On the Bus: An Action Plan for Bullyproofing Your School and Classroom

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Abstract:

Bullying is clearly a major issue for New Zealand schools. This article suggests an anti-bullying approach that can be used in schools to teach people about the dynamics of bullying and help them find solutions to bullying. It is based on the use of a hypothetical scenario, "On the Bus", which focuses the attention of students on the dynamics of bullying, and encourages them to go through a reflective process of finding ways to stop this particular instance of bullying. It also encourages them to think about, and discuss, the outcomes of bullying for those involved, for the school, and for the community at large.

Research by Adair et al (1999) into bullying in New Zealand schools has shown that, using their own definition of bullying, 58 percent of respondents reported having been bullied at school. When the researchers provided respondents with a list of bullying behaviours, 75 percent reported having been bullied in the last year alone, and 44 percent admitted to having been bullies at some time in their school career. The research also found that 76 percent of bullying incidents were carried out either by a boy acting alone or in concert with other boys.[1] Clearly, school bullying is a major issue for New Zealand education.

As a response to the growing concern about school bullying, extensive research has been carried out internationally, and a range of anti-bullying programmes developed (of particular note are: in the UK, Cowie & Sharp, 1996; Robinson & Maines, 1997; Sharp & Smith, 1994; Smith & Sharp, 1994; in Scandinavia, Olweus, 1993; and in Australia, Rigby & Slee, 1993; Rigby, 1996; and Slee, 1997). In New Zealand, there

have been three major initiatives: the Special Education Services *Eliminating Violence: Managing Anger* (1994), the New Zealand Police's *Kia Kaha* (1992) anti-bullying kit, and the Foundation for Peace Studies Aotearoa/New Zealand *Cool Schools Peer Mediation Programme* (1994). Evaluations of these programmes (see Moore et al, 1997, and Sullivan 1998a and 1999a, respectively) indicate that they are well intended and generally useful. We would argue, however, that although there has been much justifiable publicity in the media about bullying in New Zealand schools, one reason bullying continues to be a major problem is because it has not been addressed as an issue of major educational concern by the government. As a result, these well-intended efforts stand out as islands of potential safety in a sea of bullying and are, in effect, "ambulances at the bottom of the cliff". Bullying is a human rights issue concerning the need of students to be able to learn in a physically and psychologically safe environment. We would argue then that school bullying should be a major policy concern of government, that priority be given to developing effective anti-bullying policy nationally, and that this be done through a thorough and practical research process.[2]

The approach suggested here has been developed collaboratively by deputy principal and anti-bullying practitioner, Mark Cleary, who originated the "On the Bus" concept, and university lecturer and anti-bullying researcher, Keith Sullivan, who developed the subsequent stages. The model is grounded in reflective practice, particularly in relation to some fieldwork carried out by Mark with a year 9 group in a Hawkes Bay secondary school in 1998. It is intended to be used both to teach people about the dynamics of bullying (so that they understand how it works), and to find solutions to bullying in schools.

Further to this, although we feel this model can help teachers and administrators to start to address issues of bullying in their schools, we wish to underline that New Zealand and international research suggests that the most effective anti-bullying programmes are those that are based upon a well developed whole school approach in which this model would be one of a group of strategies adopted (Cleary, Smith & Sharp, 1996; Foster, Arora & Thompson, 1990; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Thompson & Arora, 1991).

A Model for Addressing School Bullying

A major benefit of the "On the Bus" approach is that it is constructed to bring out the skills and knowledge of the participants – the teachers and

students. It requires both cooperation between teachers and students and a problem-solving approach. The participants tap into their experiences and knowledge about bullying and peer group relations and also collectively examine instances of bullying in order to take forward their understandings and abilities to deal with it.

