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How can schools best support pupils showing bullying behaviours?

Introduction

This briefing reviews widely used interventions which can be used by schools to provide support for children and young people who bully others. To do this, the review is divided into two sections; firstly national strategies which include or specifically target supporting children and young people displaying bullying behaviour are considered. These are either available within schools, or can be provided by local authorities (LAs). Secondly, making use of theories from developmental psychology and criminology, the use of restorative practices as a form of support and help for bullies is discussed. Although schools continue to use punishments and sanctions in the case of bullying incidents, the primary role of this is to act as a deterrent for future actions, and to publicly demonstrate that such behaviour is wrong and not to be ignored or condoned. This review does not examine approaches which negatively reinforce bullying or anti social behaviour, instead concentrating on interventions which directly encourage behaviour change and pro sociality.

Interventions supporting children and young people displaying bullying behaviour

This section outlines and evaluates nationally implemented schemes available to schools and local authorities. Depending on the community and school factors unique to each area, local authorities in England and Wales provide a varying range of initiatives which can be used to support children and young people displaying bullying behaviours. Those discussed below are the most commonly used, and although not all local authorities have access to them, many of the programmes are relatively new initiatives which are still being developed and evaluated.

National behaviour and attendance strategy

The National Behaviour and Attendance Strategy, implemented across all schools in 2006, ensures schools and Local Authorities work towards achieving the five outcomes identified in the Every Child Matters White Paper. Part of this includes giving children and young people the opportunity to improve issues related to behaviour and attendance.

The strategy is divided into four strands, each covering specific areas related to schools and their local authorities:

- Continuing Professional Development provides professional development opportunities to all schools through their local authorities.
- School improvement focuses on providing support to schools which have been identified as having issues concerning attendance and behaviour.
- SEAL provides curriculum materials which address the social and emotional aspects of learning.
- Small group interventions provide individual level group work to pupils requiring extra help and assistance.

Although the strategy does not specifically target children and young people who bully, the SEAL and small group intervention strands directly address behavioural issues at both whole school and individual levels, so could be effective routes through which schools are able to support pupils who bully others.

Before the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy was implemented nationally, pilot schemes at both the primary and secondary school level were introduced. Evaluations of these two programmes provide evidence of the effectiveness certain strands show in supporting and changing the behaviour of pupils who bully.

Implementation of the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy in primary schools began as a pilot scheme in 2003, to which 25 local authorities were enrolled. An evaluation by Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw (2006) assessed all measures implemented as part of the

strategy by giving questionnaires and interviews to participating schools and local authorities. In relation to supporting pupils who bully others, the evaluation also examined for any changes in individual behaviour by using pre- and post-intervention questionnaires assessing the social, emotional and behavioural skills of pupils involved in either the SEAL or small group work strand of the programme. The findings showed that the SEAL strand exhibited some evidence of improving pupil's social skills, relationships and awareness of emotions, although the lack of a control group meant these findings could not be fully validated. Qualitative data from staff supported this trend, with respondents reporting that the programme had had a visible impact on pupil behaviour, with classrooms and playgrounds being calmer, and children's confidence, attitudes, and social skills improved. The small group work strand was found to be mostly used by pupils who showed poor behaviour, social difficulties in communicating with others, were at risk of exclusion, or had failed to respond to rewards and sanctions concerning their behaviour. Using the Goodman Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire to assess for behavioural changes, the researchers found significant improvements in the levels of pro social behaviour and emotional symptoms displayed by the participating children.

As part of the secondary national behaviour and attendance strategy, the secondary school version of the SEAL programme was launched as a pilot in 2005 under the title 'Developing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills' (SEBS). Five local authorities agreed to take part in the pilot, with a fifth joining later. An evaluation of the programme was carried out by Ofsted (2006) who selected 11 schools in which the development and success of the pilot would be measured over a period of five terms through inspector observation. The greatest impact of the pilot was on improving teachers understanding of social, emotional and behavioural skills, which better enabled them to develop their skills and incorporate their knowledge into lessons. This resulted in general improvements in the behavioural and social skills of pupils.

A further evaluation of the SEBS pilot was carried out by Smith, O'Donnell, Easton and Rudd (2007) between October 2005 and May 2007. To assess the impact of the programme, case studies of ten schools were used, along with a school survey and

interviews with six LA's. Similar findings were observed, with schools reporting that they believed the pilot had improved general levels of behaviour and attendance. However, no direct evidence was provided which showed individual improvements in behaviour among the pupils.

