

I'M GONNA WRITE THAT DOWN

By Brad Tassell M.A.E.

Book I

WORK BOOK

I'M GONNA WRITE THAT DOWN PROGRAM

Book II

RESEARCH

I'm Gonna Write That Down: Research on Bullying and Recognition of Perception Toward Initiation of Intervention a Whole-School Approach to Bringing all Stakeholders' Perceptions on Bullying in Line and Training Students to Distinguish Tattling from Reporting in Grades 3-6

Book I

Program Workbook

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I'M GONNA WRITE THAT DOWN

PROGRAM

Welcome!

Hello, I am Brad Tassell and this is the *I'm Gonna Write That Down* program component workbook. The complete title is as follows:

I'm Gonna Write That Down: Research on bullying and recognition of perception toward initiation of intervention, a whole-school approach to bringing all stakeholder's perceptions on bullying in line and training students to distinguish tattling from reporting.

I know you are thinking, "That is a long title," and you are correct. The point of the title is to, literally, explain all the things this program will do for your school, students, and parents without even cracking the text. In addition, it is hoped that every school will be excited to implement a program that creates the best chance for an atmosphere where student relation problems never reach bullying and victimization. The most important things to recognize are:

1. This program will create 100% stakeholders. Everybody will be on the same page. Students, teachers, administration, counselors, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and janitorial staff will all be involved in student guidance, and everyone will be glad to see the positive change in all areas of the school.

2. We will learn how easy it is to recognize everyone's perceptions of bullying as real, and create interventions that make sense. This is not a punishment, one-size-fits-all program. The

interventions will make sense to all stakeholders and, more important, are clear and understandable.

3. Students will learn and be guided in simple ways to govern their school and social lives in a more mature manner. They will need to remember only one thing! They will also feel supported by staff.

4. This is just the tip of the iceberg relative to the wonderful benefits the program can bring to your school and district.

The program fulfills these ideals in three simple ways:

- ✓ Impossible to misunderstand steps for implementation
- ✓ Protocol that puts everyone on notice when a student's perception is that of being bullied
- ✓ Recognizing perceptions and initiating interventions

Please follow the steps and components of this program. If you are in charge of implementation, I hope you find this an easy and pleasing process.

Overview of the *I'm Gonna Write that Down* Steps

1. Train teachers, staff, and administrators
2. Beginning of the year kick-off program
 - a. Students read and sign declarations
 - b. Parent letters and information are sent home
 - c. Administer surveys to students
3. Create bystanders group
4. Train students
 - a. Bullying program for each grade level
 - b. Training in the use of *I'm Gonna Write that Down*
 - c. *Don't Feed the Bully* program component instruction
5. Counselor
 - a. Answer questions
 - b. Coordinate forms
 - c. Maintain protocol
 - d. Record all complaints and follow up

Implementation Steps: A Little More In Depth

☉ **Choose your leader!**

The leader will be in charge of all coordination, administering surveys, sending letters home, training, and collecting incident reports - usually the counselor, but can also be a teacher leader, or other administrator.

☉ **Let everyone know we are going to learn to say, “I’m Gonna Write that Down.”**

Create and distribute announcement about implementation of the upcoming program. This can be accomplished with a letter sent home, announcement at school, newsletter, and/or a parade! Ensure that everyone is informed in a fun and inclusive manner from bus drivers to coaches, secretaries to students. Hang a banner stating, “We will learn how to say, ‘I’m Gonna Write that Down!’” All samples are included in the appendices.

☉ **Send home parent forms**

- Parents will be asked to sign that they have read the letter. (See Appendix, sample parent letter).

☉ **Students fill out first survey**

- Take the pulse of the school and administer the survey to all students. (A paper form of the survey and survey monkey form are included as Appendices).

☉ **Train the teachers and staff!**

- Get everyone together, have a buffet, and explain how the program works, and discuss each stakeholder role - I mean everybody. Especially bus drivers and other important personnel who work directly with students. This can be separate meetings depending on number of staff.

☉ **Train the students**

- Students are trained by counselor or person selected to coordinate the program with teachers present
- Training is conducted in small groups or by class
- This training is not intended to be conducted with the Whole-school at once or in gym or cafeteria
- Pertinent teachers attend to help assure students that all protocols will be followed

☉ **Make forms available and start encouraging!**

- Incident reports samples are included for middle school and upper elementary and primary school

- Forms need to be on hand with teachers, bus drivers, counselors, and staff to be given to students when needed

Detailed Program Explanation

I'm Gonna Write That Down/Write That Down is a means by which all students can make their perception clear as to when they feel bullied, afraid, or harassed at school or on the bus. In any situation, at any time and in any place at school, on the playground or on the bus, a student saying, "I'm gonna write that down" will put the student(s) who are teasing, harassing, bullying, intimidating, or threatening violence on notice that the victim's perception is, "You are bullying me," and the perpetrator should stop. The message is made clear that the perpetrator(s) have the chance to curtail the situation, and not repeat it and no action of punishment or correction will be taken.

