

Violence reduction in schools workshop



Session 13:
Working in partnership with
parents / guardians
- Establishing and
maintaining partnerships

" Violence against children is never justifiable. Nor is it inevitable. If its underlying causes are identified and addressed, violence against children is entirely preventable."

Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General

Pre-session activity 13.0



**Background information
session**

**Using the background
information sheets**

Pre-session activity 13.0



Key point:

Parents / guardians are an essential partnership group within the school community in the attempt to prevent and reduce the incidence of violence in schools.

Pre-session activity 13.0



4 areas to consider:

1. Parents / guardians as an interest group within the school community;
2. Parents / guardians as a general influence on young people's behaviour;
3. Parents / guardians and their children as reporters of school violence;
4. Parents / guardians as a key group in whole-school violence reduction initiatives.

Pre-session activity 13.0



1. Parents / guardians as a school community interest group

- National parents / guardians' representative bodies exist in many countries.
- At a local level, most schools have parents / guardians' councils / parent-teacher associations.
- Parents / guardians should be consulted regarding the development of school policy, especially regarding bullying and violence.
- Having consistent anti-violence message from all adults – important for young people.

Pre-session activity 13.0



2. Parents/guardians as a general influence on young people's behaviour

- Family values and parenting styles remain fairly constant over-time.
- Parents/guardians exert a long-lasting influence.
- Even though peers have a day-to-day influence in their teens, parents/guardians influence core values.

Pre-session activity 13.0



3. *Parents/guardians and their children as reporters of school violence*

- Most anti-social youth activity takes place in secret.
- Only 1 in 4 bullied pupils reports being bullied.
- They are twice as likely to tell parents/guardians rather than teachers.
- Parents/guardians often *suspect* long before they are *told*.

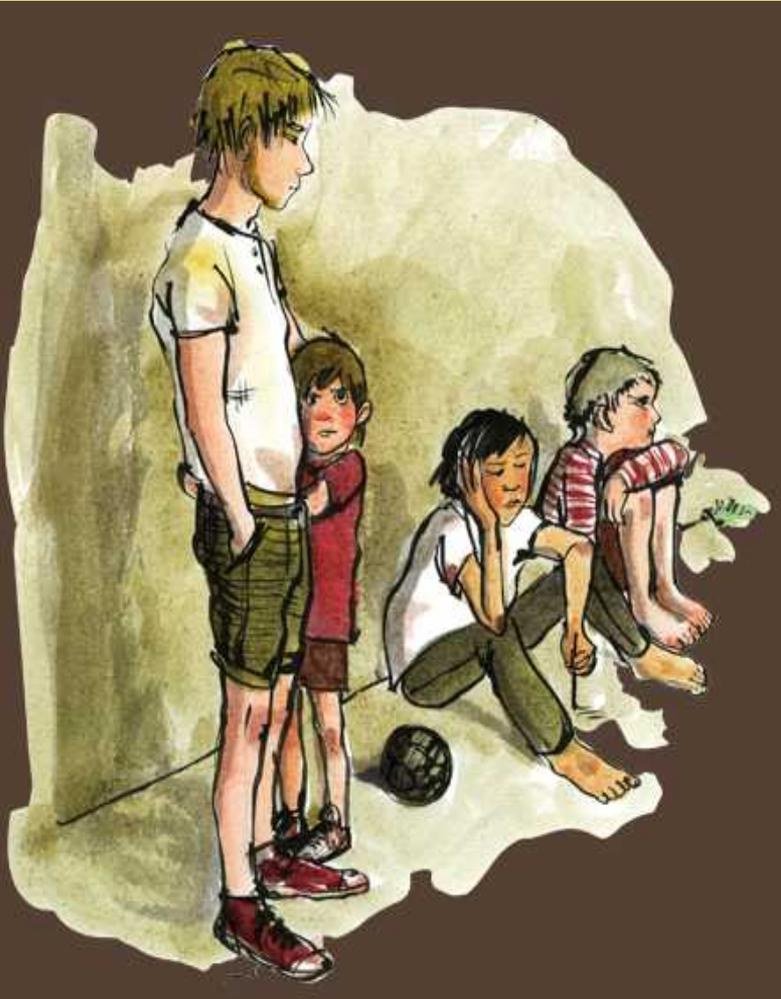
Pre-session activity 13.0



4. Parents/guardians as a key group in whole-school anti-bullying / anti-violence programmes

- Parents/guardians accorded an important role from the outset (Olweus, 1983)
- Continued in whole-school anti-bullying programmes world-wide
- There is a precedent for including parents/guardians in a school's work to reduce violence

Session 13: working in partnership with parents/guardians



Activities 13.1 – 13.3

Developing strategies for
working with parents -
assisted by the DVD *Silent
witnesses*

Activity 13.1: considering general information for parents/guardians



Learning outcomes:

Through Activity 13.1 we will develop:

- an understanding about the kind of information that may be helpful to parents/guardians who are concerned about violence in school;
- knowledge and skills about how to assist school staff in using information about bullying to promote partnerships with parents/guardians.