Although the SEAL and small group work strands of the national behaviour and attendance strategy show some evidence of improving general behaviour, the evaluations do not specifically address the support provided for pupils who bully, or any individual level improvements in their behaviour. However the strategy is still at an early stage of implementation, and with further refinement could potentially be a useful route through which schools will be equipped to better provide for pupils who bully.

External initiatives available through school referrals

At present, the most common path taken by schools to provide support for bullying pupils is through referrals to local authority initiatives. All local authorities provide a varied range of services which are tailored to suit the school and community factors of the local area. This section outlines those practices most commonly used by local authorities to provide support for anti social pupils.

Behavioural Educational Support Teams (BESTs)

BESTs are multi-agency teams which aim to promote emotional well-being and positive behaviour by providing support for children and young people who exhibit, or are at risk of developing, emotional and behavioural problems. To do this, BESTs bring together a variety of professionals from the health, education, and social care sectors, therefore a typical BEST could be expected to include any combination of educational psychologists, education welfare officers, social workers, school nurses, behavioural support staff and health workers. By providing such a variety of professional services, BESTs are able to offer support which addresses the individual needs of the child, while concurrently the teams work together to support schools in promoting overall changes in emotional well being and positive behaviour.

An evaluation of BESTs was carried out by Halsey et al. (2005) to provide evidence and understanding of their effectiveness in improving behaviour. The research was carried out in two stages. Firstly, to examine operational capacities, interviews were conducted with 20 BEST co-ordinators. Secondly, case studies were carried out on 12 BESTs, with individual interviews being held with team members and school staff. Although the evaluation mostly focused on the running of BESTs, parts of the research specifically examined the impact which had been made on the behaviour of children and young people. The report details improvements on pupil behaviour at both the individual and school level. Pupils who showed behavioural problems were perceived to be better able to stabilize their behaviour by being given individual strategies which enabled them to manage their behaviour and improve their ability to socialize with peers. This resulted in pupils being involved in fewer incidents within school, and reduced reports of fixed term or permanent exclusions. Improved behaviour at the individual level also led to a better classroom atmosphere and helped to improve the school climate for the rest of the peer group. The researchers note that a greater success in improving behaviour was observed among young pupils, with qualitative data suggesting problem behaviour among older pupils was more 'deeply embedded', and harder to alter. Changes which had been made at the whole school level, such as introducing buddying schemes, teaching classroom managements techniques and developing behaviour policies had contributed to creating a more positive school climate.

Pupil referral units (PRUs)

Pupil referral units are centres which temporarily provide education for children of compulsory school age who, for varying reasons, are unable to attend mainstream schools. The largest proportion of pupils attending PRUs are those that have shown behavioural difficulties at school, and have been, or are at risk of being, excluded. Specialist staff at PRUs take on the main responsibility of continuing the education of pupils, but also provide social, emotional and behavioural support to help pupils progress when they either return to mainstream education or enter full time employment. One way in which PRUs can provide support for children showing problem behaviours, such as

bullying, is to provide early identification of those pupils at risk of exclusion. This can lead to the child taking part in outreach support with specialist staff, either at their existing school, or through dual registration, where the pupil attends both their mainstream institution and a PRU.

As PRUs serve as educational institutions, they are eligible for Ofsted inspections, and during inspections between 2005 and 2006, over half were rated as good or outstanding. Following this, between October 2006 and March 2007, Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and Additional Inspectors visited 28 PRUs identified as good or outstanding (Ofsted, 2007). Their report aimed to give examples of best practice, by examining the impact that PRUs had made on pupils' attainment and behaviour. All of the PRUs were found to place a strong emphasis on the personal and social development of their students, attempting to increase their confidence in preparation for returning to mainstream school or beginning a career. Plans for future development were given to each pupil which set out timetables and steps for pupils to successfully reintegrate. Although the report provides a positive review of PRUs generally, it gives no indication of individual improvements in behaviour. Therefore the degree to which PRUs are able to support and help children who bully others remains unassessed.

