



Transatlantic Schools Anti-Bullying Initiative (TSABI)

Transatlantic Youth Link on Bullying (TYLB) Summary Report Part 1

Compiled by:

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Friday 8th September 2006 marked a sea change in how we engage today's young generations in discussing and developing solutions focused on bullying prevention for young people by young people. Up to one hundred international anti-bullying Peer Activists convened a three way video link and discussed as many of the following topics as time allowed;

1. Strategies: Peer Mentoring;

- a. How to implement an effective scheme?
- b. Understanding who you are trying to help
- c. Becoming a Peer Activist
- d. Awareness
- e. Early intervention
- f. Liaising with Parents
- g. Peer Mentors need a support network
- h. Measuring impact

2. Bullying and violence;

- a. How widespread is weapons use and possession amongst school age children and young people?
- b. Inner city/urban life and gang culture
- c. Security on school premises
- d. Playground violence – cultural change, but how?

3. The bystander;

- a. What is a bystander?
- b. What is bystanding?
- c. Witness or colluder?
- d. Safe and skilled intervention
- e. Law enforcement

4. The experiences of young people;

- a. Personal experiences of bullying
- b. Roles and responsibilities in their schools
- c. Sharing their knowledge of what works and what doesn't
- d. Peer to Peer learning and education

Transatlantic Youth Link on Bullying (TYLB) Summary Report Part 2

The TYLB yielded interesting and at times polarised viewpoints on bullying. It is clear that young people are concerned about all aspects of bullying; the impact that bullying behaviour has on those being bullied and the perpetrators; the increase in the use of violence and weapons related to bullying; how bullying can affect educational attainment; impact of bullying on mental health and well being of young people.

Three key areas of concern generated by TYLB

1. Bullying prevention work should be conducted at Primary age

Bullying can be prevented early on in a child's development. Primary schools in the UK, employ a wide variety of strategies and techniques to tackle bullying. Friendship/befriending schemes are effective pre-cursors to Peer Mentoring schemes in Secondary schools.

Many of the participants in London experienced bullying at primary school and have said that more should be done. George Mitchell School students have established an excellent scheme whereby they visit local primary schools and introduce themselves to the pupils that will be joining them at George Mitchell in the following school year. They also spend time over the course of a week at the primary school whilst the primary students spend time at the secondary school to help with their orientation.

Bullying at primary school is an area that many of the participants feel should be covered again and in more detail

2. Violence/weapons and bullying is a major problem ref: Columbine

England has seen an increase in the number of attacks inside and outside of school and there have been fatalities and increases in personal injuries. However, it was clear from comments made during the TYLB that young people in America feel particularly vulnerable due to the prevalence of weapons ownership/access. In the UK, it is now an offence punishable by heavy fines for retailers to sell or knowingly supply children with knives or sharp implements that can be used as weapons.

It is also clear in the UK, we have much to learn in how we make our educational establishments and centres for youths, safe and secure knowing that we are seeing an increase of child on child violence perpetrated through use of offensive weapons.

Ongoing research focused on Primary and Secondary schools in the Greater London area show that security at school is a major concern to all students with 57% of young people commenting that schools should have CCTV.

3. Supporting and empowering everyone affected by bullying including bystanders

Post videoconference feedback showed that this was an area of concern that the London group really wanted to follow up. Current research available from the Anti-bullying Alliance suggests that 'Bystanders' and 'witnesses' do indeed have a part to play in tackling bullying. However, there are negative connotations to being labeled and having a part to play within the bullying experience and the label is not necessarily helpful. What is helpful, is understanding 'what you can do?' or 'who can help?'

Supporting and empowering everyone affected by bullying should be the most important focus. Young people who are bullying need to develop empathy and those being bullied need to know

what they can do. It's easy to suggest that 'telling someone' is the key. However, we then need to go further and suggest who to go to, what you should say and making sure that you keep going back until someone actually 'listens' or 'hears' you.

If you are a bully, put yourself in their shoes. Try and imagine how it would feel if it was your younger brother or sister, cousin or best friend that was being bullied. Imagine how they would be feeling and then think about those that you are bullying. Look into the reasons why you are bullying, talk it through with someone you trust. They may be able to help you and offer support.

Adults need to understand that bullying is not a part of life or a part of growing up. There are a few key things that you should expect from adults:

- Adults have a duty to assist you - they are the adults and you are the child/young person.
- You should expect teachers, police officers, parents, carers, youth workers and social workers to help and support you.
- You should be able to ask and expect them to calmly listen when you tell them you are being bullied.
- Adults must take it seriously. Bullying doesn't toughen you up. If an adult tells you to hit the bully back, this is wrong. It won't help or keep you safe.
- They need to believe you when you are telling the truth and take it seriously.
- They should understand that telling them you are being bullied is a very hard thing for you to do and they should respect your courage.

