Bullying Prevention and Intervention Training in DC Educational Institutions

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Training overview

- 4 sessions
  - Intervention
    - The Youth Bullying Prevention Act
    - Scenarios and best practices
  - Prevention
    - What is school climate? - and two of the eight key elements of a positive school climate
    - The eight key elements continued, resources and conclusion

Session 1

Bullying legislation

Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012 (YBPA)

- Signed into law on June 22, 2012
- All D.C. youth-serving agencies must have a policy

Bullying prevention in the District of Columbia

Two meanings of the YBPA

Letter of the Law
  “Intervention”
  9 Requirements

Spirit of the Law
  “Prevention”
  8 Elements
Requirements of the Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012

- All youth-serving agencies are required to have a bullying prevention policy that includes:
  - Definition
  - Consequences and flexibility
  - Reporting
  - Investigation
  - Appeals
- Most DC schools have a compliant policy
- We cover the key elements here to ensure you know your policy

Find your policy:

Definition

- "Severe, pervasive, or persistent" act or conduct, whether physical, electronic, or verbal...
- 24 characteristics bullying may be based on:
  - actual or perceived race
  - sex
  - disability
  - source of income
  - sexual orientation
  - etc.
- Clauses re predicted outcome:
  - fear of physical harm, detriment to physical or mental health, interference with academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges provided by a school, etc.

Key points: Bullying based on characteristics

- Aggressor and victim have different characteristics – doesn’t mean bullying was based on that characteristic.
- "Actual or perceived"
- Friends’ characteristics
- Aggressor and victim can have the same characteristic
- Does not have to be based on a characteristic

Consequences and flexibility

- Designed to correct, prevent, and protect
- Must be flexible
  - Incidents are unique, as are appropriate consequences.
    - Nature
    - Developmental age
    - History of problem behavior
Reporting

• Procedure for reporting bullying and retaliation
  • Policy must include language regarding retaliation
• Anonymity
  • No formal response based solely on anonymous report

Investigation

• Prompt investigation of:
  • reports of policy violations
  • complaints of bullying or retaliation
• Name and contact information for designated investigator

Appeals

• Appeal process for: a person accused of bullying, a target of bullying, and any individual not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation.
• Prohibits retaliation
• Appeals are made to the designated higher-level authority
  • 30 days
  • Secondary investigation completed within 30 days, unless:
    • additional time
    • higher-level authority dictates in writing
    • 15 days
• Human Rights Act

Understanding cyberbullying in the context of the YBPA

Cyberbullying

Prohibitions on bullying that occurs:

“on its property, including electronic communication on, or with, its property”, and

“through electronic communication to the extent that it is directed at a youth and it substantially interferes with the youth’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the agency, education institution or grantee”

Responsibility around cyberbullying

• During agency hours
• Using agency property
• Outside agency’s hours, on personal or other technology, if affecting ability to use services
  • NOT covered if it is NOT affecting youth’s ability to use services
If cyberbullying is not covered under the policy

- Digital citizenship
- Monitor youth:
  - indicator for in-person bullying
  - indicator for ongoing conflict

Session 1: Take-aways

- What was your biggest take-away from this session?
- Are you more comfortable with this content?
- How could you apply this content to our school's context?
- Was there anything in this training that surprised you?

Session 2
Bullying scenarios and best practices

D.C. Youth Bullying Prevention Checklist

- Step-by-step guide for investigating reports of bullying
- Students should be interviewed separately
- A written report from students is ideal, when age appropriate
- If it is a cyberbullying report, keep screenshots or printouts of the offensive behavior

Scenario 1: Is this bullying?
Scenario 1: checklist

1. Type of report
2. Involved students
3. Type of behavior
4. Context
5. Bullying
   • Severe?
   • Pervasive?
   • Persistent?

Is this bullying?

Scenario 2: checklist

1. Type of report
2. Involved students
3. Type of behavior
4. Context
5. Bullying
   • Severe?
   • Pervasive?
   • Persistent?

Is this bullying?

Scenario 3: checklist

1. Type of report
2. Involved students
3. Type of behavior
4. Context
5. Bullying
   • Severe?
   • Pervasive?
   • Persistent?

Is this bullying?

Scenario 2: Is this bullying?

Is this bullying?

Scenario 3: Is this bullying?

Is this bullying?

