

Response Strategies for Bullying Victims: Group Plan

Rationale for Group

Bullying is a pervasive issue for adolescents. In 2009, 28% of students ages 12 to 18 reported being bullied at school during the school year (Robers, Zhang, & Truman, 2012). Children who are bullied are more likely to be negatively affected in the academic and personal/social domains of development, and may even experience low self-esteem later in life (Lyznicki, McCaffree, & Robinowitz, 2004), which could deter career advancement. For these reasons, I have chosen to conduct a psychoeducational group for victims of bullying at the middle school level, where I will be placed during my practicum and internship.

Advertising/Screening/Selection Procedures for Group

To begin the selection process for the group, I would identify students who had met with me individually to discuss issues around bullying while working with other counselors and teachers within the school to identify their referrals of bullying victims.

Before making final selections for the group, I would meet with students individually to try to determine their interest level in group participation as well as how well they would function as a group member. I would then send home a letter to parents and guardians of selected students to obtain informed consent before beginning the first session.

Group Composition/Size

I would prefer for the group size to range from 5 to 7 group members in order to keep the size manageable and to allow members to feel comfortable sharing their feelings and experiences. The group could have a heterogeneous composition from within the middle school population, and it will be a closed group.

Overall Objectives

NCSCOS 2.02/2.03 & ASCA A:B1.2

Learn and apply critical-thinking skills

NCSCOS 7.14 & ASCA PS:A2.6

Use effective communications skills

ASCA PS:B1.1

Use a decision-making and problem-solving model

NCSCOS 8.03 & ASCA PS:B1.4

Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems

NCSCOS 9.04 & ASCA PS:C1.4

Demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal privacy

NCSCOS 9.07 & ASCA PS:C1.7

Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices

Overall Outcomes Goals of Group

The overall goal of this group is to provide students with the skills and strategies to effectively respond to bullying behavior. The aspiration is that students will first learn these strategies in the safe environment of the group, and then transfer them to their real-life situations facing bullies.

Evaluation Plan

Students will take identical pre- and post-tests to determine their most recent responses to both verbal and physical bullying. I would determine if these responses would be categorized as submissive, aggressive or assertive, with the goal to see an

increased level of assertive responses. This evaluation is borrowed from the lesson plan I have adapted from Kimberly Hall's, "Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies."

I would conduct follow-up interviews with the students' teachers to determine what, if any, progress students have made in their abilities to respond to bullying behavior. Additionally, I would leave open the option for students to check in or follow up with me in one-on-one counseling after group termination.

Theoretical Foundation

This psychoeducational group plan is based on and adapted from a Solving Problems Together (SPT) model for victims of bullying. The SPT model takes a problem-based learning (PBL) approach. As such, students are presented with a problem, conduct research about the problem on their own, and then come back to the group to talk about what they learned. Together, the group comes to new conclusions and solutions (Hall, 2006). This group plan adapts the PBL approach to responding to bullying behavior, sometimes assigning homework to allow students to practice their newly acquired skills.

Multicultural Considerations

In conducting the group sessions, I would want to remain aware of and be sensitive to cultural differences among group members. Some factors such as race, ethnicity, language spoken at home, gender, SES, age and sexual orientation might even, unfortunately, be factors that contribute to—and affect the intensity of—the bullying the group members are experiencing.

Cultural differences may affect how quickly and to what extent students are willing to share information about their experiences with bullying in the group. They

might also affect how people within each student's culture typically respond to bullying and aggression, and consequently how each student thinks and feels that he or she should respond.

Differentiation Strategies

This group plan makes accommodations to cater to different types of learners by including activities for visual, aural and kinesthetic preferences through discussion, writing, drawing and role-play. Additionally, accommodations can be made by pairing students for some of the research portions that include reading to help students who struggle with literacy.

Rationale for Sequence of Sessions/Activities

The sessions and activities follow the Solving Problems Together (SPT) model, which has proved effective in producing positive behavior changes for middle school students (Hall, Rushing, & Owens, 2009). This model first establishes group purpose, goals, structure and rules, then teaches problem solving skills and provides opportunity for practice.

Group Schedule¹

Group meets once a week for eight weeks, and sessions run approximately 45 minutes.