Safer Schools Partnerships (SSP)

The Safer School Partnership programme was first launched as a pilot in September 2002, in a joint initiative between the (then) DfES and the Youth Justice Board. It aimed to address issues related to anti social behaviour and crime, by forming permanent partnerships between schools and police officers. This was accomplished through a variety of methods, such as permanently basing a police officer within one school, assigning one police officer to cover several schools, or incorporating a police officer into a BEST. While the primary aim of the partnership is to reduce anti social and criminal behaviour within the school, further objectives include helping schools develop whole school policies, identifying children and young people at risk of offending, supporting vulnerable children and ensuring full time education for young offenders.

The 2002 pilot scheme involved placing police officers in 100 schools, located in the ten areas of England and Wales with the highest crime rates. An evaluation of the scheme by Bowles, Garcia Reyes and Pradiptyo (2005a) selected 11 participating schools to carry out interviews and questionnaires on the impact of the SSP, while two non-involved schools in high crime areas were also included for comparison purposes. Questionnaires were given to 1175 students prior to implementation of the programme, with a follow up survey six months later, this time answered by 859 pupils. The results showed the scheme to have a positive impact at the whole school level, with pupils reporting general reductions in bullying and substance abuse. Students felt an increased likelihood of an adult intervening to stop cases of bullying. However, at the individual level, self reports showed no reductions among pupils showing problem behaviours such as bullying. The authors discuss this in terms of the length of the programme. At the time of the first questionnaire, schools had only just begun implementing the partnership, so that 6 months later, at time 2, several schools had only had the scheme fully running for a matter of months, which was considered too short a time to properly attempt to change challenging and ingrained problem behaviours.

Following this evaluation, the same research team carried out a second study on the effectiveness of SSPs (Bowles, Garcia Reyes & Pradiptyo, 2005b). 15 schools were selected which already had fully implemented SSPs. To provide a comparison these were match paired with a further 15 schools not enrolled with the SSP. Using quantitative surveys the authors examined differences between schools in their progress towards achieving the outcomes of SSP. The findings show similarities to that of the pilot study, with noticeable improvements at a whole school level, marked by lower absenteeism and exclusion rates than non SSP schools. However, individual level effects could not be fully explored as the study only used data from one time point, so no changes in pupils perceptions over time were observed.

In March 2006, the SSP was fully implemented by the (then) DfES and now runs in over 450 schools. Although evaluations of the partnership have so far provided little evidence

of changing individual problem behaviours, their impact at the whole school level is apparent in both studies.

Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP)

The Behaviour Improvement Programme is a government initiative set up to improve schools with poor records in behaviour and attendance. It was initially rolled out across 34 local authorities in July 2002, and since then has grown to incorporate over 400 secondary and 1500 primary schools. As of 2006, the BIP has been incorporated as a central component of the National Behaviour and Attendance Strategy.

The primary objective of the BIP is to improve standards of behaviour overall, through which schools could expect to report reduced numbers of exclusions, and lower levels of truancy. This is attempted by implementing changes at the local authority, school and individual level. Furthermore, those children considered at risk of criminal behaviour, exclusion or truancy are provided with their own named key worker.

The BIP tries to achieve these aims by providing enrolled local authorities with a range of measures designed to improve behaviour, and reduce the risk of exclusion. These include:

- Establishing and supporting BESTs.
- Providing for pupils who are excluded from school both fixed term and permanently, such as establishing PRUs or learning support units (LSUs).
- Behaviour audits, which allow the identification of key issues requiring addressing within the school.
- Setting up SSPs.
- Providing learning mentors to pupils who exhibit difficulties learning inside and outside of school.

The first phase of the BIP was initiated in July 2002 among 34 local authorities, selected due to high levels of truancy and street crime within their jurisdiction. Each local authority was asked to select 3 or 4 secondary schools which had shown the greatest problems with behaviour and attendance to act as priority targets, along with their feeder

primary schools. This led to over 700 schools participating. In 2004, phase two was initiated, in which a further 26 local authorities were incorporated into the BIP, covering an additional 99 secondary schools and 446 primary schools.

Hallam et al. (2005) carried out a full evaluation of both phase 1 and 2 of the BIP using interviews with local authorities, school staff, pupils and parents. Overall, the authors found measures implemented under the BIP showed some evidence of promoting positive behaviour within schools, although in terms of supporting children who bully, the most reliable indicator of this was the number of fixed term or permanent exclusions. On this measure alone, the programme showed varying results. For phase 1 schools, there was a reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions but a slight increase in permanent exclusions. Among phase 2 schools, data was not available regarding fixed term exclusions, but a statistically significant reduction in permanent exclusions was reported. The results do not provide conclusive evidence showing the BIP was successful in improving behaviour, although qualitative data from school and LA staff suggests that behaviour and attendance among pupils showed signs of improvement, and more effective policies and practices had been implemented at the school level.

