

Solution-Focused Anti-bullying

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- I live near Hull, City port in North East of England.
(260,000)
- Twice the national average unemployment, children in care, etc
- Anti-bullying coordinator & behaviour support manager, now semi-retired & independent, anything solution-focused !

Traditional Anti-bullying

Olweus was the first to do an anti-bullying project, in Norway in 1980s. Peter Smith, in the UK, early 1990s...

Similar projects throughout the world since have aimed to reduce bullying in schools, led by experts on bullying, raising awareness of bullying and recommending activities, based on theories about bullying.

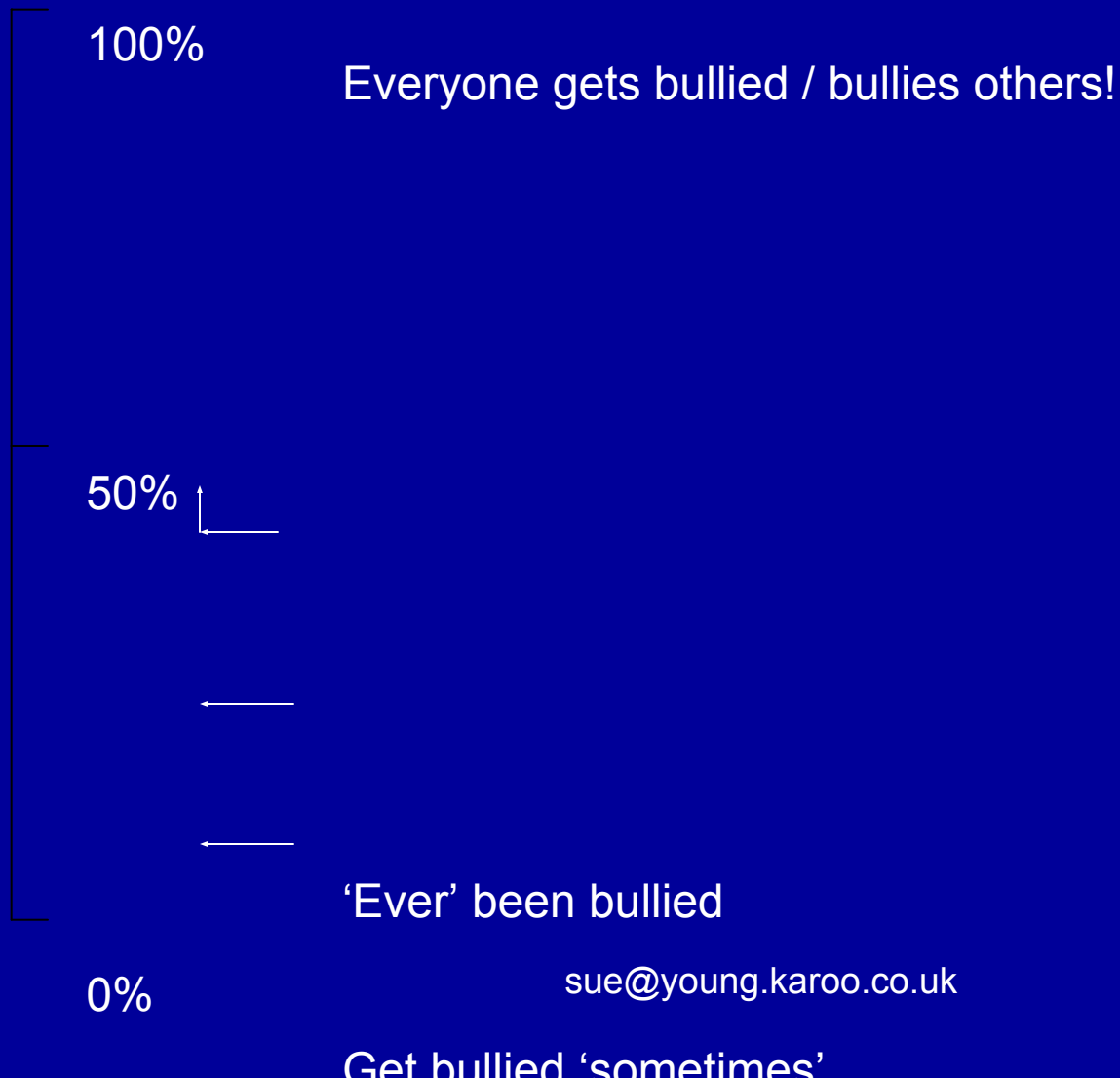
Dan Olweus in Norway & Sweden (Bergen Project etc.)
Peter Smith in England (Sheffield Project)
Christina Salmivalli in Finland (KiVa)

Raising awareness of the problem:

- Survey of bullying, before & after intervention
- Training for staff about bullying
- Teaching pupils about bullying, discussions & activities
- Strategies to deal with incidents

“Whole-school policy” “multi-level programme”

Surveys of bullying in schools



Outcomes... meta-analysis

“Only one program [led by Olweus] yielded significant reductions in victimisation and bullying, while the other 13 yielded either negligible changes or increases on these outcomes”

(Smith [Canada], Cousins & Stewart, 2005, p. 744; Smith, Schneider, Smith & Ananiadou, 2004).