The model has three phases. *Phase one: "On the Bus"* deals with the issues of bullying from a theoretical perspective. It allows a teacher and a group of students to work together firstly to generate a theoretical but realistic bullying scenario, and then to find practical solutions through cooperative problem-solving. The sequencing of processes allows for reflective thinking and a gradual movement towards both a deep understanding of the bullying issues and the development and "ownership" of a set of potentially effective solutions.

Phase two: In the school and *Phase three: In the classroom* are designed to apply this process to real situations, and to allow both a greater understanding of the dynamics of bullying (a consciousness-raising process) and effective strategic planning and problem-solving. Phase two focuses on bullying in the school, the corridors, toilets, school grounds, hallways, etc., and phase three is concerned with making the classroom safe from bullying. Phases two and three follow a similar process to phase one, but aim to produce concrete and useable policies, programmes, regulations and strategies. While providing immediate solutions, they can also be a means of developing anti-bullying policies and specific rules.

The model is intended to be flexible. Phase one can be used as the initial stage in examining bullying either in the classroom or the school generally, or both. It can also be used as a means of raising consciousness about bullying as part of a social studies or a health lesson. The model works as follows:

Phase One

Step i: Initially, a hypothetical bullying scenario is generated from students as they describe their experiences.

Step ii: A discussion of the scenario takes place

Step iii: A set of strategies is devised.

Step iv: The teacher then provides extra information in order to help the students address the underlying issues and thus understand what is happening in a deeper and more meaningful way. For instance, the teacher could come up with

an analysis based on piecing together what students have stated and/or with reference to her own experience and knowledge about bullying.

Step v: From these discussions, a better-considered set of strategies or solutions will be devised. If the teacher feels that this does not really solve the problem, she can suggest that they explore the issues further, involving some additional steps.

Step vi: This then requires that *Steps iv* and *v* will need to be repeated, and after this has been done effectively comes:

Step vii: Now a statement of final recommendations can be provided.

Step viii: It is important at this stage for the teacher (in concert with the students) to provide a reflective commentary on the situation in order both to reinforce what has been learned and to put a specific voice to the individual and group contributions. It also allows the identification of other issues or features that need to be addressed.

Phases Two and Three

The process is essentially the same, except that phase one has created a foundation upon which to move to either phase two or three. In order to do this effectively, a bridge linking the theoretical understandings of "On the Bus" to the context of the school and the classroom (*Step i*) must be created. When this has been done, the teacher should have prepared materials to stimulate discussion (*Step ii*), and allow students to then similarly generate bullying scenarios (*Step iii*). Because phases two and three are intended to develop a framework for making the school and classroom safe environments, they include several other steps not used in phase one.

Step ix: A statement of the final recommendations arrived at.

Step x: An exploration of other situations than the initial scenario.

Step xi: Generating a framework for making the school/classroom a safe place, based on what has emerged from this exercise.

Step xii: The teacher provides a reflective analysis and commentary.

Step xiii: It is important to agree to and then re-visit the anti-bullying policies and programmes developed to see if they are working well or if, in light of experience, improvements can be made.

An Action Plan for Bullyproofing your School and Classroom

Summarised, the steps in the plan appear as follows:

Phase one: "On the Bus"
i.   the teacher and students jointly develop a scenario
ii.   the scenario is discussed
iii. strategies and/or solutions are developed
iv.   feedback, facilitated discussions and extra information are provided
v.   improved strategies and solutions are developed
vi.   repeat *Steps iv* and *v* until satisfied with strategies/solutions
vii. statement of final recommendations
viii. the teacher provides a reflective analysis and commentary

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Phase two: In the school
i.   provide a bridge to the school situation
ii.   discuss bullying in your school
iii. the teacher and students jointly develop a scenario
iv.   the scenario is discussed
v.   strategies and/or solutions are generated
vi.   feedback, facilitated discussions and extra information are provided
vii. improved strategies and solutions are developed
viii. repeat *Steps iv* and *v* until satisfied with strategies/solutions
ix.   statement of final recommendation
x.   discuss and find strategies for other scenarios which need to be considered (and repeat all appropriate steps)
xi.   develop a set of agreed guidelines for making the school bullying-free
xii. the teacher provides a reflective analysis and commentary
xiii. the guidelines are revisited on a regular basis (evaluated) to decide if they are working or need to be revised