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs)

Youth Offending Teams are a key component of the youth justice system, which aims to prevent offending by children and young people aged 10 and 17. Following their introduction in April 2002, every local authority in England and Wales now has its own YOT, each of which uses a wide ranging multi agency approach, comprised of professionals from social services, probation services, police, health, education, drugs and alcohol misuse, and housing officers. YOTs assess each young person referred to them by using a national assessment, through which the child's problems are identified. These national assessments are carried out through interviews with the young person, their parents or carers, and any other services they have previously been involved with. This enables the YOT to build a picture of the child based on their educational, family, health, environment and criminal background. Results of these assessments allow the

YOTs to develop a programme specifically designed to meet the needs of the individual, which utilizes a combination of the wide range of professional skills available to them. Assessments are constantly reviewed to ensure the child is making progress and programmes continue to suit their needs.

An additional function of YOTs, and one which may be the most effective for supporting pupils who bully others, is the identification of children who are at risk of offending. By targeting children at an early stage, and aiding them personally, socially and emotionally, their risk of anti social behaviour is reduced. Using the Onset referral and assessment framework, children and young people at high risk of anti social behaviour are identified and included into initiatives such as youth inclusion programmes, youth inclusion and support panels, parenting interventions and mentoring programmes; all of which give children and young people access to support staff who help them to improve their relationships with peers and develop new skills. Although this aspect of YOTs is aimed at early identification, it may be an effective route to preventing bullying, by targeting children and young people at an early age and helping them to achieve healthy and positive development. No full evaluation of the role of YOTs is available, although inspectorate reports for individual YOTs can be obtained from HM Inspectorate of Probation.

Overview

As the above variety of programmes indicate, provisions already exist through which schools are given the opportunity to support pupils who bully others. Evaluations of these programmes have so far focused on the implementation and running of the schemes, and only provide an indication as to the effect which can be had on improving behaviour and supporting change. However, given that some of these programmes are recent implementations, and continue to be refined and developed, it may be too early to fully evaluate and realize the benefits that can be had on improving the behaviour of problematic pupils. The evaluations show beneficial effects among all programmes, which with further development, and a greater uptake among LAs could provide schools

with an effective range of strategies through which children and young people displaying bullying behaviours can be better supported.

Specialist approaches to support pupils who bully others

This section of the review examines currently existing, school-based anti-bullying interventions which, with the support of psychological theories regarding the nature of school bullying, could be useful approaches through which pupils displaying bullying behaviours can be supported by their school. Although the primary aim of these programmes is to prevent bullying, underlying theories highlight the potential that the schemes may have in instigating longer term behavioural improvement on the part of the bullying child.

Restorative approaches

The most commonly used of these methods are restorative approaches. This term is used to refer to a range of practices which focus on repairing the harm caused to the victim. Restorative approaches provide an alternative to punishing the offender, by making them aware of the victim's feelings and the harm they have caused, and making some agreed reparation. This allows victims to have their say, offering them the opportunity to talk about the impact that offensive behaviours have had on their lives. As well as expressing their feelings about the incident and interpretation of events, they are also allowed to actively participate in resolving the harm that has been caused by discussing forms of reparation. For the offenders, restorative approaches give the perpetrator an insight into the damage they have caused to the victim, both physically and mentally. They are given the opportunity to explain their actions, and the underlying reasons for them, before finally being presented with the chance to suggest ways in which they can compensate the victim for the harm their behaviour has caused. Direct sanctions could still be resorted to if an individual refuses restorative approaches or does not abide by the decisions such a process reaches.

Although restorative approaches originally focused on criminal behaviour, they can also be applied to aggressive or offensive behaviour, including bullying, and due to this, such interventions are used in many schools as a way of both preventing bullying, and improving behaviour. In practice, restorative approaches are wide ranging and can be used for a variety of incidents, including bullying, vandalism, theft, assault, and conflicts between teachers and pupils.

Within the UK, restorative practices are based around three main principles. These are:

- Responsibility: the offender along with their parents learn to accept responsibility for the offence caused through their actions
- Reparation: the victim is involved through consultation, mediation, participation and reparative activities are devised to help the offender alleviate some of the damage and distress they have caused
- Resolution: successfully ending a dispute so that pupils and their families are free to interact without threat of further conflict.

