

BULLYING PART II - INTERVENING WITH THE BULLYING DYNAMIC

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*"Building the Capacity of the English School Boards
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The Bully Personality

9 attitude of entitlement
10 highly sensitized to slight
11 predisposed to aggression
12 distorted attachment behaviour

1 **alpha complex**

4 UNRECEPTIVE to being parented & taught
5 highly RESISTANT to perceived coercion

2 **defended against caring & responsibility**

6 FEARLESS with resulting alarm dysfunction
7 TEARLESS with resulting failure to adapt

3 **BULLY INSTINCT & SYNDROME**

8 UNTEMPERED in experience & expression

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the making of bullies

the conditions that can give rise to bullies

alpha complex

alpha by default and/or by defense

defended against caring & responsibility

significant wounding and/or overwhelming sensitivity

BULLY INSTINCT & SYNDROME

- dependence is an aversive state
- failure of adults to assume alpha roles
- attachments lacking natural hierarchy
- peer orientation

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the UN making of bullies

reversing conditions that can give rise to bullies

alpha complex

alpha by default and/or by defense

defended against caring & responsibility

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BULLY INSTINCT & SYNDROME

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What doesn't work and why

1. Battling against the bully instinct and the symptom behaviour

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conventional discipline → **bully behaviour**

BULLY INSTINCT & SYNDROME

attachment problem + vulnerability problem

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Consequences: a dilemma

imposing consequences can fuel the bully problem

alpha complex defended against caring & responsibility **BULLY INSTINCT & SYNDROME**

Not imposing consequences can sabotage social justice, erode social values, undermine alpha posture, and inadvertently convey a lack of support for the violated.

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conventional discipline → **bully behaviour** ← standing up & saying 'no'
sensitivity training →

BULLY INSTINCT & SYNDROME

attachment problem + vulnerability problem

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WHAT DOES WORK

Creating relationships with Adults

Alpha Adults ↔ children **BULLIES** **Alpha Adults** ↔ children **VICTIMS**

DO NOT PUT THE FOCUS on student interaction (working at getting students to get along and be nice to each other, focus on social responsibility, social and emotional learning programs).

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the UNmaking of a bully

a 3-pronged approach to the heart of the problem

provide for **SAFE & constructive expression**

alpha complex defended against caring & responsibility **bully instinct & syndrome**

make it **SAFE to DEPEND** make it **SAFE to FEEL**

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- make it safe to depend
- maintain orientation towards adults

EMBED IN NATURAL ATTACHMENT HIERARCHIES

alpha complex defended against caring & responsibility **bully instinct & syndrome**

SOFTEN THE BULLY'S HEART

- assume the alpha roles
- draw out the tears of futility

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INTERVENING IN THE BULLY DYNAMIC

ADULTS TAKE THE LEAD

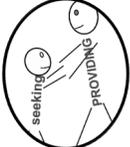
1. SUPPORT AND PROTECT THE "VICTIM"
2. ADOPT THE "BULLY"

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A) EMBED IN NATURAL ATTACHMENT HIERARCHIES

1. Foster **hierarchical caring relationships** between children (also between siblings) of different ages.
2. **Match-make the reachable bully with those in need**, in order to elicit care-taking instincts.
3. **Give the alpha instincts some room for legitimate expression** (e.g. in charge of something, acting as a resource to others, feeding others).
4. **Establish a caring dominance** – Be the one who cares for this student .



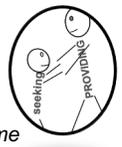
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- establish a caring dominance -

1. Convey a strong alpha presence by **taking charge** and inviting the inevitable.
2. Read the bully's needs and take the lead in being their 'answer'.
3. Assume the alpha roles in the bully's life: *home base, compass point, provider, advocate, protector, defender, comforter, one-to-hold-on.*
4. Win the alpha challenges you can without being a bully yourself.
5. Avoid or escape the alpha challenges you are not sure of winning.
6. Set the stage for being the bully's answer (arrange scenarios where the bully must depend upon you).



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B) SOFTEN THE BULLY'S HEART

- REDUCE wounding and thus the need for defenses, if possible, by monitoring peer interaction, avoiding separation-based discipline, shaming and put-downs, harsh criticism, character judgments, etc.
- SHIELD the bully with a safe emotional connection

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Keeping Children Safe

Safe emotional connections with CARING ADULTS are the single most important factor in keeping children safe.

- not anti-bullying programs
- not social responsibility programs
- not social & emotional learning programs

Student-adult relationships should therefore be our first priority.