The student states, "I'm gonna write that down," and fills out an incident report detailing all aspects of the interaction, including: time, date, place, who was involved, what happened and what was said, names of bystanders who witnessed, etc. (See Appendix: A). This form will be given to the teacher/staff member to read and then collected by the school counselor. If no other incident report is filed, no action will be undertaken against perpetrator(s). If the same perpetrator(s) again create a situation where the same student says for the second time, "I'm gonna write that down," an additional incident report will be filed detailing the second occurrence that the student perceived to have been bullied. After a second report a teacher or counselor will have a private and informal talk with the perpetrator(s). The perpetrator is assured they are not yet facing punishment, but they need to correct their actions towards the student who perceived they were being bullied. They are also asked why they did not change their behavior after they heard, "I'm gonna write that down" in connection with their actions? Depending on the severity of the offense (use of offensive, racial, or other inappropriate language, violence) the

perpetrator(s) may need to be corrected in accordance with state law. If a third incident report is filed the parents will be notified, and the perpetrator(s) will face possible suspension or expulsion. The victim's parents are also notified. Other evidence may be collected against them pursuant to school/district rules and federal/state laws relative to maintaining a safe school environment.

The school will promise to take seriously every incident report, but will not act upon a first report that does not involve physical repercussions or does not create an immediate threat to life or personal safety. The goal in this process is to allow the perpetrator(s) the opportunity to understand the perception of the student who felt harmed and stop the harm, even if the intent was otherwise. Moreover, this system will provide the school and staff an early indication of the student's perception of harm even if that perception is not shared by the school, staff, or perpetrator(s).

The school counselor and teachers should have forms available easily accessible by all students, and a report written on any type of paper or in any form should be accepted. The information can be transferred to official form to maintain consistency as long as original is also kept. These forms are to be reviewed and maintained, to include the action taken according to the set protocol.

Defining Bullying in a New Way

The Olweus (1993) definition of bullying has been in existence since the early 90's, is suitable for the dictionary, and helps define bullying for creation of state law and school district mandates, but it has done little to help students understand bullying or its effects. It also has not helped to make their perceptions clear as to recognizing a bullying situation, and has been a

source of confusion for most. The real issue is students being scared, sad, or worried about any action that hurts them or their learning. For this program, the definition of what constitutes bullying for students, including cyber issues that affect education, has been simplified and made personal.

Bullying for Students in School = Something is happening to me that I do not like. It hurts me (them), and I (they) want it to stop. Furthermore, I tell them it is hurting me, and they continue to do it.

Interventions and the protocol used to correct such problems are delineated in the program. However, the above definition is the key to recognizing perception, making it real for students, and finding a solution. The student also has a responsibility to make sure aggressors are aware their actions are painful. Additionally, all students will understand this simple definition, as eliminated the motivation of the bully and other factors not applicable to a solution.

Procedure

This program will be conducted in an elementary school (extrapolated for middle school up to grade 8) using grades 3-6. The school will obtain all permissions for training that are needed from parents. Every student will be trained, adhering to the guidelines set and announced by the school. Parents and students will be notified of protocols that meet with the district standards. Teachers, staff, and all other stakeholders will be trained and surveyed using qualitative measures as to the degree of acceptance of the program and its effectiveness.

Surveys will be short answer and yes/no format. They will be used comparatively with surveys given after a reasonable period of time to assess effectiveness of the program and the changes in degree and perceptions of bullying.

The *Don't Feed the Bully* program components that are important for implementation include instructions for students when confronted by any person whom they perceive to be attempting to bully them: (a) stay calm, (b) assess the likelihood of violence, (c) have a thick skin and a sense of humor, and (d) collect evidence (Tassell, 2006). Full implementation of this program will accomplish these steps. Additionally, appropriate age students should read a detective novel on the subject, and discuss the motivation and actions of the characters, which can help to cement learning and make empathy more real.

Student Training

Students must be told of these measures during a program that is clear and concise, lasting no more than one hour or less. Bullying will be defined using the Olweus and program student definitions, and techniques will be discussed relative to staying calm, assessing violence, having a thick skin and a sense of humor, and collecting the evidence for an incident report. Each student should then be able to demonstrate an understanding of the process. This should be easily accomplished as the most important point to be understood is that, if they feel in any situation scared, bullied, threatened, excluded, harassed, or verbally or physically hurt, they say, "I'm gonna write that down." This must apply to every situation.

