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**Improving the Social and Intellectual Climate in
Elementary Schools by Addressing Bully-Victim-Bystander
Power Struggles***

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As all schoolteachers and counselors know, children are often cruel in their behaviors in social situations. Although the spine-chilling novel Lord of the Flies exaggerates the cruelty of children, it should be remembered that the author, William Golding, had been a public school teacher!

The negative impact of bullying on students is of growing concern to elementary school educators and counselors (Olweus, 1991, 1992; Twemlow, Sacco, & Williams, 1996). Although power struggles are an expected part of developmental milestones (Coie, Dodge, Terry, & Wright, 1991), nonetheless, bullying is a pathological variant of power struggles which foster absenteeism, poor academic achievement, and other possible consequences of an unsafe environment in elementary schools, including violence.

The intellectual development of elementary school children in the latency years has, as Eisold points out in Chapter 2, a solid ground in certain developmental milestones including the capacity to inhibit and sublimate aggressive impulse, together with emerging capacity to abstract, symbolize, and self reflect. This volume and its predecessor highlight the critical role of psychological development as a necessary precondition for intellectual learning (Cohen, 1999). With these facts in mind, we developed and tested a school-as-a-whole focused intervention to reduce power struggles and improve the atmosphere for social growth and intellectual learning in a elementary school in the Midwest: C.A.P.S.L.E. : Creating a Peaceful School Learning Environment (Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, Evans, Gies, & Ewbank, 2000).

A Review of Recent Literature

The last seven years has seen an explosion of published articles on bully and victim issues. The pioneer in that research is Dan Olweus (1991, 1992, 1994, 1995), a Norwegian Psychologist who conducted several large-scale studies of bullies and victims. He found that bullies are usually physically large and fascinated with dominance; they are impulsive, lacking in empathy, and they have a proclivity for negative actions. He identified victims as weaker and smaller than bullies, and insecure, depressed, and suffering from low self-esteem. Olweus also found that younger students are more likely to be bullied than older students especially in the earlier grades, with this tendency leveling off in Middle School. In a study in Italian schools, Genta and colleagues (1996), used questionnaires similar to those used by Olweus and found that boys are more likely to admit to bullying than girls, and that bullying occurs between children in the same social class. In a Canadian study, Bentley and Li (1995), also found that victims tend to be younger or close in age to these children who bullied them. This study of fourth through sixth graders found that 21.3% of the children were bullied and 11.6% admitted bullying others. The playground is the main location for bullying, and the bullies tend to be older boys.

Boulton and Smith (1994) reported on a study of 9-year-old British school children in which both bullies and victims are rated as unpopular by their peers. Slee (1995) found that both bullies and victims in Australian schools have poor health status, often with severe depression. Slee (1993) also found that bullying episodes last six months or more and that victims are less popular, with low self-esteem, and feel unsafe at school. Bullies do not like school.

Victimization in the elementary grades may create a role that can last for life. For example, Bernstein and Watson (1997) report that victims remain victims for most of their lives with readily identifiable characteristics. For example, victims stand out as easy targets, and once targeted, they tend to remain targets regardless of the situation.

Boulton (1996) found that boy bullies tend to bully both males and females, but for the most part tend to favor same-sex victims. Also, this British study hinted that girls bullying boys may be an under-reported activity at school, a position with which we strongly agree. Power, Dyson, and Wozniak (1997) interviewed young Scottish offenders in institutions and found that victims tend to be convicted of less violent offenses than bullies. They found that the longer an offender remains in an institution, the greater the chance of becoming a bully.

Bowers, Smith, and Binney (1994) and Austin and Joseph (1996) discovered that there is a distinct group who they call bully-victim, representing a mixed group of children who both bully and are victimized also, similar to a group that Olweus calls provocative victims (Olweus, 1992). Lowenstein (1995), using the interview techniques, found that bullies are also often targets of bullying themselves and are perceptive about what makes them an easy target for bullying.

