



## AISCAP

Association of Indian School Counselors  
and Allied Professionals

The National Life Skills,  
Values, School Health  
& Wellness Program



# AISCAP News Letter

## AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP ON BULLYING IN SCHOOLS: Emerging Dynamics, Challenges and Interventions.

On 20th November 2013, *Tagore International School*, VasantVihar, New Delhi hosted the academic session. The Principal **Mrs. Madhulika Sen** opened the dialogue by sharing the pressing concerns faced by schools these days. **Mrs. Anuradha Rai**, Vice Principal *Ambience Public School* was the key resource person who steered the seminar to its depths and widths with her extensive experience as an administrator as well as a teacher.

According to the American Psychological Association, "Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words or more subtle actions. The bullied individual typically has trouble defending him or herself and does nothing to 'cause' the bullying." Bullying can be of any form: verbal taunts, name calling, put-downs, physical violence, threats and intimidation, stealing of money/possessions, exclusion from peer group, ethnic, gender or racial slurs, cyber stalking, spreading falsehoods, public humiliation, etc. Cyber bullying is increasing in popularity as students spend more and more time online. Approximately 60% of Indian students face or observe bullying on their



*The academic session in progress at Tagore International School, New Delhi*

campuses. Most victims do not report the bullying and most adults are completely unaware of it.

There are three types of individuals involved in bullying: the bully, the victim, and the bystander. There is usually a perceived imbalance of power between the bully (who is physically or socially stronger) and the victim and bystanders (who are physically or socially weaker). Bullying is a learned behaviour; home is where children receive their first lessons in moral education. Extremely authoritarian or permissive styles of parenting often lead to children turning to bullying. A neglecting style of parenting often creates children who are the victims of bullying. A student's peer group and school environment is crucial in order to mitigate the prevalence and impact of bullying. The administration, teachers, school counsellor and general student body need to take the widespread existence of bullying extremely seriously. Consistent interventions such as strict disciplinary action, counselling, peer mentoring, and class no-tolerance policies are the only way to eliminate this scourge. Otherwise, the long-term impacts of bullying will show up as violence and criminal behaviour in adult bullies, unhappiness and anxiety in victims, and a sense of helplessness in bystanders.



## PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BULLYING

### School Management

1. Zero tolerance policy for bullying in school, to be written into the code of conduct. Clearly explain what behavior is considered to be bullying. Establish clear rules against bullying and define both desirable and unacceptable behavior.
2. Juvenile law for ragging to be applied to bullying at school level.
3. Awareness workshops for parents, teachers and administration
4. Early intervention and awareness for primary level students by class teacher.
5. Ensure close supervision during recess periods and in hallways, bathrooms, and buses as bullying occurs mostly in these locations.



6. Community service requirement as part of disciplinary action against bullies
7. Schools must allot specific hours for counseling and interventions on bullying.
8. Forming anti-bullying committee in the school. This should include teachers, students and possibly a third party from outside.

### School Counselor

1. New certificate course on bullying, created by CBSE, to be required for all school counselors.
2. Counselors must observe students who are cautious, sensitive, anxious, and quiet. They must also observe boys who are physically weaker than average or students who are physically handicapped or overweight, as they are at a higher risk for being bullied.
3. Create a social environment where there is warmth and acceptance of all students and where there are high standards for student and teacher behavior toward one another. Teacher attitudes toward aggression partly determine how they will react to bullying situations.
4. Teach specific skills and strategies

in the classroom such as emotional awareness, seeing others' perspectives, alternative thinking strategies, and problem solving. Strategies for teaching these skills can include class discussion, role-play, and practice.

5. Provide positive feedback to children who exhibit appropriate social behaviors and model interactions that do not include bullying or aggression. Frequently praise students by specifically describing their positive behavior.
6. Encourage students to reach out to other students. Start peer mentoring programs where older students train and talk to younger students about bullying.
7. Involve parents of both bullies and victims in the process by informing them of their child's positive and negative behaviors and discuss ways to reinforce certain skills at home in order to help them behave better at school.

### Students

1. Group activities on acceptance, tolerance, diversity, gender issues, and peace to be included in life skill programs.



2. Specific workshops on sexual harassment and cyber bullying are required.
3. Compulsory peer mentoring.
4. Assertive training and anger management sessions.

### Parent

1. Must attend workshops for awareness about bullying.
2. Must work on communication between parent and child.
3. Limit the amount of violence children observe on television and in movies. Discuss the consequences of violence in real life.

**Pooja Bakshi, Shivani Sen**

*School Counselor*

*Tagore International School, New Delhi*

## EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR DETECTING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IN SCHOOLS



The following practices implemented in the school setting helps to reveal and identify bullying behaviour among students:

1. Be observant and document what is seen. Monitor the schoolyard, classrooms, vehicles and other places where students interact. If you observe taunting, name calling, mimicking, rude gestures, cruel or racist remarks, hitting, kicking, shoving, biting, scratching, hair-pulling, pinching, spitting, threats, intimidation, exclusion, extortion, insulting notes or graffiti, or unwanted sexualized behaviour, you may be observing bullying and /or illegal harassment. All such behaviour should be documented, reported and investigated.
2. Encourage children to report incidents that they experience or observe. By

listening carefully to what is being said and by taking all complaints seriously, you will encourage students to report bullying that they experience or observe. One must listen for the involvement of silent partners or "ringleaders." These children are bright, popular students who get others to do their "dirty work," knowing that adults in the community will not suspect them of misconduct.