Restorative practices can be seen to take a hierarchical approach; interventions used will depend on the nature and severity of the bullying incident. The most commonly used practices, in order of ascending complexity, are summarised below:

- Peer mediation: Students are chosen to become peer mentors, who are then provided with training and given the authority to mediate in low level conflicts around the school.
- Circle time: A whole class exercise used to alleviate general problems and improve the learning atmosphere. Under teacher supervision, pupils arrange their chairs in a circle, and discuss a problem which needs resolving. All pupils are given the opportunity to speak, but only one is able to talk at any given time.
- Short or 'mini' conference: An informal meeting between the pupils involved, and led by a trained member of staff, in which incidents and harm caused are examined, and the offender(s) are asked to discuss possible means of reparation.
- Restorative conference: A formal, structured meeting in which involved pupils, along with their parents/carers, friends, and school representatives, are brought

together to discuss and resolve an incident. The staff member leading the conference is highly trained, and prior to this large meeting, holds individual interviews with the participants to ensure a full conference is appropriate, and that everyone is completely prepared for it.

Evaluations of restorative approaches in schools

Evidence for the effectiveness of restorative programmes in the UK was first reported by Tinker (2002) in a study evaluating 105 conferences carried out in 8 Nottingham schools. 78% of conferences finished fully successfully, with a further 16% partially successful. Concurrently, an evaluation of a pilot study in Lambeth schools (Edgar, 2002) reported that conferences showed promising signs of resolving serious incidents.

In 2001 the Youth Justice Board established a national programme for restorative justice in schools, which saw funding provided to nine YOTs throughout England, spanning a total of twenty six schools. A full evaluation of the programme using pupil and staff surveys, combined with individual interviews with conference participants, showed some evidence of effectiveness (Youth Justice Board, 2004). At a whole school level no general improvements in pupil attitudes were observed, although most school staff reported that their school had benefited from restorative justice. However, results at the individual level were more promising. 92% of the conferences carried out were resolved successfully. Of 538 interviews carried out with conference participants, 89% reported being satisfied with the outcome, and 93% believed the process was fair, and justice had been achieved. Three months after the conference had taken place, 96% of agreements still remained intact, showing evidence of longer term improvements in individual behaviour. Data on the number of exclusions was provided by a few schools; although this sample was too small to give a significant result, schools implementing restorative justice showed a reduction in permanent exclusions compared to non programme schools.

Related interventions

There are a number of other anti bullying programmes currently running in the UK which incorporate aspects of the restorative approach. Although differing in their philosophy and methodology, these programmes similarly revolve around a group meeting with involved parties, with the aim of preventing bullying and changing behaviour. The two most commonly used of these are the Method of Shared Concern and the Support Group Method, each of which are outlined below. Both these approaches differ from restorative approaches. In particular, the bullying child is not required to make any public admission of guilt. Rather than punishing the bullies, the facilitator seeks to elicit common feelings of empathy toward the victim, which can be used to resolve the problem.

Use of both the Support Group Method and Method of Shared Concern is controversial, due to their refusal to apportion blame on the offender. Olweus (1999) argues that children who bully do not show empathy towards their victims, and any act of victimisation should always be responded to using (non punitive) sanctions. In Britain, the Support Group Method in particular has received a great degree of criticism. The Department for Children Schools and Families does not support the programme and states that any form of bullying must ‘always incur disciplinary sanctions, which should be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably’ (DCSF, 2007). The children’s charity Kidscape also oppose the method, arguing that its effects can be harmful, as shown through phone calls and emails received by Kidscape, in which parents of victimised children state concerns and problems caused by the use of the (then) No Blame approach.

Method of Shared Concern

The Method of Shared Concern, developed in Sweden by Anatol Pikas (see Pikas, 1989a,b, 2002), is a counselling based approach used in the intervention of school bullying. It uses a combination of individual and group meetings, structured around five consecutive phases:

- 1) Individual talks with suspected bullies

Through a series of steps the facilitator attempts to elicit feelings of shared concern towards the victim. Any signs of an empathic response towards the victim, and suggestions for helping them, are focused upon, discussed, and then used to formulate constructive solutions to the problem.

2) Individual talk with the victim

Using an empathic and personal approach, the facilitator discusses the problem and determines whether the child could be considered an 'ordinary' or provocative victim. Ordinary victims are then provided with help and support, while provocative victims are encouraged to realise they share some responsibility for their situation, and must change their own behaviour (in addition to the facilitators work with the bullying children).