Salmivalli (1995) studied hundreds of Finnish school children and identified several other roles including reinforcer of the bully, assistant to the bully, defender of the victim, and outsider. Boys are more associated with the roles of bully, reinforcer, and assistant. Girls are associated with the roles of defender and outsider. Thus, current research highlights the complex nature of the bully-victim-bystander relationship; with these roles being fluid and heavily dependent on the social climate.

Batsche, George, and Knoff (1994) found that the incidence of bullying in elementary schools is increasing, with less prosocial behavior and respect for others in the schools examined. This research supports the notion that students believe that adults in the school environment do little to discourage bullying and that students are poorly equipped to handle bullying. Menesini and colleagues (1997) found that children rarely intervene in bullying situations; instead teachers are seen as the responsible party who are entrusted to intervene. They found that girls are more empathic toward victims and are more likely than boys to respond to help a victim.

The problem of bullying has its roots in the family; Berdondini and Smith (1996) studied families of identified bullies in Italian elementary schools and found an increased absence of fathers, with more broken marriages in families with bullies. Rican (1995) studied Czech children and reported that parents' increased tolerance of aggressive behavior is a key determinant of problems in the families of bullying children and that self-centeredness is prominent in families of both bullies and victims. Rigby (1994), studying a cohort of 856 Australian children, found that the families of bullies function less well than other families and that female bullies have the most dysfunctional families. Oliver, Oaks, and Hoover (1994) describe the families of bullies as emotionally cool, limited in structure and rules, and high in social isolation; with increased parental conflict, positively reinforced aggression, punished non-aggression, and increased rigidity. Victims' families are mostly over-involved and enmeshed.

Programs to address bullying in schools are proliferating, but vary in degree and sophistication in the evaluation of their effectiveness. Several programs are summarized in Melton and Limber (1998). School Conflict Resolution programs are currently in wide

use in schools, but differ significantly in their approach from the approach discussed in this chapter, i.e., C.A.P.S.L.E. Although conflict resolution efforts use peer mediation, as we do for some aspects of our program, the central focus of C.A.P.S.L.E. is on the group, as a whole, with a focus on school climate rather than individual problems and conflicts. We emphasize a nonpathologizing approach to power struggles, rather than extracting the problem children from the classroom context for special attention.

The Bully-Victim-Bystander Model

Psychoanalytic including Adlerian group theory helped inform the conceptualization for our model (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964). Adler describes a healthy attitude as a sense of oneness and identification with the community, with concern for others and their welfare, that is without power struggles within the community group (school). A student who is excluded from belonging to the school group either becomes an outsider (victim) with attendant psychological effects or instead strives to find a place in the group by “proving” him or herself in order to belong (bully). This bully-victim-bystander interaction interrupts the healthy identification with the school group by creating a power struggle for the child resulting from the asymmetrical coercive power relationships and leading to the exclusion of some children from the group. There is attendant disruption of the whole school climate and a consequent reduction in the optimal atmosphere for learning.

An alternative bully-victim-bystander model is one which sees bullying as part of an interactional process that has three principal social roles and a limited number of subtypes. This model was developed by Twemlow, Sacco, and Williams (1996) and follows the pioneering work of Olweus (1991) who worked in Scandinavian schools.

This bully-victim-bystander model creates a metaphor that can be used as a school-wide non-pathologizing psychoeducational model addressed to all participants in this drama. As a result, the school counselor is not as often in the position of having to identify individuals and create solutions for them, but instead facilitates a preventively focussed school-wide model of education which addresses the impact of the misuses of power relationships between students, between students and teachers, and between parents and school personnel.

This model also suggests a three dimensional process with a stage upon which students and teachers, administrative personnel, support personnel, and parents enact the various dramas that can be understood as changing combinations of the roles of bully, victim, and bystander. Thus, any individual act of bullying or victimization has by definition a third participant: an audience, the bystander. This bystander group is an intricate facilitator of the evolution of the problem within the school and in the community. Bystanders can have bully, victim, avoidant, or ambivalent dispositions and can be identified by their passive (victim-bystander and avoidant) or active (bully-bystander and ambivalent) participation in any ongoing interaction between a bully and a victim.