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Phase three: In the classroom
i.   provide a bridge to the classroom situation
ii.   discuss bullying in the classroom
iii. the teacher and students jointly develop a scenario
iv.   the scenario is discussed
v.   strategies and/or solutions are generated
vi.   feedback, facilitated discussions and extra information are provided
vii. improved strategies and solutions are developed
viii. repeat *Steps iv* and *v* until satisfied with strategies/solutions
ix.   statement of final recommendation
x.   discuss and find strategies for other scenarios which need to be considered (and repeat all appropriate steps)
xi.   develop a set of agreed guidelines for making the classroom bullying-free
xii. the teacher provides a reflective analysis and commentary
xiii. the guidelines are revisited on a regular basis (evaluated) to decide if they are working or need to be revised

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"On the Bus": A Case Study

This next section is a case study of how phase one of the model has been used effectively both to understand bullying and to develop effective strategies for countering it. Fieldwork for the case study took place in 1998 with a class of year 9 students in a Hawkes Bay secondary school.

i.   The teacher and students jointly develop a scenario
In order to provide a focus, Mark initiated a discussion about bullying with the class. The situation which most students identified as worrying because of the potential for bullying was being on a school bus going to or from school. Being subjected to bullying on a school bus can be particularly difficult. Once you are on the bus, you are, in effect, trapped until you reach your home stop or the school.

ii. The scenario is discussed
As a way of responding to this situation, the scenario was extended for the students to explore. The students were told: "Kristy is called names every morning on the school bus, but because of the threats she can't see any way to avoid it or to tell anyone". The students were then asked, "What should Kristy do?"

iii. Strategies and/or solutions are developed

The group came up with the following suggestions:

- tell someone, her parents (one student reinforced this idea by suggesting, "she should tell them everything!")
- see the principal about it
- make sure that the bus driver knows what's going on
- sit with a friend or friends
- tell them to stop calling her names
- ignore them
- catch another bus
- look them in the eye and tell them that she doesn't like them calling her names, that it makes her feel bad.

From the list of suggestions, three strategies can be identified: *i)* tell an adult; *ii)* stand up to the bullies; or *iii)* avoid the bullies. In all three instances, the onus was on Kristy, the student being victimised, to find a solution. This seemed an unsatisfactory conclusion.

iv. Feedback, facilitated discussions and extra information are provided

In order to explore this scenario further and as a way to stimulate discussion, the class was told that recent New Zealand research (Adair et al, 1999) revealed that only 20 percent of students who had been bullied had sought some kind of help. This information caused the students to re-consider Kristy's position. They recognised that both telling somebody about the bullying or standing up for herself were theoretically the right things to do. However, they realised that for many people, and certainly for Kristy, these strategies would probably not work and would end up making her even more isolated than she already was. For instance, if she told someone, would she be safe from retaliation at a later point?

v. Improved strategies and solutions are developed

Their new conclusion was that the only realistic and safe strategy was for Kristy to catch another bus and so avoid the trouble. Although this solution was a more considered one and two of the first three strategies were dismissed, the onus was still on the victim of bullying to find a solution.

vi. Repeat Steps iv and v until satisfied with strategies/solutions

Although there was a sense that the students now had a better understanding of Kristy's predicament and had dismissed two of their original strategies, the bullying problem had been skirted around rather

than solved. This strategy of catching another bus did not address the bullying problem per se, but only how to avoid it. While this may bring short-term relief for Kristy, it does not solve the problem.

It could also mean that the next time Kristy meets those carrying out the bullying, perhaps in the halls at school or in the playground, they could easily bully her there, knowing that they have bullied her in the past and nobody has stopped them. Kristy will be living in fear.