Best practices for intervention
When to notify parents

- Is there risk of harm in notifying parents?
  - Evaluate
  - Document reasons, for example:
    - Outing of a student
    - Known violent home environment

Addressing student needs even if bullying is not determined

- Students feel hurt even if bullying cannot be substantiated under the YBPA policy
- Protection and safety
- Supporting a harmed student does not require punishment of the accused student
  - Collaborate to support victim and to prevent further harm
- Increase monitoring of specific youth

Alternatives to exclusionary discipline

- Exclusionary discipline
  - What is it?
  - Why seek an alternative?
- Restorative justice
  - Strategies
  - Why it works
- Understand outside factors

Common misdirections

Session 2: Take-aways...

- What was your biggest take-away from this session?
- Are you more comfortable with this content?
- What concrete next steps could you take after today’s session?
- Think of a situation during which you could apply what you learned in today’s session.

Session 3 Prevention; An introduction to school climate and the 8 key elements
The spirit of the law: prevention

“It is the spirit and not the form of law that keeps justice alive.”
- Earl Warren, Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Bullying policy vs. prevention

- YBPA school policies focus on reacting and responding to incidents of bullying as they occur
- To decrease rates, we must prevent bullying, not just react
  - Youth Bullying Prevention Act

How do you prevent bullying?

Start with improving school climate

- All schools are unique
- Building school climate is preventive and reactive

School climate: Rainy and sunny days

What is a positive school climate?

- Is characterized by a common language, vision, and experience
- Allows students to thrive and focus on learning
- Minimizes negative experiences and outcomes
- Engages students, staff, parents, and the community
School Climate

- Engagement
  - Relationships
  - Respect for Diversity
  - School Participation
- Safety
  - Physical Safety
  - Substance Use
- Environment
  - Physical Environment
  - Academic Environment
  - Wellness
  - Disciplinary Environment

Model from the National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments, U.S. Department of Education

Benefits of a positive school climate

- Increased academic achievement
- Increased attendance
- Increased graduation rates
- Decreased violence

The foundation for a positive school climate: 8 key elements

- Policy and enforcement - Rules for behavior are established, agreed upon by the school’s community, and enforced consistently.
- Data - Data-collection and evaluation drive decision making.
- Buy-in - Support and input is solicited from all members of the school’s community.
- Leadership - Efforts are guided by teams representing the entire school community.
- Student engagement - Students are actively encouraged to take a leadership role to shape their school climates.
- Family/community engagement - The vital role of families and communities is recognized and integrated into schools’ efforts.
- Training - All staff, including school support staff, are trained.
- Programs - Research-based bullying prevention and school climate programs focused on areas of specific need.

A closer look at 8 key elements of school climate

Policy and enforcement

- Publication of policy for students and parents
  - Fully implemented
    - Expectations clearly communicated
  - Example indicators
    - Bullying and harassment expectations posted in classrooms and common areas
    - Planned orientations or discussions
- School staff understanding of the policy
  - Fully implemented
    - Staff understand obligations
  - Example indicators
    - Investigators ID’d and consistently investigate reports
    - Scheduled staff trainings and discussions
### Staff enforcement
- Fully implemented
  - Policy enforced consistently
- Example indicators
  - Adult supervision increased in bullying “hot spots”
  - Description of monitoring system is available

### Student use
- Fully implemented
  - Students regularly report incidents
- Example indicators
  - Detailed description of process orienting new students
  - Record of observed and reported incidents

### Recording reports
- Fully implemented
  - All reports documented
- Example indicators
  - Bullying/harassment incident report form and corresponding reporting system,
  - Student and parent complaint forms
  - Anecdotal progress notes

### Documentation of bullying basis
- Fully implemented
  - All reports include a documentation of perceived basis. This can include that no basis could be determined.
- Example indicator
  - Records detailing frequency of different bases for bullying

### Survey data from students
- Fully implemented
  - Regular student surveys
- Example indicators
  - Data trend lines to demonstrate ongoing data collection (from survey reports)
  - Survey admin plan w/quantitative and qualitative data sources

### Survey data from school staff
- Fully implemented
  - Regular staff surveys
- Example indicator
  - Survey admin plan w/quantitative and qualitative data sources

### Survey reliability and validity
- Fully implemented
  - Survey items are from reliable and valid measures
- Example indicator
  - Surveys or survey items selected from existing questionnaires, or validated

### Measurable targets or benchmarks
- Fully implemented
  - Measurable targets have been set for all aspects
- Example indicator
  - Record of measurable targets