Three Types of Bullies

Bullies are individuals who misuse their power over others to create negative consequences and discomfort for another. Our typology of bullies divides them into three general categories (Twemlow, Sacco, & Williams, 1996). The first is the sadistic bully who typically orchestrates much of the trouble within the school. This student often has high self-esteem, low anxiety, excellent social skills, and a rather cold-hearted proclivity

to engage other students in harmful acts. The second is the agitated bully who is commonly given the diagnosis of ADHD. This bully is easily activated by a sadistic bully into pushing other kids around. The third type of bully is the depressed bully who has low esteem, whines and tattles, and who engages adults and peers in negative actions. The depressed bully is usually not liked by teachers and is most often caught in the act of bullying by teachers or is scapegoated by peers.

Victims

Victims are characterized by a submissive and passive attitude. These students often fail to make a place for themselves within the group and usually suffer from low self-esteem. A provocative subtype masks the passivity with cycles of submission and aggression (Olweus, 1992). These children are the natural targets for bullies because they attract the sadistic or aggressive element resulting from their submissive stance. Two further subtypes are described in high school students where victims tend to crystallize into martyr and rescuer clusters also (Twemlow, Sacco, & Williams, 1996).

The Bystanders Role

Bystanders include the vast majority of the student population. This “audience” are children who can be characterized as different types depending upon the relationship with the bully (vicarious identification with the bully): victim type (a frozen, frightened bystander); avoidant (denying the existence of a problem with power struggles in the school); and ambivalent (unsure of what to do and not yet in fixed pathological roles) (Twemlow, 1999). This is the population from which new bullies and victims arise should the school adopt a procedure of expulsion and remove the identified bully or victim from the school in an attempt to solve the larger disruptive influence of their

interactions. Thus, the bystander population is essentially a rather diverse combination of potential bullies and victims in a dormant or passive state.

A great deal of emphasis in the literature has been placed on the roles of the bully especially. School counselors have often been trained to identify both victim and bully roles and to understand the relationship between them. Also, it is understood that both bullies and victims can change roles, sometimes a victim bullies and vice versa.

The bystander is the invisible engine in the cycle of bullying. If bully and victim are social roles for the drama of bullying, then bystanders are the audience. As such, the nature of the bully-victim interaction, or desired drama, is shaped and maintained by the demand of the audience of bystanders. Unlike theater, bystanders do not stay passive and remain in their seats while the drama unfolds.

It is human nature to want to watch or peek. The most disciplined of us find it difficult not to watch a fight on the street, or to slow down to peek at an accident on the road. People are naturally curious and experience vicarious thrills from observing high-stimulation activity.

In an environment that does not target the role of the bystander, the bully has the advantage. No adult blames the audience, just the players. As long as there is a demand for a show, and the audience watches for free, the show will go on. The phenomenon of bystanding becomes even more central as the student progresses through the elementary grades and into Middle and High school. In the later grades, the phenomenon of talking about who will fight who after school can become a preoccupation. Roving “cockfights” can dominate the social climate and exert a very destructive force on the school.

In the early grades, the bystanders are open to suggestion and can be easily lured into one of these roles. The longer the bystander is allowed to watch and not be considered part of the problem, the more experience the bystander has in assuming and trying on new and dysfunctional social roles at school. The innocence of the observer is maintained when the focus is on the players of bully and victim only.

The bystander role is very catchy. When one person stops to look, a crowd is sure to follow. There is safety in numbers. When the class clown acts up, the teacher is forced to enter the drama. If the teacher becomes a bystander, then the clown becomes the star and everyone else becomes the audience and learning stops. If the teacher engages the clown, then the clown is calling the shots if the teacher cannot immediately regain control. If a principal does not support the teacher and the clown continues to plan, then the principal becomes a bystander, the teacher the victim, and the clown the bully.

Power Struggles in Schools: Some Examples

The effect on the overall school climate of subtle and not so subtle power struggle can be illustrated by a series of examples.