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SUPPORT THE VICTIM

1. Listen to the student – every time
2. Validate the bullying experience
3. COME ALONG-SIDE and MATCH THE EMOTIONS:
 - “That hurt your feelings.” “That hurts.”
 - “That’s frustrating.”
 - “That seems so unfair.”
 - “You really want him/her to like you.”
 - “That makes you sad.”
4. Help the student to **find their sadness and/or tears**

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HELPING THE VICTIM

Take charge of the student who needs protection

1. Help him/her to find safe places, with safe adults (or older students), throughout the school day.
2. Help to develop dignified ways for him to ask for help and protection from school personnel.
3. Assure the student that you will act (“behind the scenes” if that seems the safest).
4. Script some responses to keep the student safe.

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SCRIPTING RESPONSES

1. DO NOT SUGGEST DIRECT "ALPHA CHALLENGES" (e.g. standing up to the bully).
2. Provide ways of getting "outs" of painful or difficult situations
 - i. Going to the bathroom
 - ii. Saying, "that's interesting – thanks for letting me know."
 - iii. Pretending it doesn't matter.
 - iv. Saying, "I have to go now."
3. Remind them of where else to go to stay out of the bully's way
4. Remind them of who they can go to see to stay out of the bully's way

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ADOPT-A-BULLY

1. Team meeting
2. Identify students "of concern"
3. Prioritize these students for preventative interventions without explanation

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FEELINGS MORE LIKELY TO BE DEFENSIVELY INHIBITED

- feelings of **vulnerability** and **woundedness** (hurt, pain, suffering)
- feelings of **separation** (missing, loss, lack, emptiness, loneliness)
- feelings of **dependence** (neediness, insecurity, lack of control)
- feelings of **embarrassment** including blushing
- feelings of **shyness** and timidity
- feelings of **shame** (something is wrong with me)
- feelings of **futility** (sadness, disappointment, grief, sorrow)
- feelings of **alarm** (apprehension, unsafe, anxiety, fear)
- feelings of **caring** (attachment, concern, empathy, devotion, love investment, compassion, engagement, sympathy)
- feelings of **responsibility** (feel badly, guilty, sorry... feel like making things better or making things work for)

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ADOPT-A-BULLY

4. Assign a mentor
 - Find a way to "collect" and "connect" – e. g. "2 x 10" – say "hello" ten days in a row
 - Find ways to use the alpha instincts - "Could you help me?"
 - Find ways to keep the student out of "tempting" situations by keeping him or her close to a caring adult
5. Find ways to separate students so they can be put into natural HIERARCHIES

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Creating Hierarchical Relationships

FUN FRIDAYS

- All adults in the school share a skill that they enjoy.
- Students can sign up to learn or participate in the activity.
- Older students help younger students.



TAKING CARE OF PLANTS



ELDERS COMING INTO THE SCHOOL
"Knitting the Generations"

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Creating Hierarchical Relationships

What are practices you have in your school that develop these kind of Student - Adult relationships?

What could you do for a student who needs adult mentorship but won't seek it out naturally?

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ULTIMATELY

The opinions of the adults in a student's life

HAVE to matter more than the opinion of the bully (or peers)

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Method of Shared Concern (MSC-m) (modified)

Adaptation of the work of Anatol Pikas
further developed by Ken Rigby

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Method of Shared Concern (MSC-m) (modified) - Outline

Once a "suspected" bullying situation has been identified

- **Phase 1:**
INDIVIDUAL meetings with the bully suspects
- **Phase 2:**
Meeting with the student 'wrongly done by'
- **Phase 3:**
Further individual meetings with the bully suspects
- **Phase 4:**
Further meetings with student 'wrongly done by'

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Identification of a Bullying Situation

- ❑ Become aware of a student or student whom you suspect are being bullied.
- ❑ Become aware of students who are engaging in bullying type behaviour.
 - ✧ The information about the bullying should not come from the "victim"
 - ✧ Avoid the perception that the victim "ratted" on the bully suspects.

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Phase 1: Individual meetings with the bullying suspects

Each student is seen individually starting with the suspected ring-leader

Step 1 : Build confidence

- Adopt a sincere, non-blaming attitude.
- Share your genuine concern about the person being victimized.
- Start with a sentence such as : "I am worried about Tom, I hear that some students have been giving him a hard time lately."

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Phase 1: Individual meetings with the bullying suspects

Step 2 : Transform bullying into shared concern

- The student is asked to explain what he/she knows about the situation.
- Use questions or statements such as:
 - "Do you know what is happening? "
 - "Do you know anything about it?"
 - "How do you see what is happening to Tom?"