Try and remember that you're not actually on your own, even though it might feel like that sometimes. There are thousands of other young people who are going through similar experiences. Below are some of the messages from **beat**bullying ambassadors:

- Ignore the people that have a problem with you, you don't need them
- Tell someone quick – don't keep it in
- Don't let bullies put you down
- Speak out against bullying
- Stay safe!
- Help other people that are being bullied!
- Working together, things can change!
- Why should you care about what they think?
- You're not alone there is always someone who can help
- Be true to yourself
- Please don't put up with bullying!
- Please don't bully other people!!
- Bullying damages confidence and causes pain!
- Don't standby – get help for those that need it

Transatlantic Youth Link on Bullying (TYLB) Summary Report Part 3

Going forward by Francesca Cross, Newstead Wood School

Time constraints had an impact on the depth in which many of the subjects were discussed. However, it was clear from the beginning that all the 'International Peer Activists' that took part had much to say and that the TYLB has a purpose and a place in our events calendar.

Bullying knows no boundaries and the experience of all those with a part played out in the bullying continuum, is critical to our understanding of how to combat child on child violence. The impact of bullying can affect educational attainment, reinforce isolation and be root cause for truancy. Bullying in childhood and young adulthood could play a part in bullying that affects adults in the workplace.

The TYLB is a brilliant example of how Peer Activism can be the genesis of some degree of cultural shift. Young people want these opportunities and so do their educators. Many of the London Peer Activists that took part are now conducting their own inter-borough and inter-school video links on a number of key areas. What the TYLB has done is galvanise young people and their schools into becoming far more proactive in developing this discursive and cooperative tool. The anticipated outcomes still stand and it is hoped that a rerun of the TYLB is on the cards and that momentum will be maintained.

Anticipated outcomes

- Forging transatlantic links between schools and developing the capability to engage in distance learning through the facilitation of further events.
- Twinning with US schools and the **beat**bullying International Ambassadors Programme (currently numbering 300 individual ambassadors). Particular interest in MACS and BB Ambassadors forging links
- Production of a Peer Mentoring Toolkit and resource developed from the findings of the videoconference report generated by the young people participating.
- Development of training resources including the implementation of Peer Mentoring schemes and how to involve the whole school community in owning solutions to bullying and empowerment for cultural change in bullying behaviour and how it is managed.
- Increased awareness of Peer Mentoring as an important tool in tackling bullying in schools.
- Greater understanding of how Peer Mentoring works as a strategy from the viewpoint of those at the point of service delivery.

Bullying in context. Some contemporary statistics on bullying in UK communities:

1. 55.5% of young people have been bullied (**beat**bullying (BB) May 2006)
2. 1 in every 2 school exclusions and 46% of school non-attendance is in some way related to bullying (Institute of Education 2004)
3. 1 in 3 adults living in the UK have witnessed bullying on the streets, (BB/YouGov survey 2006)
4. 39% of young people admit to truanting due to being bullied, (BB on-line survey 2005). Of this 39% ;
 - a. 48% truanted on the odd day
 - b. 29% truanted once a week
 - c. 9% withdrew from school for an extended period
5. Each week at least 450,000 young children are bullied at school, (ABA 2005)
6. Each week a further 500,000 are bullied outside of school in the community, (BB 2005)
7. Every year 40,000 young people telephone help-lines about bullying, (Child-line 2005)
8. An MSN/YouGov survey of 500 teenagers shows that 11 per cent of 12 to 15-year-olds have been bullied via the internet, (March 2006)

Bullying via text messaging and mobile telephones. Survey carried out by beatbullying with Carphone Warehouse / YouGov 2006

1. 47% have suffered some form of text, photo text, video text, email, chat room, web pages or on-line bullying
2. 29% of 11- to 19-year-olds had been threatened or harassed using mobile phones,
3. 44% of parents are worried about their child being bullied or threatened by mobile phone
4. 79% of teachers are worried about text bullying.
5. 29 per cent of those surveyed said they'd told no one about being bullied
6. 11% admitted sending a bullying message to someone else
7. 73% of young people who had received a bullying text, new the bully, 26% said it was a stranger

8. **beat**bullying (2005) research polling 3000+ young people reports that 56% have suffered some form of text / mobile phone bullying.
9. 6% of young people report they have been a victim of “happy slapping” (**beat**bullying on-line survey 2006)
10. 35% of young people report witnessing an incident of “happy slapping” (**beat**bullying on-line survey 2006)