Student Facilitated Anti-Bully Program

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Another study conducted by Packman, Lepkowski, Overton, and Smaby (2005) researched a student assist (Elledge et al., 2010). Another study by Allen (2010) further supported the idea of social peer bullying which states, "research has demonstrated that peer engagement is a critical factor in and may actually increase to the end of high school (Elledge et al., 2010)."

Bullying is a student experienced problem yet, students are not vastly involved in the process. This leads to the purpose for this capstone. The intention is to incorporate students into the bullying curriculum currently in place at the middle school, creating the Student Facilitated Bully Project. The project includes a way for the school to implement each year. The goal for the Student Facilitated Bully Project is to ultimately decrease the incidences of bullying in the school. The anticipated outcome is that with student involvement, the incidences of bullying will decrease and students will feel empowered on an individual and group level to prevent bullying.

Relevant Literature

According to PACER’S National Bullying Prevention Center, over 160,000 children miss each day due to a fear of being bullied (2012). It is common for children who are bullied to develop mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety which can outlast a school career, poor academic performance, and in extreme cases, can lead to suicide (Blake et al., 2011). Verbal social victimization is when a person is the target of social bullying when an aggressor uses words to hurt and to exclude (Blake et al., 2011). These dimensions include overt bullying and relational forms of victimization.

- Overt bullying is the physical or verbal forms of bullying such as hitting, kicking, pushing or name calling
- Relational forms of victimization are the indirect forms of bullying such as rumor spreading, and exclusion (Elledge et al., 2010).

Blake et al. (2011) slightly modified and added to these dimensions and described bullying behavior to include the overt, verbal social, nonverbal social, and peer exclusion categories. Overt bullying is when a person is the target of social bullying when an aggressor uses words to hurt and to exclude (Blake et al., 2011). Verbal social victimization is when a person is the target of social bullying when an aggressor uses words to hurt and to exclude (Blake et al., 2011). Overt bullying is the physical or verbal forms of bullying such as hitting, kicking, pushing or name calling. Relational forms of victimization are the indirect forms of bullying such as rumor spreading, and exclusion (Elledge et al., 2010).

Students were invited to attend an informational meeting regarding the bully project. Those who expressed an interest met with the facilitator to discuss the ideas they proposed for the group to complete. Participation in the group was voluntary and open to all who were interested in addressing bullying and victimization at Byron Middle School.

Methodology

Students were invited to attend an informational meeting regarding the bully project. Those who expressed an interest met with the facilitator to discuss the ideas they proposed for the group to complete. Participation in the group was voluntary and open to all who were interested in addressing bullying and victimization at Byron Middle School.

Students created a list of ideas to implement including:
- Making anti-bully posters with slogans and the group’s name
- Announcing 1 fact about bullying weekly
- Presenting interactive skits at the elementary
- Recording and presenting skits at the middle school
- Meeting with incoming 5th graders for additional support
- Present on self-esteem and assertiveness
- Creating a mentor group with the members of the Bully Busters mentoring younger students
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- Presenting at elementary, i.e. skits, role plays teaching about bullying with alternate actors to problem solve a solution
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The anticipated outcome is that with student involvement, the incidences of bullying will decrease and students will feel empowered on an individual and group level to prevent bullying.

Reflection on Project

The facilitator met with the group and introduced the topic of the Student Facilitated Bully Project. The students were excited to be included in the anti-bully project. They came up with numerous ideas from small scale, making posters and developing skits, to large scale, creating a mentor program, monitoring the hallways and cameras, as well making matching skits. The group was able to narrow down the focus for this year to developing skits and creating awareness of the student experienced problem. They also created an abstract plan for next year and the goals they would like to meet.

This year, the group was able to create the basis for the program:
- Name: Bully Busters
- Meeting times: one time weekly
- Purpose: to reduce bullying in the Byron Middle School
- Activities accomplished:
  - Developing skits and incorporating ICT (Interrupt, Compliment, and Inquire)

The students also developed a questionnaire for teacher completion. This was developed as a member of the group who voiced the opinion that only students took the annual bully survey the school implemented. Other group members supported this statement and shared that although bullying in a student experienced problem, teachers were the ones who dealt with it. The group was interested in finding out how much the teachers actually witnessed, how often they intervened, and if their interventions were effective. The group shared a feeling of hopelessness that the teachers did not notice bullying and felt that they did not intervene enough. One student in particular shared that the students did not witness the school’s actions in regard to bullying and therefore, felt that the school did nothing. This was addressed, and the students were assured that the school did indeed take action when a report of bullying was made. The school had previously had a “Bully Box” where students could fill out a report if they were victims or witnesses of bullying. Students voiced that they did not like this reporting system as it did not seem to be confidential located in a high traffic area where people could visibly see someone filling out a report.

This system was recently changed, however, to be an online reporting system. Students can now call, email, or text the online reporting system to make a report of bullying.

Recommendations for Future Use

The Bully Busters created a list of activities that they would like to accomplish for the next 2012-2013 school year which includes:
- Posters
- Skits
- Announcing one fact about bullying weekly
- Presenting interactive skits at the elementary
- Recording and presenting skits at the middle school
- Meeting with incoming 5th graders for additional support
- Present on self-esteem and assertiveness
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References

References are available from the author upon request.