If Kristy no longer takes this bus, then somebody else will probably take her place as the victim of this bullying group. The problem would not be solved. In order to take the momentum of problem-solving generated by the group further, another way to develop better understanding was used.

An Examination of the Dynamics on the Bus

Rather than repeating the strategy of providing more information as the basis for this exploration in the case study, Mark moved to using visual stimulation. He drew on the board a diagram of the bus in order to get students to think and answer questions about the dynamics of the situation. He focussed first on where people would be located.

Where would Kristy be sitting?
Answer: The group unanimously agreed that Kristy would be sitting at the front, close to the driver, in order to get the best possible protection. It was also felt that she may have placed herself there for one of the following reasons: *a)* she was new to the bus; *b)* she did not have others to sit with; or *c)* she may have been feeling "down" and wanted a bit of quiet.

Where would the name callers be sitting?
Answer: They would be sitting at the back of the bus. Everyone agreed on this. Having established where people were sitting, the group then turned their discussion to the nature of the name calling.

How would it occur?
Answer:
a) Those down the back of the bus would perhaps call out comments to Kristy as she got on the bus. These would be derogatory, aimed at her hair, her weight, her clothes, the fact that she wore glasses, etc.
b) The group would consider these as throwaway remarks, just a bit of fun, a good laugh.

c) The other students on the bus would be expected to join in and would, in fact, laugh along.

In order to delve a bit deeper, these findings were explored further and those who were the bystanders to the bullying, seen as being located in the middle of the bus, were brought into the equation.

So what's actually happening here?

a) *For the one being bullied, Kristy?*

If the backseaters have chosen well, Kristy is a passive girl and either does not respond or does so ineffectually, or she may seek refuge by trying not to be noticed. Typically, her body language will reinforce her passivity. She may sit down low in her seat, hunching her shoulders and trying to pull her body inwards, as if trying to seem invisible.

b) *Those doing the bullying, the backseaters. What's in it for them?*

In sitting at the back of the bus, those students are locating themselves as far away as they can get from the adult in charge of the bus, the driver. This is where they are most likely to be able to be disruptive, to be rude or to bully, because the driver's main job is to drive the bus and this is the area farthest from her locus of control.

The *backseaters* take the laughter and compliance of others on the bus as an affirmation of their actions. It tells them:

i. everyone agrees that it's funny and fun;
ii. it's only a bit of fun – no one's really getting hurt;
iii. that I'm popular, I'm cool, I've got lots of friends on this bus; and
iv. let's keep doing it.

They can act confidently and swagger in their success.

c) *Those who are on the sidelines. What does this mean for them?*

The middleseaters: Those children who are middleseaters are in a position of being physically, and symbolically, in the middle of the conflict. The feelings of the middleseaters are probably mixed. They may be:

i. slightly embarrassed and perhaps feeling a twinge of sympathy or pity;
ii. mainly pleased that they are not the butt of the joke today; and
iii. although the middleseaters may know it's either sadistic or weak to support the bullying of Kristy, there is an element of excitement in it.

The role these "middleseaters" choose to adopt is pivotal in determining what will happen, whether the taunts will die away or escalate.

The bus driver: The bus driver is the only adult on the bus. She is in an ambivalent position. It is her bus and she has control of it but she is not necessarily a figure with status as teachers can be. She may be aware of what is going on and may choose to keep Kristy close to her to protect her or she may choose to ignore the situation. If she does not know the students individually, she may find the situation disruptive and treat them all as causing trouble, including Kristy. She may, on the other hand, see it as "kids being kids" and let them sort it out themselves.

vii. Statement of final recommendations

These various ways of examining the "On the Bus" scenario enabled the students to draw on their own experiences and understanding, and also to work as a group to find ways of dealing with the bullying. They agreed that most people on the bus did not like the name-calling, yet because nobody spoke out the impression given was that it was acceptable behaviour. Mark and the class brainstormed what to do to create solutions that were more acceptable. They came up with the following suggestions:

- when the bullying starts, it is important that the middleseaters ask Kristy to sit with them;
- if anyone feels uncomfortable with the name-calling, they should either challenge it then and there or if they do not feel strong enough, they should talk about it with someone else on the bus;
- middleseaters should not support the behaviour by laughing;
- let Kristy know (off the bus) that what the backseaters are saying is not true;
- take Kristy to see the teacher.