Session #1: Introduction to Group and the Problem Solving Process

- Leader and student introductions
- Initial evaluation
- Discuss group purpose, goals, rules and name
- Explain group structure
- Problem-Solving Process
 - Creating a problem statement
 - Identifying facts

Session #2: Problem Solving like a Reporter: 5W-How

- Review problems-solving steps one and two
- Step three: Questioning facts about the problem

Session #3: Problem Solving like a Scientist: Developing Hypotheses

- Review questions from step three of the process
- Formulate hypotheses for each

Session #4: Problem Solving like a Survivor: Key Questions and Locating Resources

- Identifying key questions
- Identifying the location of resources
- Homework: interviewing

Session #5: Putting it into Practice Part 1: Verbal Bullying Responses

- Identifying strategies in research
- Role-playing to practice new strategies
- Homework: interviewing

Session #6: Putting it into Practice Part 2: Physical Bullying Responses

- Sharing findings
- Practicing skills
- Homework: interviewing

Session #7: Practice Makes Perfect

- Practicing skills
- Providing feedback

Session #8: Graduation

- Discussion of what learned in group
- Summarizing the experience
- Final evaluation

¹ Lesson plan adapted from Hall, K., "Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies." *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

Session #1: Introduction²

Objectives:³

1. NCSCOS (1.11) & ASCA (A:A3.2), Demonstrate the ability to work independently and cooperatively.
2. NCSCOS (2.03) & ASCA (A:B1.2), Apply critical thinking skills.
3. NCSCOS (7.07) & ASCA (PS:A1.9), Demonstrate cooperative behavior.

Lesson Outcomes

Students will be able to create a problem statement and identify facts from it.

Lesson Assessment Strategies

Students will provide a problem statement and one fact from a personal experience with bullying.

Materials: Flip chart paper, marker

Introduction:

Welcome students and introduce group leader. Counselor states the purpose of the group, then students introduce themselves by stating their name and answering the question, “Have you ever experienced or seen someone else being bullied?”

Main Content/Experiential Activity:

1. Students complete pre-test (Appendix A). Read over directions and questions to group and have them complete individually. Collect when finished.
2. Group members work with the counselor to develop group rules and create group name on flip chart.
3. Counselor explain group process and number of sessions going to meet.
4. Counselor introduces the first step in problem solving: to narrow the problem down to a manageable size. Counselor reveals the following statement previously written on flip chart paper and reads it aloud.

“John is frustrated and sad because students tease him at school. Some students call him names, while others push and shove him. He’s tired of being a victim of bullies.”

5. Counselor tells students that in order to help the student in the problem statement as well as each other in dealing with bullies, the group will use a problem-solving process that will help them solve this problem as well as any future problems that they may have. The counselor then explains that after first narrowing a problem down; the next step in the problem-solving process

² Lesson plan adapted from Hall, K., “Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies.” *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

³ Unless noted otherwise, all NCSCOS standards listed in this plan refer to Guidance curriculum standards.

is to identify facts from the problem statement. Students work together to identify and list the facts about the problem.

Processing:

The counselor asks the group members if they've ever been in a situation similar to the one discussed. Students briefly discuss their experiences and state the problem and one fact from that experience.

Closing:

The session ends with a summary of the purpose and structure of the group and the accomplishments of the first session.

Session #2: Problem Solving like a Reporter: 5W-How⁴

Objectives:

1. NCSCOS (1.14) & ASCA (A:A3.5), Communicate knowledge.
2. NCSCOS (2.02) & ASCA (A:B1.2), Communicate critical thinking skills.
3. NCSCOS (7.07) & ASCA (PS:A1.9), Demonstrate cooperative behavior.

Lesson Outcomes

Students will be able to question each fact regarding a problem statement.

Lesson Assessment Strategies

Students will supply one new thing they learned in the session.

Materials: Flip chart paper, marker

Introduction/Review:

Counselor briefly reviews the previous session. A student reads the problem statement, while another student reads the facts that had been previously recorded. Counselor reminds the students about the problem solving process, which included the first step as narrowing the problem, the second step as identifying facts, and now the third step as questioning.

Main Content/Experiential Activity:

1. Using the facts identified about the problem in session one, counselor will introduce the third step: questioning. Counselor relates this step to the job of a reporter to ask the “5-W How” questions and models asking one of these questions to get students started.
2. Students ask open-ended questions about each of the facts as if they were a reporter for “John’s story. Counselor writes the words “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” “why,” and “how” to encourage students to ask open-ended questions.
3. Students take turns recording questions on the flip chart paper.

Processing:

Students can share questions they ask themselves about their own bullying experiences.

Closing:

The session ends with each student summarizing what has been accomplished during this session by finishing the sentence, “One question I can ask about the last time I was bullied is...”