[Olweus results remain unrepeated...]

- Outcomes are often disappointing (despite the hype!)
- Reduction can be short term
- Sometimes leads to an increase in bullying... in control schools too! (Why is this? Raising of awareness?)
- No clear evidence for what works
- Schools sometimes drop out or don't implement fully...
- Schools without support from researchers seem to do better! (V Stevens et al, Smith in Sheffield)

...and yet the advice remains very much the same!

Albert Einstein's definition of insanity:
Doing the same thing over and over again and
expecting different results!

Researchers (not the only ones!) tend to
congratulate their intervention for any success and
blame the schools for any failure!

Time for something different?

New ideas about change

- Steve de Shazer & Insoo Kim Berg: solution focused brief therapy - SFBT
- David Cooperrider: Appreciative Inquiry - AI

- Factors that help bring about change with individuals also work in organisations
- Both realized that solutions do not usually arise from theories about problems - problems have nothing to do with solutions!

Solution-focused practice

The most effective way to bring about the change that is wanted is to give it appreciative attention!

What you give attention to will grow!
Choose carefully what we give attention to...

- If you give attention to bullying you risk making it worse !

Problem-solving

Define the problem
What is bullying?

Assess
How much do we have?

Select a remedy
Consult an expert!

Review
Reassess the problem

Solution-focused

Describe the preferred future
What do you want instead?

Recognise success
What are you doing already
that works?

Appreciate strengths
How did you manage that?

Do more of what works...
Notice it working...!

A framework for solution-focused practice

- Describing the preferred future
- Recognising the successful past
- Appreciating existing strengths
- Doing more of what works

Solution-focused scale:

10

How we want schools to be instead. Our aspirations for relationships in school...
A friendly, supportive and safe community ...

5

1

J Junger-Tas, Leiden (1999)

“...many of the programmes [in the Netherlands] have wider aims than merely the reduction of bullying... to influence the moral climate, improve their teaching environment, to create safer and happier schools where... children can develop their social potential, so as to become capable and responsible adults.”

Describing the preferred future

Imagine you visit a school tomorrow... What would tell you it was a friendly, supportive and safe community, a 10?

Each person in turn, one idea each

- *The first thing I would notice that would tell me this is a friendly school is...*
- *Another thing I would see in a supportive school is...*

Make a list. Keep going!

Working with class groups

- Outcomes for projects report schools as a whole, rather than classes
- Some evidence to suggest this is misleading
- The difference in bullying may be as large between classes in schools as between schools
- Recent meta-analysis (Wong) suggested that class work is more important than whole school policies

Discussions about bullying

Don't do it!

SF anti-bullying discussions

- Describing the preferred future:
 - How do they want the class to be?
- Recognising the successful past:
 - What have you done well today?
- Appreciating existing strengths:
 - Complimenting, appreciating each other
- Doing more of what works:
 - If you are even better next time, what will be different?

Friendship Week

The government in England recommends all schools have an “Anti-Bullying Week”

- How about “Friendship Week” instead !

In pairs... make a list of ideas, that you could do next week... the smallest things you could do, to promote a friendly atmosphere in class/school...

The difference between activities for

- anti-bullying week ... and

- friendship week

When people use their own experience and ideas to build on what they do already it is more likely to be both successful and sustainable.

Anti-bullying

- Not just a preventive activity
- Focus on how the school community wants to be ... articulate it, live it and teach it.
- A proactive friendly and supportive ethos reduces bullying in schools, not strategies to solve it !

Support groups

Even in the most friendly and supportive schools bullying may sometimes happen.

So we need strategies to stop it

Using a support group was one strategy we developed. It is the most successful strategy we know for stopping bullying, particularly in primary schools.

Advice stays the same...

Even when the theory turns out to be wrong...

- Research on 'bystanders' [Latane] following a murder in New York that demonstrated that bystanders do not intervene.
- Pepler focused her anti-bullying project lessons on teaching children to intervene...
- Levine has recently shown that this is a myth!
- No wonder Pepler's project didn't work...

Levine is finding out why bystanders do intervene!!

Assumptions:

- School staff know best how they want their school to be.
- School staff have all the skills and strengths they need to make their school more like they want it to be.
- Outside experts need to get a lot better at appreciating what they do and helping them do it !

Dank u wel!

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