Reading the book, *Don't Feed the Bully*, by Brad Tassell (2006) also is recommended in order to understand bullying and the concepts of staying calm, assessing violence, having a thick skin and a sense of humor, and collecting evidence. Learning real-world concepts through fun and stimulating literature is an effective method for making concepts and lessons enjoyable and interesting. A discussion of the book and the characters' roles can bring further understanding of bullying and its underlying motivations. The program is fun and informative and uses music,

comedy, stories, and serious information to bring greater awareness. It also, helps students understand how cyber-bullying can destroy many years for the bully as well as its detrimental impact on the victim. Tassell (2006) espoused four very simple steps to lessen any bullying situation: stay calm, assess the likelihood of violence, have a thick skin and a sense of humor, and collect evidence (Tassell, 2006). The *I'm Gonna Write That Down* program highlights those steps in one easy-to-use phrase that helps to alleviate the student's worry about "how to react" by when in a situation of conflict. A major goal of the *Don't Feed the Bully* program is to assist students in proactively helping themselves and avoiding any extended adverse effects resulting from any small degree of bullying or harassment. This program empowering everyone to put weight behind students' perceptions of bullying and to create interventions that benefit all stakeholders.

Examples

Someone throws a spit wad at your head on the bus.

Someone kicks the back of your chair in class or otherwise pokes or prods you.

Students call you names that you do not like - fat, stinky, poor, etc. (Note: If inappropriate, offensive, or racist language is used, counselor should take steps following the first incident report.)

A group takes the ball (or any item) away from you on the playground and plays keep away, and you are not playing.

A student is told he/she will be hurt if humiliating directions are not followed.

Student Role (perceived victim)

If a student feels emotional pain, for any reason, from perceived bullying, the student calmly says, "I'm gonna write that down," and nothing else. An incident report (Appendix A/B) should be completed by the student as soon as possible following the incident. All teachers, counselor, secretaries, principal, lunch personnel, bus drivers, janitors, and coaches must agree to assist the student in writing the report if needed. An oral report can also be given, but it is best if staff helps students write their own report. Students must include in the report all relevant facts and perceptions. During a confrontation if the student used the statement, "I'm gonna write that down," to a perceived threat or attack, to which the perpetrator(s) complied and never repeated the situation, the victim becomes empowered by having corrected the situation, and no further action or correction is taken. However, if the attack or situations are repeated by the same perpetrator(s), then the perception is further substantiated to the victim and others that bullying is occurring.

By saying in a calm manner, "I'm gonna write that down," students let potential bullies, and bystanders, know that the situation is only an annoyance and will not hurt them emotionally or internally, although they do not, nor does anyone, enjoy when others try to hurt them.

Some students are unable to speak or react during bullying, and should be instructed that saying nothing is acceptable. When they remove themselves from the situation, they can "write down" the incident and submit to the counselor/staff. Students must be encouraged to return the perpetrator(s) in a safe place and say, "I wrote that down." Some students may worry about using their names, and it is acceptable to submit an anonymous incident report. However, it is crucial that students understand that bullies count on a climate of fear to stay safe. If bystanders witnessed the incident, they should be enlisted to sign the report. The purpose of this process is

that students will say "I'm gonna write that down," and fill out the reports when they know they will be supported.

Students who say, "I'm gonna write that down," (first occurrence) and document the incident also are aware that no action will be taken or comments made by the school or authority to the perpetrator(s) about the incident. The result is that the perpetrator(s) is given the chance to not repeat the behavior. When it is not repeated, then the victim feels empowered that they have fixed their own problem, and the perpetrator(s) has learned that the actions were perceived as bullying, rather than something else, such as humor or simply an annoyance. Should the action be repeated and the student is again to say, "I'm gonna write that down," (second occurrence) the victim is aware that, without their knowledge, an informal conference with a teacher or counselor will occur with the perpetrator(s) to discuss the incident. In addition, the victim is aware that he/she and the perpetrator(s) may be observed without their knowledge. The victim also realizes that interventions will be explored, such as moving seats or other simple actions that can alleviate the problem.

If a third incident occurs and the student is forced to say, "I'm going to write that down," (third occurrence) the perpetrator(s) and victims parents will be notified, and a conference scheduled to inform the parents of the forms, protocol, observations of staff and bystanders, and the steps that have been taken to that point. They will be appraised of the actions taken against the perpetrator(s) and steps to be taken to terminate contact.

Student Role (perceived perpetrator(s))

During training students are told what to do if someone says to you, "I'm gonna write that down." If students are not intending to bully or to be hurtful, they should immediately voice

their intent to the student that they will not commit the action again. If they are trying to be hurtful, they will be on notice that the process has begun and this student should not be targeted again. They also should be told that the act of overtly excluding or encouraging others to shun or exclude the student also can be perceived as bullying. They are to leave the student alone, and create no measure of retaliation.