Bullying of students by teachers

The assistant principal of a Denver, Colorado middle school suspended some 97 students over a 3-day period for a variety of nonviolent infractions. In defense of his action he argued, “the troublemakers weren’t doing us any good. They were just interrupting the educational process for good students who come to school every day” (Davila, 1995, p. 18). Within a few days the school was in a state of virtual anarchy with direct confrontation of teachers by students, and many angry phone calls from parents to

local politicians and school administration. The problem with teachers who bully students is a highly sensitive one relatively unexplored in the literature and which we will address in a later publication.

Bullying of teachers by students

This was well illustrated in a school in which the teachers decided to allow the school classes to be organized around local indigenous gangs rather than by age and academic achievement. What was striking in this particular intervention was that the teachers, including the principal, did not see that process as bullying and instead viewed the suggested interventions as constructive. Outside consultation revealed a pattern by which the staff identified with the aggressor, reflecting deep fears of the gangs and their impact on the school. During a staff consultation, the staff, including the principal, became quite emotional and were ultimately able to reflect on the irrationality of their proposal.

Complex Bully-Victim-Bystander Interactions

The incident that crystallized the pervasive bully-victim-bystander interaction was one in which a window was broken in a fifth grade classroom and the incident was blamed on another student. The situation was a result of collusion between the sadistic bully and other class members, who were threatened with serious trouble if they did not lie about who had broken the window. The submissive victim simply acquiesced and agreed that he had done it. The bully involved had a history of following through with his threats, including physical mistreatment of other children, vandalizing property, painting graffiti on school property, damaging library books, and so on. The submissive child victim eventually ended up in psychiatric care.

Through a circuitous route from counselor to parent and later a complaint to the school principal, the whole issue was brought to the foreground. The school had had increasing problems with out-of-school suspensions and other disciplinary referrals, yet all took place in an apparently quiet school environment. The children rarely looked happy, and there was little laughter in the corridors or on the playgrounds. The principal had difficulty in dealing with this particular incident because of the long history of trouble with the family of the bullying child.

Both parents of the bully had a history of frequent complaints to the school board and school administration members about the ill treatment of their children in previous schools. The family had several severely dysfunctional children and difficulties with money and employment, thus eliciting sympathy. While neither parent participated in any school activities, nor worked within the PTO structure, they were frequent visitors to the school with complaints about how their children were being treated; this included accusations of racial, religious, and other forms of discrimination. Interactions between the mother and the principal involved thinly veiled threats to the principal with comments such as, "You don't have to worry, I'm not going to hit you. I don't do things like that" a provocative response on the mother's part to presumably nonverbal submissiveness.

It became apparent that the bullying boy in the classroom was actually the instrument of his older sister's bullying. He performed that dirty work for his sister. In this instance, the class of children became victimized bystanders to the sadistic manipulations of the bully and the submissive victim child became the casualty or scapegoat. The staff of the school, led by the principal, were already in the position of victim bystanders to a bullying family who encourage highly ambivalent feelings

complicated by threat of litigation against the school. The school administration's unconscious denial of this threat caused them to delay action until a crisis occurred. The intervention to be outlined later was successful particularly because it did not pathologize the bullies concerned and in fact ended with the parents of the bullying children becoming involved with the program and becoming instructors and promoters of the program. Although the submissive victim continued to need psychiatric treatment, the treatment was made more effective, we believe, by the interactional approach to the school climate as a whole.

Roles of administrative staff and school board

The particular roles of administrative staff within the school and on the school board are also very important for the overall effectiveness of this model (C.A.P.S.L.E.). What's good for the goose is good for the gander, is a truism that is important in this context. Bullying behavior by any personnel acts as a negative model for children in that regard. For example, it is not uncommon for there to be overt conflict between school administration and staff over issues like salary and conditions of employment, in which the administration are seen as bullying and unreasonable. Staff who become depressed and angry about these issues transmit their feelings to their students, even if they are not overtly discussed in their presence. Similarly, the influence of school secretaries and school custodial and janitorial personnel have a time honored role as part of the informal process that can create a bully-victim-bystander atmosphere. Special problems in such school personnel that are not discussed openly often exert an indirect influence on school climate, reflected for example in failing academic achievement and increasing disciplinary referrals.