3. Be on the lookout for "Bully/ Victims." These bullies are themselves victims of abuse who have learned aggression from others and are, in turn, aggressive towards weaker children. When a bully is identified, further investigation of the child's circumstances may reveal patterns of violence towards the child. The child may need counseling or other preventive intervention.
4. Listen to and report rumors of bullying, harassment, or abuse that you overhear among students. Among girls, covert bullying behaviour includes spreading malicious gossip, shunning, isolating and ostracizing a particular girl and manipulating friendships. For example, "Aarti is not your best friend anymore. She likes Khushboo better than you." Administrators should investigate

rumors. Often they provide a bread crumb trail to student misconduct.

5. Watch for signs that a child is being victimized. Watch for isolated, lonely children. Investigate why a particular child likes to stay in the classroom during recess. Why does another child stay near adults on the playground? Watch for torn clothing, injuries and missing belongings.
6. Provide close supervision to vulnerable students. Children with special needs are two to three times more likely to be bullied and more likely to bully than others of their age. Children who have been sexually abused or experienced other childhood trauma may be particularly at risk for victimization as well. In addition, children with certain emotional and behavioral difficulties, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorders ADHD or oppositional defiant disorders, may be at risk for bullying others.

**Dr. Poojashivam Jaitly**

*Clinical Psychologist*

*Institute of Child Development & Adolescent Health*

*Moochand Medcity, New Delhi*





"To Police or To....."

Soham's mother was concerned, her son did not look happy. He came home listless and answered her in mono syllables when she spoke to him -

"How was school?"

"Nice"

"What did you do today?"

"Nothing"

"And how are your friends?"

"Fine"

And then one day he finally broke down

"I don't like school"

"Don't like school? Do you want to tell me something?"

In a trembling voice he said - "Mama, Boss has told everyone not to play with me. I eat my lunch by myself and have no one to play with"

"Boss? But who is Boss?"

"He is in my class"

Soham was five years old and had recently joined a new school.

At what age does bullying begin? Why do children bully? Does telling them off stop them from bullying?

Bullying is a malaise that is spreading like an epidemic. For a society that has always taken pride in its deep roots of peace and tranquility, we now talk about the need of anti bullying policies. If you remember the recent Aman Kachroo case when a strapping young lad just out of school was beaten to death by his college mates in a medical college in Himachal; did the college not have an anti bullying policy? Did no one hear him shout in pain or did they choose not to hear him?

Are we being immature in our belief that policies will help schools to get rid of the growing incidences of cruelty amongst children. Look at the west, the reality is that the more we work with getting policies in place the bigger the problem seems to be getting. Does it help to suspend bullies? Do rules and laws really stop anyone from breaking them? Or do we need to do more than that.

I remember reading an article I would like to share with you. The article spoke about the simple yet profound message that the 'Wizard of Oz' has for its readers.

"Dorothy and her friend believed that the 'wizard of Oz' will provide them with what they lacked a brain for the scarecrow, a heart for the tin man, courage for the lion, and a way home for Dorothy. But he in turn sends them on a more treacherous mission to go and kill the Wicked Witch of the West, before he helps them. Fighting against several odds they return to Emerald city victorious only to discover that the wizard

is no wizard but an ordinary mortal like them who can only provide the scarecrow with a head full of bran, pins, and needles, the Tinman with a silk heart stuffed with sawdust, and the Cowardly Lion a potion of "courage". Because of their faith in the Wizard's power, these otherwise useless items make them believe that they now have what they always wanted. The Wizard points out the reality that they already possessed a heart, brain and courage—they just had to be accessed through facing danger. It also turns out that Dorothy didn't need the Wizard's help returning home; she simply needed to wake up from her dream. She realizes that despite mean people like her aunt Miss Gulch, "There is no place like home."

As counselors it is time that we empowered the 'abused' because the truth is that abusive people are a reality of the world around us. We will meet them at all times of our life and in all walks of our life. No amount of rules and policies can rid society of, neither the stepsisters of Cinderella nor the stepmother of Snow White.

We need to learn from 'The Wizard of Oz' that the character traits necessary for overcoming bullying are within each and every one of us, and difficult moments helps us to chisel and refine these traits. We need to coach our children to find ways to deal with bullies so that they can watch how the terrifying power of a bully when confronted melts away just like the Wicked Witch of the West.

Going back to Soham. When Soham's mother went to school and the principal called his class teacher to understand what was happening, to the dismay of all present his class teacher was not even aware that Soham was new to the school. She had thought that he had moved up along with the other students from kindergarten. Is she guilty too? I believe the school could do with a policy on how to help new students feel welcomed in school.