3) Preparatory group meeting

All children suspected of bullying the victim are brought together for a group meeting, in which their comments from earlier meetings are recounted. Any attempts by participants to improve their behaviour, or make the situation better for the victim are positively reinforced.

4) Summit meeting

The victim and bullies are brought together, with the facilitator aiming to find a resolution acceptable to both parties. The ultimate result of this is to establish a written or verbal agreement of peaceful coexistence between the two parties.

5) Follow up of the results

To ensure agreements are honoured the facilitator continues to monitor the situation, and should resolves be broken, further counselling is carried out.

Shared Concern uses separate individual interviews with all children involved in the bullying. Discussing the incidents separately with each bully is thought more likely to elicit a positive response because any feelings of peer pressure or group influence amongst them are weakened. Key to the success of this method is the work of the facilitator, who uses cognitive techniques throughout the whole process to move the bullies towards recognising the hurt they have caused, and improve their behaviour towards the victim.

Supporters of the programme have produced several papers claiming evidence of its effectiveness among a small number of case studies (Pikas, 1989a, 1989b). Smith, Cowie and Sharp (1994) provide an independent evaluation, in which the authors, having been fully trained by Pikas, facilitated training workshops for twenty one primary and secondary school teachers, all of whom felt that it was an appropriate and helpful response to bullying. To provide further evaluation of the method, interviews were then conducted with thirty pupils and six teachers who had been involved with the method. Three quarters of the pupils reported that bullying had decreased following the intervention. This improvement was attributed to pupils being given the chance to openly express their feelings, and formulate their own solution to resolve the situation. Five of the teachers felt the Method of Shared Concern had reduced the frequency and severity of bullying incidents, although in some cases the bullying child had switched their attention from the initial victim, to another child outside of the group. The authors concluded that Shared Concern is a useful short term intervention for reducing bullying behaviours, but in the case of very persistent bullying, further interventions may be required.

Support Group Method

The Support Group Method, formerly called the No Blame approach was first developed by Robinson and Maines (1997). The aim of the Support Group Method is to change problem behaviours, which is accomplished through a mixture of peer pressure to elicit a prosocial response, and self realization of the harm and suffering caused to the victim. Support Group conferencing uses a seven step approach to encourage this behaviour change:

- 1) The facilitator talks individually to the bullied pupil
- 2) A group meeting is then set up, comprised of 6 to 8 students, who have been suggested by the victim
- 3) The facilitator explains to the group that the victim has a problem, but does not discuss the incidents that have taken place
- 4) The facilitator then assures the group no punishment will be given, but instead all participants must take joint responsibility to make the victim feel happy and safe

- 5) Each group member then gives their own ideas on how the victim can be helped
- 6) The facilitator then ends the meeting. No punishments or verbal / written contracts are made, but instead the group is given responsibility for improving the victim's safety and well being.
- 7) Individual meetings are held with group members one week after the meeting to establish how successful the intervention has been.

There is some evidence of effectiveness, particularly from advocates of the method. Maines and Robinson (1992) used teacher reports to assess the outcomes of individual support group sessions, with a success being measured by a cessation in bullying which was still present 6 months after intervention. The authors reported a very high success rate, 8 out of 8 primary school sessions and 47 out of 49 secondary school sessions had resulted in a successful outcome. Similarly, an evaluation of the method by Young (1998), reported that of 51 support group sessions studied, 80% resulted in immediate success and 14% a delayed success. The remaining 6% had only limited success.

Independently, an evaluation by Smith, Howard and Thompson (2007) aimed to ascertain the use of and support for the Support Group Method within schools and local authorities. Using questionnaires, 57 LA's and 59 schools participated in the study. Despite a small number of negative comments, two thirds of local authorities supported the method, either strongly or in general terms. 11 LAs further provided a rating of effectiveness, the majority of whom felt the outcomes of the Support Group Method were satisfactory. From the school questionnaires, over half of the schools rated the effectiveness of the method, the majority (53%) deeming it very satisfactory, followed by rather satisfactory (30%) or neutral (18%). However, the authors note that in practice, the way in which SGM was used varied widely, being frequently confused with similar methods such as restorative practices and Shared Concern. No evidence was provided as to whether the Support Group Method was able to support and improve the behaviour of children who bullied others.