By hearing, "I'm gonna write that down," the perpetrator(s) know that they should stop and not repeat their actions in any way. It is to be understood that, in repeated situations, the same words do not have to be spoken. The victim's perception of harm and attack is all that is needed for the situation to be considered the second, third, etc., incident.

If two or more reports are received about perpetrators in the same area of the school or on a bus, the school policy should state that the perpetrators cannot access those areas for a certain period, until such time as the student and school recognize that no bullying occur. This policy should be outlined in the protocol established by the counselor and staff, and should be communicated to parents.

What Happens When the Perpetrator Hears

"I'm Gonna Write That Down" the First Time?

The important point to remember is that, upon hearing for the first time, "I'm gonna write that down," the perpetrator is aware that no action will be taken. This gives the perpetrator the opportunity to make different choices, as the actions have been perceived as bullying. Should they choose to stop any further aggression, the problem is fixed and no further correction is required.

What Happens When the Perpetrator Hears

“I'm Gonna Write That Down” a Second Time?

Should the perpetrator decide to repeat the actions or create new ones against the same person a second time, the next level in the protocol is initiated. When, "I'm gonna write that down" is heard a second time from the same person, the aggressor will meet with the teacher or counselor. Upon submission of the second written incident report a staff member known to the perpetrator speaks to them informally, perhaps in the library or hallway between classes, where others cannot hear. The conversation should not be construed as punishment. The teacher or counselor seeks out the student, rather than issuing a summons. The conversation is kept informal to ensure that the perpetrator is aware that they are not in trouble. The teacher inquires about the student hearing for the second time "I'm gonna write that down" and the reasons it was not understood that the victim disliked that type of attention. The student may try to defend the actions, and should be allowed to explain. The perpetrator may even say that the other student was the bully, at which time the question should be raised relative to the reason an incident report was not filed when the other student said, "I'm gonna write that down." If there was a problem with the other student, a form should have been filed. However, since nothing was done and contact did not cease after hearing, "I'm gonna write that down," the teacher or counselor allows one more opportunity for the perpetrator to understand that the victim is to be left alone. The teacher or counselor is clear that the student has had two chances with no formal action or punishment. It is also clear that they are thinking of the perpetrator best interests as well as the student who feels bullied. The next step in the protocol is then outlined, should the perpetrator hear again, "I'm gonna write that down" a third time. The perpetrator is requested to simply leave the other student alone by not only stopping the perceived bullying, but also giving the victim a great deal of space. It is explained to the perpetrator that no further contact with the other student

means there is no opportunity for the other student to lie or invent a bullying situation, which would falsely implicate the perpetrator. The informal talk should end with a positive comment about the teacher's or counselor's faith in the ability of the perpetrator to learn from this experience.

Upon receipt of two incident reports, the teacher or counselor needs to do a bit of detective work. They already have evidence of the place and times of a perceived bullying situation. For the next few days, they will focus their eyes and ears on the perpetrator, particularly in those areas, without the perpetrator's awareness of being observed. Enlisting another adult in monitoring the situations and interactions is highly recommended, as well as observing the perceived victim. At this time bystanders should not be invited to speak. At an appropriate time, if the perpetrator and perceived victim have ceased contact or the problem has resolved, the extra monitoring can be cancelled. In some cases, simply changing student schedules or seating arrangements in the classroom can end a problem. This often can be accomplished without highlighting the situation or participants, although any student who hears, "I'm gonna write that down" for the second time, must have this conference.

What Happens if the Perpetrator Hears

“I'm Gonna Write That Down” a Third Time

In a very few cases, the perpetrator does not learn and continues the unwanted contact. If "I'm gonna write that down" is heard a third time from the same student or students, the punishment phase begins, with lead person speaking to all bystanders about the incidents. The leader also coordinates with those adults assigned to monitor the students in the areas where the bullying was taking place. It is recommended that all parents be contacted, and separate conferences scheduled. During the conference, the perpetrator is given the opportunity to relate

their side of the story, although, all forms are read and presented to the parents, along with an explanation of the informal meeting held with the teacher, counselor, and any monitoring of the students is explained. Parents may have to be reminded that they signed a document explaining the program and are aware of the protocol. Depending on state law or district mandates, parents should be advised that the forms, interviews, and observances, can be considered evidence in legal proceedings, and all state laws will be followed. It is hoped that parents will be in full agreement with the guidance suggest by the school. The school request a one day in school suspension or detention, and assurances from the parents of no further contact. Parents will be assured that the focus of this meeting is on their student's best interests, but further problems will cause greater interventions. Those interventions can be listed based on school mandates.

This process is extremely helpful to the student in learning self-control and understanding how their actions are perceived.

