they are very funny. There is a scene from the episode titled “The Comeback” (Trainor, 1997; available on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2eCXhbYVVU&feature=youtu.be) where George, who had just been insulted by a coworker for eating too many shrimp, finds Jerry, Elaine, and Kramer and asks them for advice on what to say as witty comeback to his coworker. This could have been a great situation for brainstorming together in support of a friend; however, George does not get the response he wants, and the situation rapidly deteriorates.

Procedure

Have staff sit in small groups to view the video clip. Show the video clip and provide a brief description of George’s situation. It is a very funny scene, especially when Kramer gives his advice. Ask participants to reflect on a time they were part of a group that was dysfunctional. Have them reflect on that experience and why it was dysfunctional (*make it clear that no names of specific individuals should be used*). Ask them to go share their experience with the other members of the group. Have members assume the following roles: facilitator, note taker, reporter, and timekeeper.

Guide Questions

What made the small group experience unproductive?

How did the people in the group interact?

What type of decisions did the group attempt to make?

How did you feel about the decisions made or not made?

What could have helped facilitate the process so that the group could have worked better together?