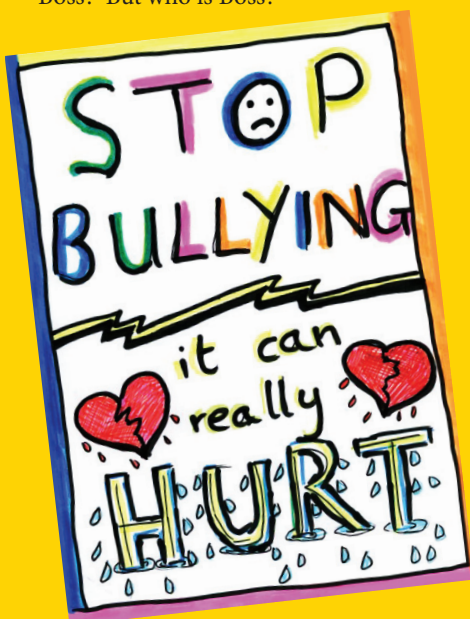
There is a lot we can all do at school to reduce the incidences of bullying.

**Preeti Puri**

*Counselor*

*Bluebells School International, New Delhi*

**Let's Complete The Puzzle**





The academic session at Ambience Public School, New Delhi

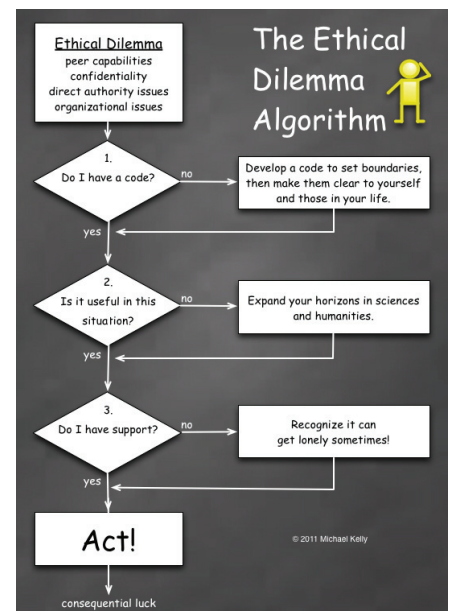
The interactive workshop on **Ethical Dilemmas in School Counseling**- The Context, Emerging Thoughts and Recommendations held on 22nd January 2014 at **Ambience Public School**, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi, proposed the following charter as various issues were discussed and presented before the panel chaired by **Prof. J.L. Pandey**, the board of AISCAP, the Principal **Mrs. Jeanie Aibara** and the Vice Principal **Mrs. Anuradha Rai**.

The academic session highlighting the various Ethical Dilemmas faced during school counseling and the strategies to combat such situation were addressed by **Ms. Mehak Wadhwa**, School Counselor, **Ambience Public School** as the key resource person for the seminar. Twenty two schools represented by school counselors, special educators, teachers, vice-principals and principals were part of the seminar and suggested the following recommendations as various concerns were brainstormed on this open platform.

#### PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Broad general guidelines and specific guidelines with room for improvisation for providing counseling services in schools.
- Well-defined job profile of counselors in order to safeguard the role of the school counselors.
- Involvement of authorities for empowerment and awareness of counseling services.
- Separate counselors for primary, middle and high school level due to the diverse nature of concerns at different stages of development.
- Involvement of parents and teachers as a support group for the counselor and the counselee for maximum effectiveness.
- Compulsory counseling for each student/class to bring out the best in students. Helping them realize their full potential.
- Counseling sessions as part of the time-table with specific time slots on rotational basis.
- Teachers training for 'teachers as counselors' in classroom settings to create a positive non-judgmental environment.

**Mehak Wadhwa**  
Counseling Psychologist  
Ambience Public School, New Delhi



TECHNICAL AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT	
<b>MS. MEHAK WADHWA</b> Counseling Psychologist Ambience Public School, New Delhi mehak.wadhwa21@gmail.com	<b>KAMIYA KUMAR</b> Counselor, Bluebells School International, New Delhi # 9582726226, kamiyakumar@gmail.com
<b>ASTHA BAJAJ</b> Counselor, DPS Mathura Road, New Delhi # 9873485062, asthabajaj@yahoo.com	<b>NEHA DUTTA</b> Counselor, St. Marks School, New Delhi # 9999448826, sportyneha@gmail.com
<b>PRIYANKA GERA</b> University Teaching Asst. Phd Research Scholar # 9873459555, priyankag03@hotmail.com	<b>JAYANTI BANERJEE</b> Counselor, Mother's International School, New Delhi # 9872846551, banerjeejayanti@yahoo.com



#### ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND ALLIED PROFESSIONALS

**Dr. Divya Prasad**  
Sr. Clinical Psychologist & School Consultant  
divyaprasad1973@gmail.com

**Dr. Poojashivam Jaitly**  
Clinical Psychologist & School Consultant  
(M) 9910173330, poojashivamjaitly@gmail.com

**Ms. Astha Sharma**  
Consultant Clinical Psychologist  
(M) 9971203773, astha12sharma@gmail.com