Student Role (bystander)

Bystanders may be asked to initial a report a witness to the incident. They also may be asked to corroborate the story. Bystanders also can say, "I'm gonna write that down" or "I'm gonna write that down, too." In any situation where they feel bullying has occurred, bystanders are also encouraged to initial the report of the student who perceives that he/she is being bullied. A bystander also may file an anonymous report of a place or situation where bullying is happed, but are encouraged during training to use their names and always add the names of others as well. Bystanders should think about who they are helping when filing a report, and not thinking about who is getting in trouble. The report carries more weight when several names are on it, and the perpetrator must hear, "I'm gonna write that down."

Teacher, Staff, Principal and Bus Driver Role

All staff will perceive the students situations as real. In many cases, the student's perception of bullying may be heightened and not in line with actual events. However, that perception in their eyes is still considered threatening and sometimes terrorizing. Stating, "I'm gonna write that down," indicates their fear is real, and the steps outlined will be taken. It also means they have an opportunity to correct their own problem before any further measures are instituted. Staff promises to help with incident reports in any way needed to document the situation.

Staff also will remind students to have bystanders corroborate and initial the incident report, and will help if they are unable to do so. The expectation is that any report will be investigated as quietly as possible by staff/counselor/adult stakeholders, with the express objective of safety and guidance. The teachers/staff/principal, in rare cases, might be enlisted to help in monitoring perceived victims and bullies in a covert manner in order to gain an eyewitness account of situations. These interventions are rare cases, but are crucial when needed.

Counselor, Leader Role

Counselors will maintain all incident reports and ensure that they are easily available to all students and teachers in a discreet manner. Counselors will help students complete the forms and will administer beginning-of-the-year surveys to students and teachers regarding bullying perceptions (Appendix F). A Paper-and-pen survey can be used, or can be used as a template to create your own online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>. The survey can provide valuable information in a variety of areas linked to student perceptions of bullying and problems

in specific areas of the school, the number of students who feel they have no friends, those students who others fear, and other important insights into the minds of students.

Counselors will follow the protocol as each incident report is submitted, and conduct training for staff and students, unless they decide that a professional trainer should be used. They will send declarations to parents and students (Appendix C/D) at the beginning of the year for their signature and explanations of the *I'm Gonna Write That Down* program (Appendix E). Counselors will be available to answer any questions that may arise.

Counselors are encouraged to become familiar with the district rules and laws on privacy. Most schools have wide latitude relative to recording students when they determine safety may be compromised. Counselors should possess two or three digital audio-only recording devices that can be attached to a student inconspicuously to record interactions after a third incident report. They also administer an end-of-the-year survey to assess quantitative aspects of the degree of bullying perceptions and safety in the school. Last, the counselor has the authority to create bystanders groups to assist in monitoring areas of concern in the school and on the bus.

Counselors ensure that students who say, "I'm gonna write that down," are taken seriously by the administration. Students should be assured that in situations of attempted bullying, unwelcome teasing, or verbal harassment, the perpetrator(s) who received a warning have only one opportunity to correct their behavior. Any further attempt will be met with clear action. Students must feel stating, "I'm gonna write that down" will receive full support by school and staff. "I'm gonna write that down," communicates to a potential bully that the student feels they are being bullied, although only externally. Knowing they have full school support in

saying, “I’m gonna write that down” students perceive perpetrator(s) who are mean are as an annoyance, rather than psychologically destructive.

Counselors/teachers/staff/principal must create a school environment that fosters the same ideology of annoyance with bullying period. Every student should be assured that no acts will go beyond that stage, or swift, decisive, clear, and definitive action will be taken. Another important role of the counselor is to inform students and parents when a situation is not considered bullying and make clear that bullying is a continued effort to break down and individual and using an imbalance of power to commit harm to another. Counselors need to be ever vigilant in guiding students in recognizing the difference, which builds character toward self-actualization. This highlights the importance of the change in the student definition for bullying stated previously, because all perceptions of bullying will become aligned over time as students feel more empowered to deal with simple relational problems themselves.

Principal Role

The principal is seen as the lead figure in preventing bullying by most students in elementary grades. The principal’s role is to support the counselor and staff, and when needed assist students with completion of incident reports. The principal must regard all reports seriously, support training, and expect 100% compliance from all faculty and staff. In addition, the principal must be apprised of all program aspects. The principal should also limit the counselor’s role to only those outlined by CACREP standards.

Coach role

When a school has a sports team, the coach must set an example that bullying is, not only against team policy, but team members are required to be safety leaders in the school in order to

be eligible to participate. Team members are encouraged to be part of a bystander program, if one is present at the school. All sports team members should be trained in conflict resolution, so that students can go to them at any time if they feel scared or bullied. The team members make a commitment to come to the aid of students being harassed and can lose eligibility if they are known to use bullying tactics. These steps are made clear when all students are use the *I'm Gonna Write That Down* concept. Team members who hear this statement know that their role is to ensure the perceived victim is given help.