C.A.P.S.L.E. Program Discription

This program has two core and two support components. The core components that should be used in all schools are Zero Tolerance for bullying, bystanding, and being a victim and the Gentle Warrior martial arts based program. The two support programs that can be used if the conditions of the school warrant it are Peer Mentorship and the Bruno program, an adult membership approach.

Zero Tolerance for bullying, bystanding, and being a victim

Specifically, posters are placed at strategic points around the school depicting desirable behaviors to re-enforce the zero tolerance central theme of the program. The posters cover the following topics:

Nine Ways to Handle Bullies	The Manners and Social Skills of a Good Elementary School Student
Are you a Bully?	What is a Gentle Warrior? (emphasizing service to others and empathy)
Are you a Victim?	Are you Getting Angry?
Are you a Bystander?	The Self-Protective Response (a quick way of relaxing the body)
Right Speech (a way of interacting with people non-coercively)	

Next, the posters are supported by regular classroom discussions about the bully-victim-bystander relationship, either in half-hour segments or in one full period each semester. Teachers continue reinforcement with such techniques as a joke of the day keeping conscious the importance of dealing with power struggles.

Once each semester a six session Family Power Struggles workshop is conducted collaboratively between parents and the coordinator of the C.A.P.S.L.E. program. The workshops use role-play to help bring about an understanding of power struggles and also offer solutions to family conflicts. Several rewards are developed for each class when the

class succeeds in keeping fighting and conflict out of the classroom or school, including a special flag for each grade and a school Peace Flag. The children who cause the disruption take the flag down, and if a school has 150 consecutive days of peace, a visit from a local dignitary is suggested. Many other forms of reinforcement are included: patches, buttons, magnets, and stickers depicting various aspects of the bully-victim-bystander relationship.

In each monthly school newsletter an article is written by one of the program workers on some aspect of how the school is responding. A C.A.P.S.L.E. leadership group meets monthly, which could also be the School Mental Health Team. At a minimum this team should include the principal of the school, a designated mental health worker (usually a school counselor), and representatives from each aspect of the program including older children when appropriate. The main purpose of this support program is to monitor the Zero Tolerance for Bullying since it is most important that the issue never be allowed to become routine.

The Gentle Warrior Program

Each school year two 12-week training modules are conducted, either by outside martial artists or with a trained P.E. teacher or other interested person. One session a week is used and all children in the classroom should participate without pathologizing them. The Lesson Plan includes the following elements: a relaxation period; a question and answer period around a discussion of self-respect, self-control, and respect for others; stretching and muscle strengthening exercises; and certain martial arts techniques. Although no kicking or punching techniques are used, balancing, falling safely, defensive positioning, and blocking and release techniques are taught. Then there is fun style role

playing to illustrate bully-victim-bystander relationships and where possible reading stories chosen from a variety of classical sources to illustrate aspects of the code of conduct. Sources include Aesops Fables, Plato, and Thomas Jefferson. A variety of tips for parents is circulated each week with the child's take home folder to suggest that parents go over the issues with their children to reinforce the social and physical skills learned. Parents and teachers are encouraged to participate in the program.

It should be noted that martial arts is the metaphor used to engage the whole school in an ongoing discussion of power struggles and the bully-victim-bystander interaction. Other techniques can be equally effective, for example, sports, dance, theater, and debate.

The Bruno Program

The importance of the containing metaphor or adult protective shield (Sacco & Twemlow, 1997; Twemlow & Sacco, 1996) evolved from our work in Jamaican Schools and Communities. We adopted the name "Bruno" for these adult mentors, a term applied to them by Jamaican children, to describe a loyal "yard dog" who is not vicious, but is helpful, protective, and caring. This warm, gentle, and "can do" attitude is a metaphor for a way to communicate within the culture of the school that there is control and order that alters the atmosphere.