The new solutions were much better. None of them put the onus on the person being victimised to be responsible for finding a solution. Having realised what was happening, the peer group – the observers – took responsibility for creating a process for halting the bullying. The strategy could best be described as the peer group taking responsibility, with the assistance of the teacher, for finding a solution.

viii. Analysis and commentary

This final section is intended to summarise the whole experience and to analyse what happened over and above what came out of the problem-solving process. (A similar process of analysis can be done in the school, either as a further exercise which includes the participation of the students or as a way of allowing the teacher to stand back and

put together what happened in order to get a better understanding for other occasions.) The following analysis and commentary are given as an example of what the authors (with some student input) have added to the "On the Bus" case study.

A Set of Dynamics Which Allows the Bus to Become an Unsafe Place

What's the harm after all? The name-callers hearing the laughter get confirmation that they are popular and funny and that everyone (although not Kristy) enjoys having "a bit of fun".

The bystanders get the message that there is nothing that they can do and that no one else feels any sympathy for Kristy. It would require making a stand to do anything that goes against the strong tide here. Anyone doing this would get the same treatment as Kristy in both the short and long term. Besides, it is more exciting laughing than thinking about feelings, and why should they have to look after Kristy who is a bit of a wimp anyway?

Kristy gets a clear message. She is on her own. What can she do? Telling her parents, the teachers or the driver will make her look even more inadequate than she feels. Verbal retaliation is a possibility but she thinks of the right things to say hours later, and anyway the name-callers seem to be much funnier and quicker than she is.

The driver hearing the name-calling will dismiss it as being a bit of harmless fun. Kids will be kids, it's all part of growing up, what's the damage? Kristy will be safe sitting next to me, I'll stop those others hassling her. But shouldn't she just show a bit more backbone and stand up to them?

If the bullying is not handled, things will only get worse. Those who feel uncomfortable but powerless will retreat into their own world and find ways to justify their inaction. The backseaters will continue their bullying and get increasingly outrageous in their comments as no one is there to oppose or stop them. The laughter will increase as the others desperately try to justify their inaction and cover up their discomfort. The bullying behaviour could turn to attempts to physically or even sexually humiliate Kristy. Her feelings will not be considered, no one will empathise with her – they cannot afford to. The driver gets fed up with the raucous behaviour and starts shouting at everyone (indiscriminately) to keep quiet. She will tell the backseaters to behave and tell them that she has an eye on them. Kristy, increasingly alienated and miserable, will become withdrawn, isolated and fearful. Desperate to maintain their power, the backseaters will increasingly threaten

Kristy, safe in the knowledge that she won't tell. They recognise that they have gained considerable power on the bus and will not want to give this up. A culture of intolerance and lack of respect has become embedded.

What is happening under the surface? We would argue that in situations like this there is a gradual build up of aggression, that the taunts are symbolic as they are meant to test and challenge what Kristy, as well as the other students and the bus driver, are prepared to accept. The following progression is typical:

i.   Initially, the taunts are meant to see how Kristy will react.
ii.   Everyone is watching, both the backseaters and the middleseaters, to see how Kristy will respond. What will she do?
iii. Everyone knows that unless Kristy can stand up to these initial taunts, she will be condemned to further abuse.
iv.   People do not expect Kristy to be able to handle this situation; after all, this is why she has been singled out.
iv.   If this can happen to Kristy, it could happen to others on the bus who allow themselves to seem vulnerable.

