



Media Release

12th March 2010

Bullies to become a solution to bullying

Engaging bullies and their victims can be an effective method of preventing bullying from continuing in Australian schools, according one of the nation's leading experts in peer victimisation.

Research undertaken in a small sample of schools by Adjunct Professor Ken Rigby, of the University of South Australia, and Ms Coosje Griffiths has shown a 90 per cent success rate can be achieved through what is known as the 'shared concern' approach to non-violent bullying, which adopts a non-punitive use of punishment.

Prof. Rigby will discuss the method among others with teachers in the community health sector at the forthcoming 4th Biennial National Centre Against Bullying (NCAB) conference in Melbourne on April 8-10 this year.

The Method of Shared Concern is seen as an alternative to the use of punishment as a first response to non-violent forms of bullying.

Prof. Rigby said: "Punishment often results in bullying going underground. This method of dealing with bullying works to change students behaviour and stop the bullying altogether."

He said one of the biggest challenges for any teacher is to decide what strategies to use to prevent and resolve bullying at school.

"The shared concern approach, originating in the work of Swedish psychologist, Prof. Anatol Pikas, extends the options available to teachers and counsellors in dealing with cases of bullying, especially non-criminal forms of bullying undertaken by groups of individuals," he said.

"The research empowers teachers with confidence and skills to take on the issue. It gives them options and strategies when confronted with cases of bullying involving repeated verbal abuse, isolation, malicious rumour spreading and cyber bullying."

Prof. Rigby said the success of the method was demonstrated in 17 cases undertaken in Australian schools with a 90 per cent successful outcome.



NATIONAL CENTRE AGAINST BULLYING CONFERENCE 2010

April 9–10, Melbourne

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“The method does not allow bullies to escape from the issues they have created; it makes them part of the solution. The suspected perpetrators have to confront the issue and work with the victims under trained practitioners to resolve the matter,” he said.

Prof Rigby said the success of the Method of Shared Concern approach to bullying had seen it become an important part of anti-bullying programs in schools throughout the world.

“It is my hope that it will be part of the anti-bullying programs in Australian schools,” he added.

The Federal Minister of Education Julia Gillard recently released a report evaluating the Method of Shared Concern (see <http://www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/nationalsafeschools/pages/research.aspx>) in connection with its review of the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) which contains a set of nationally-agreed principles for safe and supportive schools environments.

The Method of Shared Concern approach was evaluated by Prof Rigby and fellow NCAB member Ms Coosje Griffiths under the auspices of the University of South Australia.

The Method of Shared Concern is examined in a new book to be released shortly by Prof. Rigby, entitled: *Bullying Intervention in Schools: Six Basic Methods*. Other intervention approaches are also examined in the book.

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