All team members will consent to initialing any incident reports for any student who ask, when the team member was a bystander to an incident. If they feel the situation was different than the student's account they may file out a report in their own words. This applies to all teams and groups in a school such at cheerleading, forensics, all sports, etc.

Bystander Group Role

Counselors may form a group to be available to assist in any situation where bullying may be a factor. They are to be positioned in areas of low supervision in the school, and must be in pairs to allow for two sets of eyes on a situation, as there is strength in numbers. In addition, one can stay behind if help must be summoned, small communicators such as walkie-talkies may be utilized to connect with the counselor or the office. Evidence indicates that bullying situations stop more than 50% of the time when another student intervenes, and at a greater rate when those students are perceived to have power. These students may also have small audio-recording devices that can be activated when a situation escalates. This group does not administer corrections or punishment; they observe and intervene when needed.

The intervention is always handled in a kind and calm manner. An example of an area might warrant the presence of a bystanders is the school bus, where group members sit together near the rear of the bus. Another location is the locker room or on areas of the playground where faculty do not usually patrol.

Cyber-bullying

This program can be utilized when responding to attacks on the internet, although this researcher believes that “no response” is always best for online harassment and bullying via text, or any sort of social media. In response to any unwanted online activity, “I’m gonna write that down” can be a strong signal to indicate that the information will be kept and forwarded to the appropriate authorities, should it break state or federal laws that have become more strict. Students need to be clear that anything they written or uploaded online will more than likely be there “forever.” No matter the format or platform, and computer experts can find information that an individual may think had been deleted. Employers now look deeply into the social media life of any prospective job candidates; even a post from 10 years earlier can make the difference in successfully securing a job.

Most district policies regarding the internet, which were in flux during the last few years, are evolving into more concrete rules. If something occurs online outside of school, but interferes with the educational process in the school, the administration has the authority and may be required by law to act against the perpetrator(s). It is suggested that principals and counselors who wish to document evidence should take a picture of harassing/bullying/actionable texts, social media pages, rather than downloading or changing settings on a child’s personal electronics/phone/computer. This assists with the documentation of evidence and maintains privacy standards, in order that the administration cannot be accused of tampering. School policy dictates on a case-by-case basis whether the authorities should be contacted depending upon the willingness of students and parents to remedy the situations, and the safety of the school.

Tattling/Reporting Training Method

Teachers/staff are instructed to say, “Write that down” when a student personally reports a problem. The student should already have been trained in accessing an incident report. The teacher also will ask the student if anyone is currently hurt to assess level of harm. Furthermore, the teaching will ask the student the question, “Who are you helping?” They may listen to a portion of the report, but the student must complete an incident report if action and the situation is believed to be bullying or deserves teacher/counselor/principal attention. All teachers can assess on a case-by-case basis, with the knowledge of the child, action to be taken, but the student will always be told to “write that down.” If a report is not filled out no evidence is submitted, and the teacher will most likely take no action. Students then must decide whether their reporting of the situation rises to the level of reporting or is tattling.

The important question that every student should ask himself/herself before going to the teacher is, "Who am I helping?"

Bullies are People Too

An important part of program implementation is recognizing that those who bully are not served by being “called out” or having negative attention brought to their actions. Tassell and Tassell (2012) related a story of a parent who stopped bullying situations before they rose to the level of repetitive or harassment by informally speaking to students in a casual atmosphere. No sense of “getting in trouble,” was perceived by the student, and no other students are privy to such conversations. The student feels a sense of respected, rather than being headed to punishment. Counselors may bring a bullying problem to the attention of a student suspected of bullying by simply asking the student about the situation along, with an informal discussion of why things of this nature could in the future hurt their academic and school life. Researcher Jeff Daniels discussed using the lunchroom and other areas to create an informal closer relationship between staff and students in order that these kinds of casual discussions can be productive and not create unneeded drama or negative feelings toward authority (Toppo & Elias, 2009). The counselor or teachers should document any conversations and make notes about the student’s reaction. They end by thanking the student and bringing the perpetrator(s) to the understanding of the victim’s perception of the perpetrator(s) actions, and to determine whether they wish that perception to continue. Counselors talk about repercussions if the perception of bullying becomes repetitive, but should highlight the student’s choices to avoid moving onto the next step, i.e., punishment. Counselors should consider the suggestion of De Jong and Berg (2011) to help students create their own solutions, rather than tell them how to act. In *Lost in School*, Greene (2008) discussed the fact that students will work against their own best interests due to a lack of other ideas, even though their actions are directly opposite to what is understood to help

the situation. By leading students to create their own solutions regarding how they should act in situations that might be perceived as bullying, they can partner in the solution to correct the problems, rather than feeling as though they are the problem that needs to be fixed.