Theoretical Support

Although evaluations of these methods generally focus on the reductions which have been made on bullying, and not individual changes in the behaviour of bullies, psychological theories are able to provide an insight into how these programmes may be able to provide support for children who take part in bullying behaviours.

Peer Pressure

For non punitive approaches, such as Shared Concern and the Support Group Method, peer pressure is regarded as the most important underlying mechanism. Individuals can be seen as being influenced by a small group of peers to whom they are closely associated. Members of this group all share common interests, thereby establishing an ethos which binds them together. Bullying can arise when group members, for varying reasons, may decide to target external groups or individuals; however, this is only likely to occur if the individual's actions are supported by the ethos of their peer group. By manipulating this ethos, non punitive programmes seek to prevent the individual(s) from taking part in bullying. This is accomplished in differing ways. The Support Group Method seeks to positively influence group feelings. Members of the group who do not bully are used to exert positive peer pressure on the bullying children by revealing their more prosocial attitudes. These become incorporated into the ethos of the group, potentially leading to more positive attitudes, and, having witnessed the hurt caused to the victim, a condemnatory stance against bullying behaviours. The Method of Shared Concern takes a different approach, instead seeking to break down negative attitudes amongst the bullying group, so that less influence is had on the individual's actions. This is accomplished through the individual interviews with group members. By removing them from the group, the facilitator is given the opportunity to create a bond with the individual, through which the participant's real feelings can be obtained, and the harmful group ethos which has caused the problem can be lessened. The success of both of these programmes therefore depends on the ability of the facilitator to manipulate both group and individual attitudes, which can then be used to discourage pupils from taking part in bullying behaviours.

Empathy Induction

Restorative approaches, and related interventions, all seek to resolve bullying incidents by eliciting either group or individual feelings of empathy toward the victim. Children who bully rarely exhibit empathic attitudes towards their victim. Should they be punished for their actions, the use of direct sanctions may further decrease the chance of them showing an empathic response. Restorative and non punitive approaches seek to change this through the use of the group meeting. The victim is given a chance to openly speak out about the hurt they have experienced, which gives the bully(ies) an opportunity to observe their actions from a different perspective, and to understand the longer term implications that have resulted from them. It is hoped that by realising the full effect of their behaviour, and by witnessing the real damage that has been caused, feelings of empathy can be elicited. As a result, the perpetrator may decide to stop bullying the victim, as they feel remorse for the harm caused, or, at best, may desist from bullying completely, as they now have a greater realization of the damage that their actions can have.

Shame Management

For restorative approaches, the most prominent psychological theory used to support them concerns the concept of shame. Studies examining the relationship between shame, anger and criminal behaviour have shown consistent links between mismanaged shame and hostility or violent offending (for example Lewis, 1971, Scheff, 1987, Tangney et al., 1992, 1996). Shame can also be incorporated into a theory of bullying, and as postulated by Ahmed and Braithwaite (2004), acts as a fourth variable, alongside the family, school and personality, which impacts on the likelihood of involvement in bullying.

Shame management theory (Ahmed, Harris, Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 2001) attempts to explain bullying and aggressive behaviour as a result of mismanaged feelings of shame. Shame acknowledgement and shame displacement are two key concepts which underlie how shame can be managed. Shame acknowledgement occurs when the

individual understands and admits that a particular incident in which they have been involved is both wrong and shameful. The offender therefore realises the error of their action and expresses remorse at the damage that has been caused. Shame displacement occurs whereby an individual blames others for wrongs they have committed, refusing to blame themselves and attributing the fault to other parties involved.

In relation to bullying, shame management theory proposes that individuals who are able to acknowledge shame will refrain from taking part in further bullying behaviours. This is because these individuals realise the harm their actions can cause, and so refrain from harm doing. Typical behaviours which illustrate shame acknowledgement include taking responsibility, facing up to others rejection and making amends for hurtful actions. Conversely, individuals who show shame displacement are more likely to become, or continue to be involved in anti social behaviours. Shame displacement can manifest itself in a variety of behaviours, for example, externalizing blame, feeling anger, and displacing anger.