⁴ Lesson plan adapted from Hall, K., “Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies.” *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

Session #3: Problem Solving like a Scientist: Developing Hypotheses⁵

Objectives:

1. NCSCOS (1.11) & ASCA (A:A3.2), Demonstrate the ability to work independently and cooperatively.
2. NCSCOS (7.03) & ASCA (PS:A1.5), Classify and appropriately express feelings.

Lesson Outcomes

Students will be able to develop hypotheses to the questions posed about facts in a problem statement.

Lesson Assessment Strategies

Students will provide their own hypotheses and share them with the group.

Materials: Flip chart paper, marker, looseleaf, pencils/pens/colored pencils

Introduction/Review:

Counselor briefly reviews the first three steps of the problem solving process. Students read aloud the questions they developed during session two.

Main Content/Experiential Activity:

1. Counselor explains the fourth step in the problem solving process as similar to how a scientist attempts to answer questions: developing hypotheses. Counselor models a hypothesis to the first question on the flip chart.
2. Students work independently to develop two to three hypotheses for an assigned question. They may express these in written form or draw a picture. Students are instructed by the counselor to consider their own experiences with bullying when developing hypotheses.
3. Students share their hypotheses verbally with the group while a recorder writes them on the flip chart. During this time, the counselor paraphrases, reflects feelings, and summarizes to make it easier for students to share their own experiences with bullying.

Processing:

Students share how they're feeling about the problem solving process so far and how they think it could help them in responding to bullies.

Closing:

The session ends with students answering the question, "Based on our discussion today while forming hypotheses, what do you have in common with someone else in the group?"

⁵ Lesson plan adapted from Hall, K., "Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies." *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

Session #4: Problem Solving like a Survivor: Key Questions and Locating Resources⁶

Objectives:

1. NCSCOS (8.04) & ASCA (PS:B1.5), Demonstrate when, where, and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions.
2. NCSCOS (9.06) & ASCA (PS:C1.6), Assess resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help.
3. NCSCOS (2.05) & ASCA (A:B1.4), Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers.
4. NCSCOS (2.03) & ASCA (A:B1.2), Apply critical thinking skills.
5. NCSCOS (2.06) & ASCA (A:B1.7), Choose to be self-directed, independent learners.
6. NCSCOS (English Language Arts 2.01), Explore informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed by: monitoring comprehension for understanding of what is read, heard and/or viewed; making connections between works, self and related topics/information; drawing inferences and/or conclusions.

Lesson Outcomes

Students will be able to identify key questions and locate resources to help them answer questions.

Lesson Assessment Strategies

Students will share possible resources with group; students will perform homework assignment.

Materials: Flip chart paper, marker, looseleaf, pencils/pens, print material for research resources

Introduction/Review:

Counselor briefly reviews the first four steps of the problem solving process. Group members review the problem statement again and look over the list of questions and hypotheses. Introduces the fifth and sixth steps of problem solving: identifying key questions and locating resources.

Main Content/Experiential Activity:

1. Counselor asks, “Of all of these questions, which of these do we need to answer in order to solve the problem?” Students identify one main question. Counselor may need to help students by breaking this question down into two parts to address verbal and physical bullying. Group members write questions on the flip chart.

⁶ Lesson plan adapted from Hall, K., “Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies.” *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

2. Counselor asks the group members to work in pairs to develop a list of resources for answering the identified questions. Students are encouraged to identify multiple resources, including people as well as written material.
3. One person from the pair reports back to the group while counselor writes responses on flip chart.
4. Counselor assigns homework: to answer the first key question using resources that were previously listed. To help students with locating print material, the counselor provides multiple books on the topic of bullying along with printouts from the internet (see Appendix B). Students are instructed to choose at least one book or printout to read and to interview at least one person. (Note: Sources will vary by reading level so as to make them accessible and useful to a variety of students with differing reading abilities.) Using these resources, students research the first key question.

Processing:

Students discuss how well their pair share worked and any trepidation regarding performing interviews for homework.

Closing:

Students ask any questions they have about homework and discuss any barriers to completing homework. Counselor and group members provide ideas about overcoming foreseeable barriers.