A major difference in the *I'm Gonna Write That Down* program and others is that the first instance of suspected bullying is free from any punishment or correction. The program gives everyone the opportunity to learn that their actions are construed as bullying by the person who is targeted. This removes the labels of “bully” and “victim,” as the situation becomes simply a mismatched interaction, allowing the perceived aggressor the chance to understand how the actions are perceived and then choose to stop.

Limitations

Several limitations are possible with this program, particularly the unwillingness of staff/teachers/administrators to work within the confines of the program. Teachers have already stated, “Kids won’t write things down” or that it is not their job to help. In many cases, staff members feel that it is easier to humiliate students into compliance and believe they are “correcting” the problem when it arises. As they do not have to witness any aftermath of fear or later bullying, they assume they have done their job. Another limitation deals with teacher’s or counselor’s who do nothing to alleviate the problem and demeans a student’s perception when the student states, “I’m gonna write that down.” This program corrects a main limitation of all other programs. Students react to bullying or their perception of bullying in one manner that places everyone on notice that the student states, “I’m gonna write that down” needs some sort of intervention if the bullying continues.

Students in grades 1 and 2 should participate, depending upon their writing level.

Teachers are encouraged to help them.

Discussion

The tactics and outcomes of bullying are still present in schools, and the issue of bullying has been brought to the forefront. However, research has shown that awareness does little to quell the fear of many children and does not prepare them for the moment when they are bullied. It is never a student's fault when targeted for repetitive harassment. But their response to it, and understand who is making the choice as well as all stakeholders recognizing their perceptions as real and valid, can have a huge impact on what is truly terrorizing or just an annoyance related to growing up that will build self-esteem and problem-solving skills for a lifetime. When a fifth-grade class was recently asked their definition of bullying, one student called out with great passion, "It's when they drive you into a rage!" Everyone would agree that bullying is terrible, but only you can go into a rage. They were asked, "What if it was impossible to get you to rage? What do you think they do?" The same student replied, "They would stop trying." This researcher's response, "Not overnight it wouldn't, because they would test you for a while to see if you really were incapable or raging. You are giving them exactly what they want, and it might be time to see how it would go if you did not give them exactly what they want. You can never rage again. Try it and see." Along with that advice discussions were held with the school to ensure that the student's perceptions of the bullying were validated and options were given in lieu of raging.

It is true that, when discussions are held regarding stakeholder's roles in preventing bullying, no one is left out – not the bullies themselves, to those on the edge of suicide, to those simply scared, to all staff members from the principal to the janitorial staff. When everyone is on

the same page and students feel empowered to shine the light on the dark corners of bullying learning to distinguish between real bullying and dealing maturely with conflict and peer problems will create strong leaders out of victims, bullies, and bystanders.

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Appendixes

Appendix A - *I'm Gonna Write That Down*, Incident Report

Appendix B – *I'm Gonna Write That Down*, Primary Incident Report

Appendix C – Sample Bully Free Declaration

Appendix D - Sample Contract for Parents

Appendix E – Sample Parent Letter

Appendix F – Pen and Ink Bullying Survey

"I'm Gonna Write That Down" Incident report Name _____ (Note: if someone is hurt or inappropriate language is used please notify teacher immediately.)

Date of incident _____ approximate time of incident _____

Place: Where were you? Please, write down the place where this happened. (Please, be specific: example could be playground plus describing the area or place. Describe things that can be seen in the area as specific as possible, like near bench or behind gym entrance doors.)

Who? Write names of the person or persons who are causing this problem.

Who else? Write down the names of all bystanders you can remember who witnessed this situation.

What happened? Write down what was said or done that was hurtful, mean, or anything that tells what happened in this situation. Please, be as specific as possible. If inappropriate words were used, use the first letter and dashes for the rest of the letters in the word. Write on back if you need more space.

Please, write down how you reacted to the situation. Write down what you said in response.

Please, ask bystanders to sign this form.

Please, sign your name here.

"I'm Gonna Write That Down!"

"Put your school name here!"

Your Name: _____ Grade: _____

Date of Bullying: _____ Time of Bullying: _____

1. WHAT happened? _____

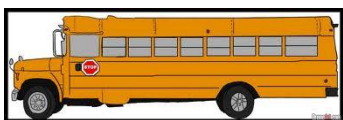
2. WHO is doing the bullying? _____

3. WHO ELSE witnessed the bullying? _____

4. WHERE were you when the bullying happened? (check one)



Cafeteria ___
hall ___



bus ___



playground ___

Other place _____

Ask the bystanders to sign here.

Sign YOUR NAME here.