Adult mentors, preferably male, are recruited from surrounding districts and sometimes retirement homes and assisted by older students to monitor the power dynamics of the school climate. They specifically are most functional during recess, lunch hour, and before and after school with minimum involvement in the actual classrooms and intellectual activity. The adult mentor is paired with an honor patrol, a

fifth grade child who assists that mentor and especially to informally assist with the creation of rules for games, especially problematic games like basketball and the use of play equipment.

Peer Mentorship Program

High school students are recruited from the high school to which many of the children at the elementary school will eventually go. The high school students benefit from the involvement since they often have had trouble with disruptiveness and are given credit for the work done. Several times a week they assist students in academic learning and in conflict resolution, and to a lesser extent, they help children identify personal problems and issues. Training is given to the mentors but the majority of the training takes place during ongoing weekly supervision. They are trained to deal gently with children's secrets and confidences; they are also trained to help children solve physical violence problems and an emphasis is placed on the importance of keeping one's word; not acting superior; and being forgiving, compassionate, honest, and sincere. Mentors are trained with role playing scenarios for situations that they may come across; for example, a child who won't stop crying, an uncooperative child, a withdrawn child, and so forth.

Results of a Controlled Study of C.A.P.S.L.E.

The results of a four year controlled study of this program are reported in Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, Evans, Gies, and Ewbank (2000). There is a dramatic reduction of informal notifications to the principal of serious infractions compared to the control school and a significant reduction in out of school suspensions over the four-year period of the study. For the 1997-1998 school year the difference between experimental and control schools was at ($p < .004$) level for OSS with the difference between

experimental and control school getting more and more significant over time. (A full report on statistics can be requested from Stuart W. Twemlow, M.D.). Dramatic improvement in academic achievement is demonstrated in comparing the standardized Metropolitan Achievement test scores of third and fifth graders. The difference on composite tests scores show an improvement in the experimental school from the 40th percentile to the 58th percentile, with especially strong improvement in the reading scores ($p < .0001$ level).

These analyses indicate that the school's overall performance improved as well as individual student's performance improving more significantly in the experimental school than in the comparison school. As expected, the primary improvement in these academic achievements tests scores are in the children who did not have particular problems, that is, they are not classified as bullies, victims, or bystanders by school teachers. It is these children who in fact suffer the most when classrooms are disruptive. One teacher commented that by the second year of the program in an average classroom period of 45 minutes usually 20 minutes were spent setting the children down. After the program became effective the full period was available for teaching. General measures of school safety show that older children are quickest to benefit and feel more safe at school especially. The younger children are the slowest to improve.

Teacher rated problem behaviors in children of the Gentle Warrior program also show a significant change with a reduction in dependency, tendency to be withdrawn, and less victimized behavior. In general, this more outwardly directed program results in the most significant and observable changes in children who tend to be quiet withdrawn victims who have the poorest academic achievement of any group much poorer than for

example of the bullying children. These “wall flowers” show a dramatic shift in an ability to be assertive with an ameliorating effect on the bully, necessitating less direct intervention by the disciplining teacher.

Principles of Implementing a Successful Psychoeducational Model with the School

Counselor as Facilitator

School counselors have traditionally been the identified resource to assist teachers in managing disruptive students. Every school has a disciplinary code and is led by a principal with certain values and attitudes toward discipline. Thus, a counselor may be in the position of having to respond to a principal who is authoritarian or submissive and hands-off with student aggression. Traditional counselor responses target either the victim or the bully in aggressive acting out, or respond to a teacher’s request to remove a child because of a series of incidents that result in one student being identified as the problem

The alternative suggested in this chapter involves an intervention strategy that places the counselor in a dual role. In addition to the traditional individual approach, the counselor becomes a change agent targeting the entire school climate. This social interventionist role requires the counselor to develop and manage a school-wide program to educate students, support staff, teachers, and parents on the negative aspects of such power struggles since disruptiveness in the school is seen as a direct result of the ongoing interactions of social roles, including the bully, victim, and bystander, and the results from unmanaged coercive power interactions between bullies and their victims under the watchful eyes of the bystanders.