### Data collection and data-based decision making
- Fully implemented
  - Efforts clearly tied to ID’d needs
- Example indicators
  - Data trend lines to demonstrate ongoing data collection
  - Team meeting agendas indicate data use
Staff buy-in

- Staff engagement
  - Fully implemented
  - Staff highly engaged in decision-making
- Example indicators
  - Staff at all levels are engaged
  - Staff attendance
- Staff commitment
  - Fully implemented
  - Surveys indicate ≥80% are committed
  - Example indicator
  - Formal buy-in survey data

Implementation and fidelity

- Fully implemented
  - All staff engaged, with fidelity
- Example indicators
  - An agreement to which staff agree
  - Observations of program fidelity

Leadership

- Leadership team meeting
  - Fully implemented
  - A leadership team formed and meets regularly
  - Example indicators
    - Meeting schedules
    - Well-defined roles
    - Team meeting minutes
  - Leadership representation
    - Fully implemented
    - Leadership team incl. diverse representation
    - Example indicator
      - Leadership team roster

Session 3: Take-aways...

- What are four of the most important points you learned?
- Were you familiar with this content before this session? Do you feel more comfortable with it now?
- Can you identify aspects of this session that directly relate to your school? What specifically?
- After hearing this session what changes would you want to make in your school?
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- **Leadership** – Efforts are guided by teams representing the entire school community.
- **Student engagement** – Students are actively encouraged to take a leadership role to shape their school climates.
- **Family/community engagement** – The vital role of families and communities is recognized and integrated into schools’ efforts.
- **Training** – All staff, including school support staff, are trained.
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Framework adapted with permission from the Safe School Certification Program (safeschoolcertification.org)

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**Student engagement**

- **Leadership team involvement**
  - Fully implemented
  - Leadership team incl. students
  - Example indicators
    - Student leadership roster
    - Meeting minutes
- **Student feedback**
  - Fully implemented
  - Students provide feedback and insight
  - Example indicators
    - Qualitative surveys
    - Convenient suggestion boxes
    - Fishbowl discussions

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**Community and family engagement**

- **Student clubs and leadership**
  - Fully implemented
  - Students encouraged to form clubs and campaigns
  - Example indicators
    - Clear and detailed policies and procedures
    - List of all groups, numbers, demographics
    - Descriptions of group insights
- **Strategies for the disengaged**
  - Fully implemented
  - Significant effort made to encourage all students
  - Example indicator
    - Documentation of strategies
• Communication with family and community
  • Fully implemented
  • Information actively disseminated to parents and community members
  • Example indicators
    • Community and family newsletters
    • Press releases, news coverage, social media

• Parent and community input
  • Fully implemented
  • Parent and community input is valued, sought regularly, used
  • Example indicators
    • Family night/open house planning
    • Documented collaboration w/community
    • Volunteer and training opps

• Training offered to staff
  • Fully implemented
  • Training provided for ALL staff
  • Example indicator
    • Attendance log

• Training aligned to data
  • Fully implemented
  • All training is aligned with data
  • Example indicator
    • Detailed training plan based on needs ID’d in data
    • Evaluation of training and professional development

• Training aligned to policy
  • Fully implemented
  • Training is aligned with YBPA
  • Example indicators
    • Training related to bullying definition, prevention, and intervention.
    • School investigator is trained
    • Facilitators’ outlines of staff trainings

• Evidence base of programs
  • Fully implemented
  • All programs are evidence-based
  • Example indicators
    • Documentation of the research base

• Programs aligned to data
  • Fully implemented
  • All programming is aligned with data
  • Example indicators
    • Artifacts from program
    • Implementation fidelity checklist
• Multi-tiered programs
  • Fully implemented
    • School-wide, targeted, indicated programs and services
  • Example indicator
    • Record of differentiated implementation strategies

Resources
• National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)
• StopBullying.gov
• Evidence-based program (EBP) directories
  • National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices
  • What Works Clearinghouse
  • FindYouthInfo.gov Evidence-based Directory
• Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Model Programs Guide
• Penn State University EPIS Center

Current climate capacity assessment

Questions and discussion

Final take-aways...
• What did you learn about bullying intervention?
• What did you learn about bullying prevention?
• What new tools do you have to address bullying in your school?
• What immediate action steps can you take?
• Do you feel comfortable with the content?
• Would you feel comfortable teaching someone else about the content you learned during these sessions?