Studying *Silent witnesses*



1. Untitled introductory sequence

Questions for the audience:

How do the incidence rates in your country / region / school compare? Are these rates known?

In your professional capacity, how would you answer a parent who asked you how common it was for children where you live to be bullied at school?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



2. Bullying – a multi-dimensional problem

Question for the audience:

Can you think of practical ways in which the idea that bullying “could involve any child” can be used to engage the majority of parents / guardians in a school community’s efforts to reduce school bullying and violence?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



3. Victims of bullying

Question for the audience:

Do you agree with Professor O' Moore's assertion that certain categories of students may be more "at risk"? If not, why not? If so, which categories of students would you include?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



4. Effects of bullying on the victim

Question for the audience:

v. Are there any other effects of bullying / violence that have not been included here?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



5. Effects on witnesses to bullying in later life

Question for the audience:

Are there any other long-term effects on witnesses of school bullying / violence that have not been included here?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



6. Effects on victims of bullying in later life

Question for the audience:

Are there any other long-term effects on victims of school bullying / violence that have not been included here?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



7. Bullies in later life

Question for the audience:

To what extent do you agree with Professor O' Moore's statement that there is a "poor long term prognosis" for perpetrators of bullying behaviour?

Studying *Silent witnesses*

8. Profile of a bully

Questions for the audience:

To what extent do you believe it is helpful to discuss the “profile of a bully”? Have stereotypical pictures of “bullies” and “victims” helped or hindered our recognition that anyone can be involved in bullying behaviour?

In your opinion (or experience), how do different interest groups within the school community – that is to say, pupils, parents/guardians, staff – picture a “typical bully”? Do these conceptions differ within or between these groups, and how?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



9. Motives for bullying

Question for the audience:

In your professional capacity, using the ideas put forward by Professor O' Moore and your own, how would you answer the question: “*Why do some children bully others?*” – if that question were put to you by an enquiring parent?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



10. What can schools do to prevent bullying?

Question for the audience:

What services to schools – either government led, or NGO outreach services – are available to schools in your country? Do parents / guardians know about or use of any of these?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



11. Causes of bullying

Question for the audience:

In your professional capacity, using the ideas put forward by Professor O' Moore and your own, how would you answer the question – “*what causes bullying?*” – if that question were put to you by an enquiring parent?

Studying *Silent witnesses*



12. Measures to counter bullying in schools

Question for the audience:

What can / should schools do about school bullying and violence in your own country? How does this differ from the situation in Ireland as outlined by Professor O' Moore?

Activity 13.2: understanding the position of parents/guardians whose children are involved in incidents of violence

Learning outcomes:

Through Activity 13.1 we will:

- begin to understand the position and feelings of parents/guardians whose children are involved as targets of incidents of school violence;
- begin to understand the position and feelings of parents/guardians whose children are involved as perpetrators of incidents of school violence;
- develop skills for dealing with differing parental perspectives / demands.

Activity 13.2

Discussion topics for working sub-groups:

1. the values related to non-violence which I try to include in my own child-rearing;
2. what I say to my children to help them deal with frustration and conflict;
3. the range of influences on a child's attitudes and behaviour.
4. how I would feel as a parent, walking into a school, to meet with a school staff member about my child's involvement in an incident of violence as a *target*?;
5. how I would feel as a parent, walking into a school, to meet with a school staff member about my child's involvement in an incident of violence as a *bully*?

Activity 13.2

Questions for open discussion :

How do the answers from groups 1 and 2 compare?
Is there a difference between what children hear us say and what they see us do at home?

How do the answers from group 3 differ according to the young person's age?

How do the feelings of the parents in groups 4 and 5 compare. As a teacher, how would you prepare to meet both of these parents?

Activity 13.3 – helping parents/guardians to help children cope with verbal abuse



Learning outcomes:

Through Activity 13.3 we will develop:

- knowledge about ways of dealing with verbal harassment, and ways for parents/guardians to teach these to their children;
- understanding the role of verbal abuse in school violence;
- observational and feedback skills

Activity 13.3

This is an activity about thoughts and feelings that parents/guardians may have.

1. In your group, draw a match stick parent on a sheet of flip chart paper.
2. Record the thoughts and feelings of the parent on the speech bubble sheets and stick them on flip chart paper to make a poster.
3. After 10 minutes you will be asked to display your poster around the room when it is completed and then to circulate round the posters as a group to discuss the parent thoughts and feelings on the other posters.

Activity 13.3 – Advice to give



Some solutions about how to respond:

- *The silent treatment* - could include avoiding the person who is harassing you altogether – walking away if you see them coming; completely ignoring it when someone is calling you names; pretending that you haven't heard them at all.
- *Humour* - could include thinking of a witty response; acting as if it doesn't bother you, by “laughing it off”
- *Assertiveness* - involves standing up straight, looking confident, speaking clearly and firmly, and maintaining eye contact, while telling the person abusing you to stop.