Often, the counselor can identify these roles, but there is usually no systematic approach in place for everyone in the school to be proactive and learn how to manage the harmful roles of bully-victim-bystander. The younger the child, the more impressionable they are to simple and positive messages. Programs that target these social roles can encourage positive behavior by illustrating the undesirability of being a bully, victim, or bystander and by providing a socially acceptable language with behavioral skills to manage these struggles.

The School Counselor in this dual role as consultant and monitor of the school climate and helper for individual problem students fits very well with the Comer model school development program (Comer, 1993), now in use in over 800 schools around the nation. This model uses a participant management, child-centered focus with the school counselor in a counseling and preventive role on the mental health team. This program encourages in-depth parent and community involvement in school governance and a mental health team which is responsible for school climate also. Widespread involvement of the community surrounding the school, from which the children come, is encouraged in line with the findings of Elias and colleagues (1997).

Besides Comer, other recent writings also suggest that school counselors shift their role from “counselor as clinician” to a more preventively focussed approach (Nystul, 1993). It is impossible to create this type of intervention without the full cooperation of the school leadership and administration, parents, and outside volunteers. These programs only work when the change agent is successful at engaging all levels of the school in solving this problem, since the specific interventions are metaphors to engage all levels of the school in the process. For example in the C.A.P.S.L.E. program,

martial arts is used as such a metaphor; however, others such as art, music, dance, drama or sports could be used equally successfully, provided that multiple levels of staff and students are engaged in a process that targets the misuse of the power relationship in a nonpathologizing way.

Bell and Suggs (1998) propose a sports metaphor to promote resiliency in children. Heart is defined by them as that extra mile needed to master a sports drill or technique. They feel that such achievement inoculates the child against stress and low self-esteem, similar to the extra self-confidence that Gentle Warrior training confers especially on victimized and bystander children.

Thus, the first action step is to engage interest from all levels of the school in a project targeting the bully-victim-bystander interaction. Since there is considerable denial in many school systems regarding violence and disruptive power struggles, prevention is greatly enhanced when the school counselor engages the principal in exploring an intervention for the entire school rather than just targeting problem students. The principal as the leader needs to be convinced that this is the appropriate direction and then commit the staff resources to proceed.

The second step is to create a plan that reflects the input of all levels of the school and surrounding community. These programs work best when a concept is kept simple and the school is allowed to express its own cultural values in the design and implementation of an intervention. The message needs to be kept the same: power struggles are intolerable, standing by and watching someone being bullied is not acceptable, and victims need to learn to be assertive and reach out for the resources they need. Once this message is etched in the minds of the change agents, then the specific

vehicle becomes less important than maintaining the purity and the consistency of the message. When a majority of the school staff and students practice the language of the bully-victim-bystander interaction, then a peaceful and creative school learning environment can become a reality.

How would Steven and Malika fare in such a school? There would be considerable potential gains for each child. Steven would likely develop greater comfort with his peers and struggle less gaining their attention with boastfulness, since his class would be having discussions about showing off as a potential put down to others (bullying). Steven might also become more expressive and assertive about his serious concerns about both his troubled parents, insisting that they develop skills to interact with him about these important matters.

Malika is about to enter middle school where bullying behavior peaks. In her unsafe school environment this program could help her develop self-defense skills, and, in addition, a variety of ways to handle the numerous power struggles she will encounter. Malika seems to be developing some bullying behaviors herself including gossiping and tattling, as well as outbursts of rudeness. C.A.P.S.L.E. will likely help her become more self-aware, self-reflective, and thus self-correcting. The program could help both these children whose opportunities and backgrounds are so different.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have outlined the philosophy and techniques of an intervention to reduce violence in schools and to create a peaceful learning environment. The intervention focuses on the school climate and not on mentally ill children. By its attention to the dialectical relationship between Bully, Victim, and the Bystanding

audience, all students, staff, and parents become part of the problem and thus also part of the solution. Once coercive power struggles are settled, the climate usually becomes conducive to both academic learning and a happy and stress-free environment for teachers and students.

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