There is also a set of other variables, some of which could be described as known and others as unknown.

The knowns

What we know about this situation is that although the middleseaters are going along with this situation, they feel very uncomfortable with it. There is a sense of feeling unsafe and not wanting the negative energy to be turned on them. There is a feeling of things being out of control for everyone, perhaps even some of those who are taking part in the bullying. We also know that it will be making Kristy very unhappy and that she will be feeling inadequate. This will affect everything else she does – essentially for Kristy the world has become an unsafe place. If this is being done to Kristy on the bus, then it will very likely be happening at school, and if these kids meet her at the shopping centre or anywhere else, she will be a target for them.

Kristy is isolated. This could be for several reasons:

i.   She may be new to the school, she may have done something to put her outside of her peer group or she may not have the kind of personal charisma that draws friends to her.
ii.   The risk for someone individually to support her is great, especially if there is no personal return for that individual. There is an

element of risk of also becoming victimised for anyone who chooses to take Kristy's part. But the greater the number of students who choose to do so, the lesser that risk. There is less risk if four girls take her part, rather than two, for instance.

iii. Kristy is a girl with low status. People probably instinctively have mixed feelings about her. Although they feel she shouldn't be bullied, they may also think that she is a bit of a wimp in not at least trying to stand up for herself.[3]

We also know that schools do not condone bullying and that bullying is an abuse of power and an illegitimate form of action.

The unknowns

What is unknown is whether or not there are students on the bus who would be prepared to stand up for Kristy. If she is lucky enough to have strong friends then she will be supported. It was felt, however, that most of the students on the bus would decide not to support her because for them the risk is too big and her status is too low to justify the risk. Kristy's initial reaction will have established her status and her passive response will confirm to the others that she is not worth taking the risk for.

If the peer group is strong and does not go along with the dynamics of bullying, then there probably will be a confrontation that will be symbolic and will determine whether this challenge will succeed. What form the response to the challenge will take and how the peer group could respond are issues for consideration.

In a situation such as this, the backseaters support each other in their abuse of Kristy. They could be likened to a group of actors on a small stage (the back of the bus) who rely on the middleseaters as their audience to appreciate the play they are presenting. Their bullying is a demonstration of power over a person who is much less powerful than they are. Amongst the backseaters, there is probably a ringleader who initiates proceedings and who controls the group.

Case Study Overview and Bridge to Phases Two and Three

As a way to stimulate discussion and as a means of bridging phase one to phase two, Mark discussed some of the research into bullying behaviour with his students. They became more interested than initially as the process to date had "contextualised" bullying and made it relevant to them. This meant that the stage was set to move easily into more specific school and classroom events of bullying.

The correlation between school bullying behaviour and later criminality (see Olweus, 1993) interested them. They talked about how the bully (the backseaters, in this instance) could become dependent on the endorsement of the peer group and how as they got older their behaviour could grow more outrageous to attract the same attention. They would also fail to learn how to develop positive relationships based on loyalty, trust, empathy and fun, becoming reliant instead on what could be described as mistrusting relationships which would be marked by fear, manipulation, secrecy and rejection. Students felt the bullies would probably have positive self-images (Olweus, 1993, and Rigby & Slee, 1993, argue that bullies have above average self-esteem), and the actions of the others on the bus in support of their anti-social behaviour would boost this.

The class discussed how as students get to year 11 they tend to become more independent and less reliant on peer approval, reducing the hold on this age group of the backseaters. They, still seeking excitement and status, are drawn to others like themselves. While they continue to bully and be antisocial, slowly others distance themselves from their leadership. They drop out of school or form bullying groups alienated from the main peer group. They are understandably annoyed and angry. They have not changed their behaviour, and they are certainly not acting any differently. They develop a pattern of blame – it's always someone else's fault. They continue to manipulate and abuse those they work, live and play with, failing to connect in an honest way.