Based around previous literature on shame, the MOSS-SASD scale (Management of Shame State – Shame Acknowledgement and Shame Displacement) was developed to measure feelings of shame and examine how individuals manage their shame following acts of wrongdoing. Using this scale, Ahmed (2006) conducted a longitudinal study on feelings of shame among school age Australian children over the course of three years. In total, 365 participants from 32 schools took part in the study. The first assessment was carried out at primary school, with participants being asked to complete the MOSS-SASD questionnaire, along with the Life at School survey, a questionnaire which asked the pupil their general feelings about school, along with questions specifically concerning bullying. At follow up, three years later, pupils were again tested using the same questionnaires. This enabled researchers to investigate the stability of bully and victim roles over time, and the relation this showed to individual levels of shame management.

The findings showed that children who bullied others showed higher levels of shame displacement and lower levels of shame acknowledgement than children who did not

bully. Using the longitudinal data, the authors examined changes in shame management scores over three years. Children who bullied others at both time 1 and time 2 showed consistently high scores on shame displacement and low scores on shame acknowledgement. In comparison, children who were bullies at time 1, but had desisted from bullying at time 2, showed increased levels of shame acknowledgement, and decreased levels of shame displacement. The results therefore suggest a relationship between shame management and involvement with bullying. By changing the way in which bullies manage shame, interventions may be able to prevent bullying behaviours.

Reintegrative Shaming

Although the changes among pupils in this study occurred naturally, without intervention, improvements in behaviour resulting from restorative programmes may occur through a similar path, whereby participants become better equipped to manage their shame. Reintegrative shaming theory, established by Braithwaite (1989), argues that by witnessing social disapproval that is condemning, yet respectful, offenders are given the opportunity to acknowledge shame, which in turn can lead to permanent improvements in their behaviour. To achieve this, the victim, offender and their support networks, such as friends and family, are brought together for a group meeting. The intention of this is for 'invoking remorse in the person being shamed and/or condemnation by others who become aware of the shaming' (Braithwaite, 1989). If this is done respectfully, and resulting in forgiveness or reparation, then behavioural improvement could be successfully achieved.

Ttofi and Farrington (in press) examined the effects of parental shaming on sibling and peer bullying among a sample of 182 children aged 11-12. Participants were given questionnaires covering shame management and bullying, followed by a series of vignettes to establish the shaming techniques used by their parents. The findings confirmed earlier research, showing shame management to be significantly related to bullying; children with ineffective shame management were more likely to bully siblings and peers. Among children whose parents used reintegrative shaming techniques, a

positive correlation with shame management was found. In contrast, children whose parents used disintegrative shaming, whereby the child is effectively stigmatized and excluded, showed significantly poorer shame management skills. Disintegrative shaming therefore had a direct negative impact on a child's shame management skills, resulting in an increased likelihood of taking part in bullying. Reintegrative shaming, however, only showed an association between children whose parents used the technique, and effective levels of shame management. Although reintegrative shaming did not directly improve shame management skills, its continued use was correlated with more effective shame management, which directly reduced the likelihood of involvement in bullying. Therefore the type of shaming experienced by the child influenced their involvement in bullying, mediated through the child's shame management abilities.

Restorative approaches, along with the related interventions previously discussed, can be seen as forms of reintegrative shaming. Although they focus on stopping bullying from reoccurring, pupils who victimise others may benefit from being treated in a reintegrative way. This could potentially increase their ability to manage shame, and ultimately reduce their involvement in bullying. Therefore, restorative approaches, and variants such as Support Group and Shared Concern may be effective routes through which schools can be better equipped to provide help and support for pupils who bully others.

Overview

Restorative interventions, and approaches related to them are already used in many UK schools. Evaluations of the programmes to date have mainly focused on the implementation and running of the schemes, although some evidence has been provided which shows reductions in the amount of bullying taken place. Little research has attempted to investigate how these programmes help and support children who display bullying behaviours, although the concepts of peer pressure, empathy induction, shame management and reintegrative shaming provide a theoretical explanation as to how these programmes may be able to support, and improve the behaviour of anti-social children. However, it must be considered that restorative approaches are relatively new within the

UK, and continue to be further developed to achieve the most successful outcomes. Fuller evaluations are needed, both of the programmes themselves, and the effect that can be had on improving behaviour. At present, restorative practices only provide limited evidence for their ability to support bullies, but the underlying psychological theories surrounding them highlight their role as a useful tool through which schools may be able to provide support for pupils showing bullying behaviours. Their benefits may be best realized as an initial, school based intervention, which can provide early support for pupils who bully, before further sanctions or more intensive options, such as those available through school referrals, become necessary.

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