

Considering mindfulness techniques in school-based anti-bullying programmes

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Introduction

Bullying - Cyberbullying

A situation in which a student is exposed repeatedly and over time to **negative actions on the part of one or more students**.

When this **negative behaviour** occurs online or using technology or mobile phones.

Objective

To present **MINDFULNESS** techniques as a way to combat and alleviate the negative effects in victims in terms of **mental health**.

The consequences of bullying and cyberbullying

Bullying - Cyberbullying

Victims

Anxiety, depression, suicidal behaviour, eating disorders, borderline personality disorder, lower self-esteem, psychosomatic problems, lower school achievement, higher school delinquency and school drop out.

Loneliness, depressive mood, lower self-esteem, depression, suicide, school absenteeism and academic problems.

Bullies

Risk of involvement in delinquency and illicit drug use.

Cyberbullies

Conduct problems, low prosocial behaviour and not feeling safe at school.

Bully-victims

Psychopathological problems, lower social competence and poorer problem solving skills.

Bully-victims

Mental health problems.

Current anti-bullying programmes

National Action Plan on Bullying of the Irish Department of Education and Skills

Provides a set of recommendations to schools on the development of their policies and procedures for dealing with bullying incidents.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme

It targets peer relationships to decreased existing bullying relationships and to increase peer social relationships throughout the school.

Kiva, Finland

It targets bystanders who are present when the incidents occur, which constitutes an important element in decreasing bullying behaviours

Psychological intervention

The health services

Far removed from dealing with these cases

School staff

are not always appropriately skilled to deal with serious psychological issues.

This calls for a stronger link between schools, parents and psychological services.

Considering Mindfulness

Mindfulness

Awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally

Aim

Facilitate present moment awareness and acceptance, in such a way that control exerted by psychological content over behaviour is minimised.

Benefits

- Decreased inattentive and hyperactive behaviours
- Reduced stress, pain and anxiety
- Improved behaviour
- Moderation of the effects of depression
- Decrease in avoidance of dealing with such emotions and increase in problem solving skills

Conclusion

What do we need?

+ anti-bullying projects based on the concept of **Mindfulness**

Educational centres and families

+ awareness of the devastating impact that bullying and cyberbullying has on their students and their children

Schools

Turn their attention to the well-being of their students and to programmes which can increase positive coping strategies and **decrease mental health problems**.

Not ignore the lack of tolerance for diversity, poor empathic skills and reduced sense of civic responsibility.