

MINDMATTERS SPOTLIGHTS: BULLYING

Six helpful approaches for responding to bullying

Dr Ken Rigby, a leading Australian bullying researcher, has identified six approaches available to schools for responding to bullying. Being aware of these approaches can assist schools in employing the most appropriate response to bullying incidents.

1 THE TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINARY APPROACH



School staff make it clear that bullying is unacceptable, create rules, and enforce consequences as a deterrent. Commonly used in serious incidents of bullying, and when the incidents have been public.

[Find out more at BullyStoppers](#)

2 STRENGTHENING THE TARGET



Targeted students are supported to respond effectively to the bully, thereby empowering the student and reducing the school's involvement. In each incident schools consider whether the approach is appropriate and how support will be provided. Most often used in low level cases where it is felt the target can develop coping skills.

[Find out more at BullyStoppers](#)

3 MEDIATION



When students on both 'sides' freely agree to seek help from a mediator to resolve the issue. Effective implementation requires appropriately trained staff, and/or students' willingness from both parties to participate, and a monitoring plan once an agreement has been reached.

[Find out more at BullyStoppers](#)

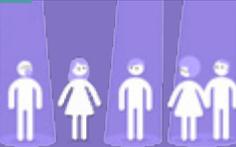
4 RESTORATIVE PRACTICES



All parties take part in a meeting where offenders acknowledge the harm they have caused and then act restoratively to repair relationships (e.g. through an apology and/or compensatory action). Commonly applied where the perpetrator can be convinced to become sincerely remorseful and both parties can agree to work together to prevent a recurrence of bullying.

[Find out more at BullyStoppers](#)

5 SUPPORT GROUP METHOD



A non-punitive approach which begins with a meeting between the practitioner and a targeted student. Subsequently, students who are prepared to support the target meet with the practitioner and the identified perpetrators in order to determine ways in which the situation can be improved. Commonly used with younger students when a group of students is continually upsetting someone.

[Find out more at BullyStoppers](#)

6 THE METHOD OF SHARED CONCERN



A multi-stage, non-punitive approach, it begins by working individually with the students suspected of bullying. The target is then seen and counselled. Next, the suspected bullies meet with the practitioner and devise a plan to resolve the problem. Finally, the plan is shared with the target and the problem resolved at a joint meeting to the satisfaction of all parties. Commonly used in cases of group bullying which do not involve severe or illegal actions.

[Find out more at BullyStoppers](#)

Review the individual case of bullying.

Determine which model/s best suit that case and your school's policy.

Use the links to find out more.

TO FIND OUT MORE, GO TO KENRIGBY.NET OR [BULLY STOPPERS](http://BULLYSTOPPERS).

Adapted from Rigby, K (2010) *Bullying interventions in schools: Six major methods*. Camberwell: ACER

MindMatters is a national mental health initiative for secondary schools developed by beyondblue with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.