The class also brainstormed about the long-term implications of the bus bullying on Kristy. If the others on the bus did not support her she would feel increasingly isolated and vulnerable. Typically she would blame herself and feel that opting out was the only way she could cope. If she sought advice from adults she would be seen as a nark by the others and would be vulnerable to retribution from the backseaters. Unable and ill-equipped to take on the bullies, she is trapped by her inaction. If she seeks help she is interrogated on why she does not do something to stop the name-calling. This further chips away at her happiness and increases self-doubt ("It's my fault"). Her self-confidence, already low (a more assertive person would have been able to deflect the insults right at the beginning) would further plummet and her relationships in other settings would probably deteriorate as well. She may become bitter and resentful, and in any position of power or control over others act out the abuse (move from abused to abuser).

There was also discussion about how the bystanders would suffer as a result of their inaction. They could justify their behaviour by saying there was nothing they could do, or that the Kristys of this world deserve it. An uneasy reluctance to get involved develops as a way of acting. A self-preservation mentality develops ("If someone else is getting it then I'm okay") and abuse flourishes. Silence and fear are in the ascendancy. "It's not my responsibility", becomes the catch cry. The bus has degenerated into a selfish, blaming micro-society. No one takes responsibility and everyone loses out.

How This Exercise Has Been Beneficial

At this stage, the teacher and students have gone through an exercise of solving a hypothetical bullying situation. It is about an incident that they can all relate to, but is also theoretical and non-threatening. Carrying out this exercise has produced the following useful results:

i. It has helped students to clarify some of the issues and dynamics around bullying which could be transferred to other situations.

ii. It has underlined the importance of the peer group having a choice either to support or to stop bullying.

iii. It has shown that the students (with facilitation from the teacher if asked for) can find their own solutions to bullying problems.[4]

Practical advantages in the scenario itself are that:

i. Everyone is a winner if bullying stops. Kristy would be with others who could support her and they would feel good about doing that. The backseaters would channel their energy elsewhere and might develop more positive ways of relating.

ii. The driver would no longer need to keep one eye on the students and would concentrate on the road.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

This action plan for bullyproofing schools and classrooms is offered for use by teachers, administrators and counsellors. We feel that it is a straightforward and useful resource which recognises that teachers and students can work together, drawing on their experience and knowledge, to combat bullying effectively.

In writing this article, the authors have provided an example of how the model has been used for phase one.[5] In using the template for

the other two phases, the process is essentially the same, but the issues to be considered would be different.

For example, when examining classroom bullying, issues such as the style of teaching that various teachers adopt would need to be taken into account, as it varies considerably, from being strict and authoritarian to being open and even chaotic. The way this would impact on the peer group dynamics would also vary. The culture of each classroom is unique and needs to be recognised. Are there high academic expectations, or are students just waiting until they can leave school? If there is streaming in a school, then the expectations of the students in the class would vary greatly and the subculture developed on a class by class basis would need to be examined. Anti-social and prosocial behaviours and group norms would need to be identified.

Further to this, the nature and specifics of leadership within a school would impact on attitudes towards, and handling of, bullying. Many of these issues are very challenging and would need to be set within a positive improvement framework.

Notes

1. Adair et al's (1999) latest research into bullying is fairly extensive and is based on a study of 2066 form 3 to 7 secondary school students from co-educational schools in the upper North Island.

2. Other than partial support of an evaluation of the *Eliminating Violence* programme (see Moore et al, 1997), Ministry presence is absent from this important area.

3. See Sullivan 1998b for a discussion of bullying and isolated children.

4. Further to this, Mark has suggested that another way to reinforce what the students have learned theoretically is to role-play the scenario so that the students can live through the various roles and know what it feels like to be victimised, to bully and to observe. This could be built into the scheme. A cautionary note in relation to role-playing is that it must be directed skilfully, and that it is important to bring people properly out of the roles they have taken on.

5. We have not provided further examples because space does not permit and also because the model is still being refined.

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