Appendix C

Sample Bully Free Declaration adapted from *Aspergers and Bullying** (Dubin, 2007):

We the students, teachers, and parents of ____ school, declare that all members of the community are valuable citizens. We affirm that no student will ever be teased or bullied with an intention to cause harm. We agree that students who choose to act contrary to this policy should be subjected to consequences for their actions. It is important to stand up for the people who have been bullied and to let those who bully know that what he or she is doing is unacceptable. It is in the ____ tradition that we affirm these principles of inclusion and acceptance for every student, teacher, or member of our community. (p. 128)

Appendix D

Sample contract for parents on first day of school:

Dear Parents and/or legal guardians,

Please read and review the bully free declaration with your child. Below you will see a contract that we are asking students and parents to sign. Discuss the contract and the importance of bullying prevention with your son or daughter before he or she returns to school with signed contract tomorrow.

I ___ agree that I will abide by the principles and policies set forth in the Bully-Free Declaration. If I don't abide by then, I agree to accept the consequences for my actions (Dubin, 2007, pp. 128-129)

*This may be modified for the needs of any school.

Appendix E

Dear Parents and/or legal guardians,

We at _____ are using a new protocol for helping students understand when bullying is occurring and help other students know when they might be bullying others. The new protocol is called, “I’m gonna write that down.” This is a statement that any student can use at any time they feel they are being bullied and are fearful. This statement does not speak to intent, but a way to create awareness for all students when a person is feeling bullied. Upon hearing “I’m gonna write that down,” the student or students who are creating the situation shall stop their interaction with the student, and not repeat the comments, gestures, or intent of the interaction again. The student who said, “I’m gonna write that down” will fill out an incident report with all pertinent information, and as long as no offensive language or physical violence has occurred there will be no other actions taken by the school, but the report will be given to the school counselor as record of evidence. This gives all students a chance to assess their actions and the situation and to not repeat the actions. Should they repeat at any time another situation that causes a student to feel bullied, harassed, fearful using teasing, verbal threat, or physical threat, the statement will be made “I’m gonna write that down,” for the second time. The student will again fill out an incident report and turn it into the counselor. Depending on the severity of the language or harm in the opinion of the counselor the second incident report may cause a meeting with the student or group of perpetrators. If there are no more situations then no other action will be taken. If a third incident report is created by a student saying, “I’m gonna write that down,” to the same student or group then parents will be notified and the perpetrators will be in violation of school and district bullying policy with corrections depending on severity examples being suspension or expulsion. At any time the student or group perpetrators may create their own report, but once they have heard, “I’m gonna write that down,” there is no reason to initiate further interaction with the student who feels as if they are being bullied. The school will take each report seriously, but give all perpetrators a chance to remedy the situation themselves. All students will be trained until they understand the program and steps. We thank you for your help and if you have any question please feel free to contact the counselor. We also welcome you to attend the program training to further your understanding. And we thank you for your support in creating a safe environment for all students.

Sincerely,

Appendix F

I'm Gonna Write That Down Survey

Please, answer all questions honestly. This survey is anonymous. Circle your answers.

1. Have you been bullied?

A) Yes

B) No

If yes, how often, (Once) (Occasionally) (Often) (Everyday)

2. Please, mark any/all forms of bullying that has happened to you.

A) Physical (threats of violence)

B) Verbal

C) Text Message

D) Email

E) Social media (Facebook, twitter, Topix, Pintrest etc.)

F) Spreading rumors

G) Excluding

3) Have you ever bullied someone?

A) Yes

B) No

4) Have you witnessed bullying?

A) Yes

B) No

If yes, how often (Once) (Occasionally) (Often) (Everyday)

5) Have you ever intervened when you have seen bullying happen?

A) Yes

B) No

6) Have you told an adult about bullying that has happened to you or someone else?

A) Yes

B) No

7) If you were bullied, was it resolved?

A) Yes

B) NO

8) If you have seen bullying, where do you see it happen?

A) Bathroom: (Which bathroom/bathrooms) _____

B) Playground: (What areas of the playground) _____

C) Class: (Which classroom or classrooms) _____

D) Bus: (Which bus) _____

E) Cafeteria: (Which lunch period or what time) _____

F) Somewhere else: (Be specific) _____

9) Who do you think the bullies are in the school?

10) How many good friends do you have at school?

- A) None
- B) 1 Good Friend
- C) 2 or 3 Good Friends
- D) 4 or 5 Good Friends
- E) More than 5 Good Friends

11) Are you male or female?

- A) Male
- B) Female

12) Are you being bullied now?

- A) Yes
- B) No

Book II
RESEARCH

I'm Gonna Write That Down: Research on Bullying and Recognition of Perception Toward Initiation of Intervention a Whole-School Approach to Bringing all Stakeholders' Perceptions on Bullying in Line and Training Students to Distinguish Tattling from Reporting in Grades 3-6

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