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Attitude of the Intervener affects the success of the Method

- Warm and empathetic.
- Believe that the bully suspects are caught in the bullying group dynamic.
- Have a desire to understand the point of view of the bully suspects and a desire to help them.
- Believe that the bully suspects can change their behaviour.

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Phase 1: Individual meetings with the bullying suspects

Step 3: Reaching a TURNING POINT

- This point is reached soon as the student has acknowledged some awareness (not necessarily guilt) relating to what has been happening.
- This requires only the smallest acknowledgement, such as, "I suppose so." or "Yeah, I guess so."



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Phase 1: Individual meetings with the bullying suspects

Step 4: Stimulate constructive solutions

- Ask the student directly what she/he could do to make the situation better.
(Note that the interviewer is not trying to get to the bottom of the matter or to apportion blame.)
- Express approval for any constructive proposal.
- If necessary, suggest a small step that could be taken
- Arrange for a follow-up meeting to see how things are going.

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Phase 1: Individual meetings with the other bullying suspects

- The remaining students in the group are seen **individually**
- Steps 1 to 4 are repeated.
- At this meeting, no threats are made
- No warnings are given.

Close monitoring is essential.

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Phase 2: Meeting with the student 'wrongly done by'

- Meet with the student 'wrongly done by' **after** you have met with all the bully suspects.
- Express concern, sympathy and support over what has been happening.
- Let the him/her know that you have been speaking with the bully suspects and that they are ready to make changes.
- If this is a **provocative** student discuss changes that could be made in their behaviour
- Let the him/her know that you will meet again soon to see how things are working out.

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Phase 3: follow-up meetings

- Further **individual** meetings are held with the suspects to check to see if they have honoured their promises and to monitor progress.
- Follow-up meetings are held with the student 'wrongly done by' to monitor progress.

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Parameters for the Method of Shared Concern

According to Rigby, MSC should NOT to be used:

- In relatively mild cases.
- In very serious cases
- When a violent act has been witnessed by an adult
- When a situation has been reported

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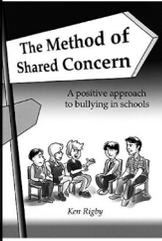
Evaluation of MSC-m

Kathleen Mauro, psychologist (retired)
Peter Hamilton, psycho-educator (retired)
Eastern Townships School Board

- It takes time.
- It is a lot of work until you get used to the Method.
- **Must go back to do follow-up.**
- Students said that it was effective.
- Students wanted to have the follow-up.
- **Built relationships for future interventions.**

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MSC - RESOURCES



The Method of Shared Concern: A Positive Approach to Bullying in Schools by Ken Rigby (2011)

Dr. Ken Rigby:
<http://www.kenrigby.net/11d-Shared-Concern-Method>
www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/

DVD on The Method of Shared Concern
<http://www.readymade.com.au/method>

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MSC - RESOURCES

short summary of how it works:
<http://www.kenrigby.net/11e-Shared-Concern-Method-How-it-Works>

example interviews:
<http://www.esags.tv/child-centred-provision/pastoral-care/northern-ireland-anti-bullying-forum/method-of-shared-concern/>

more interviews:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7Fj7Cmqz-A>

Pikas, Anatol, **New Developments of the Shared Concern Method.** In *School Psychology International* 2002, Vol. 23 (3): 307-326. This article can be found on the web at: <http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/NewPikas.pdf>

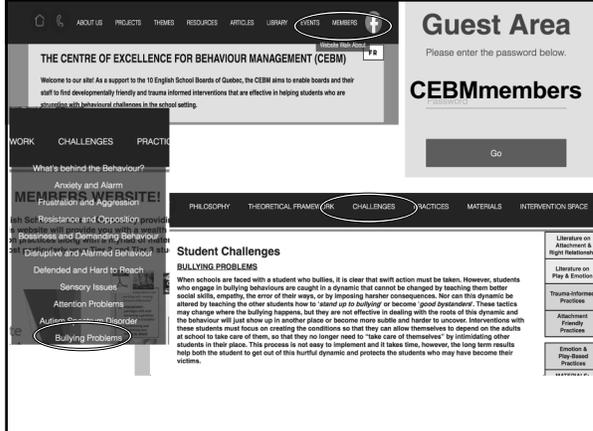
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- **RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS**
- **SOFT HEARTS**

Dr. Gordon Neufeld "Hold on to your Kids"
Chapter 13

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