

# OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a universal school-based intervention for the reduction and prevention of bullying problems in elementary, middle, and junior high schools. The program strives to restructure the school environment to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying. School staff are primarily responsible for implementing the program. All students within a school participate in the program with additional individual interventions targeted at students who are identified as bullies or victims of bullying.

## Program Content:

Bullying is characterized by the following three criteria:

1. Aggressive behavior or intentional "harmdoing"
2. Carried out repeatedly and overtime
3. Occurs within an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power

To address bullying behavior, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program implements core components at three levels: the school level, the class level, and the individual level.

*School-wide interventions* include the administration of an anonymous questionnaire to assess the nature and prevalence of bullying at each school, a school conference day to discuss bullying at school and plan interventions, formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee to coordinate all aspects of the school's program, and increased supervision of students at "hot spots" for bullying.

*Classroom interventions* include the establishment and enforcement of class rules against bullying, and holding regular class meetings with students.

*Individual components* include interventions with children identified as bullies and victims, and discussions with parents of involved students. Teachers may be assisted in these efforts by counselors and school-based mental health professionals.

## National Recognition:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association (SAMHSA) Model Program
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) Blueprints for Violence Prevention Model Program
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Program
- Surgeon General Promising Program

## Program Effectiveness:

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has been shown to result in:

- a 30% to 70% reduction in students' reports of bullying and victimization
- a significant reduction in students' reports of general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft and truancy
- significant improvements in the "social climate" of the class, as reflected in students' reports of improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, and a more positive attitude toward schoolwork and school

## Risk Factors

*Targeted for a Decrease*

- Impulsive and dominant personality
- Lack of empathy
- Difficulty conforming to rules
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Positive attitudes toward violence
- Physical strength (boys)
- Gradually decreasing interest in school
- Peers with positive attitudes towards violence
- Lack of parental warmth and involvement
- Overly permissive parenting
- Harsh discipline/physical punishment
- Lack of parental supervision
- Indifferent or accepting teacher attitudes towards bullying
- Indifferent or accepting student attitudes toward bullying