Session #5: Putting it into Practice Part 1: Verbal Bullying Responses⁷

Objectives:

1. NCSCOS (8.04) & ASCA (PS:B1.5), Demonstrate when, where, and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions.
2. NCSCOS (9.06) & ASCA (PS:C1.6), Assess resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help.
3. NCSCOS (2.05) & ASCA (A:B1.4), Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers.
4. NCSCOS (2.03) & ASCA (A:B1.2), Apply critical thinking skills.
5. NCSCOS (2.06) & ASCA (A:B1.7), Choose to be self-directed, independent learners.
6. NCSCOS (English Language Arts 2.01), Explore informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed by: monitoring comprehension for understanding of what is read, heard and/or viewed; making connections between works, self and related topics/information; drawing inferences and/or conclusions.

Lesson Outcomes

Students will be equipped with strategies to respond to verbal bullying.

Lesson Assessment Strategies

Students will share their response to a prompt on responding to bullies via an exit card.

Materials: Flip chart paper, marker, looseleaf, pencils/pens, index cards, print material for research resources

Introduction/Review:

Counselor briefly reviews the six steps of the problem solving process. Students review the problem statement and key questions.

Main Content/Experiential Activity:

1. Each student shares what he or she discovered as a strategy through his or her research and writes the strategy/ies on the flip chart.
2. Students role-play to practice the skills they discovered via research. The counselor first models the role-play activity. For example, in several of the books the main character responded assertively when he or she was being called names. Therefore, students may practice responding assertively through role-play by mimicking the characters in the books.
3. After practicing identified strategies, students then focus on the second key question regarding responses to physical bullying via a homework assignment.

⁷ Lesson plan adapted from Hall, K., "Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies." *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

Again, students are instructed to take home at least one book or printout and interview at least one person regarding the key question.

Processing:

Students give feedback about the role-plays and discuss situations in the past when responding assertively would have been helpful in dealing with verbal bullying.

Closing:

Counselor reminds students that there are only three more sessions remaining. The session ends with students responding to the following prompt on an index card to be handed to the counselor before leaving the session, "How would you respond if tomorrow during lunch a bully began to tease you in the cafeteria?"

Session #6: Putting it into Practice Part 2: Physical Bullying Responses⁸

Objectives:

1. NCSCOS (8.04) & ASCA (PS:B1.5), Demonstrate when, where, and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions.
2. NCSCOS (9.06) & ASCA (PS:C1.6), Assess resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help.
3. NCSCOS (2.05) & ASCA (A:B1.4), Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers.
4. NCSCOS (2.03) & ASCA (A:B1.2), Apply critical thinking skills.
5. NCSCOS (2.06) & ASCA (A:B1.7), Choose to be self-directed, independent learners.
6. NCSCOS (English Language Arts 2.01), Explore informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed by: monitoring comprehension for understanding of what is read, heard and/or viewed; making connections between works, self and related topics/information; drawing inferences and/or conclusions.

Lesson Outcomes

Students will be equipped with strategies to respond to physical bullying.

Lesson Assessment Strategies

Each student must provide, either verbally or in writing, one strategy they learned for dealing with physical aggression.

Materials: Flip chart paper, marker, loose leaf, pencil/pen

Introduction/Review:

Counselor briefly reviews the six steps of the problem solving process. Students review the problem statement and key questions.

Main Content/Experiential Activity:

1. Each student shares what he or she discovered as a strategy for responding to physical bullying through his or her research and writes the strategy/ies on the flip chart.
2. Students role-play to practice the skills they discovered via research. The counselor first models the role-play activity.
3. Students are assigned to continue to research the two key questions and to practice the strategies discovered during the week.

⁸ Lesson plan adapted from Hall, K., "Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies." *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

Processing:

Students discuss if and how their feelings about being bullied have changed since the group started meeting. They discuss ways in which they have seen other group members grow, as well.

Closing:

Counselor reminds students that there are only two more sessions remaining. Each student must provide, either verbally, in writing, or act out physically, one strategy they learned for dealing with physical aggression.

Session #7: Practice Makes Perfect⁹

Objectives:

1. NCSCOS (9.07) & ASCA (PS:C1.7), Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to safe and healthy choices.
2. NCSCOS (2.03) & ASCA (A:B1.2), Apply critical thinking skills.
3. NCSCOS (7.14) & ASCA (PS:A2.6), Use effective communication skills.

Lesson Outcomes

Students will be equipped with strategies to respond to both verbal and physical bullying.

Lesson Assessment Strategies

Students will demonstrate response strategies via role play.

Materials: Flip chart paper, marker

Introduction/Review:

Counselor briefly reviews the six steps of the problem solving process and the strategies developed in sessions five and six.

Main Content/Experiential Activity:

1. Students report back on their experiences in practicing their new strategies. The can also share any new strategies they discovered through research, recording these on the flip chart.
2. Students role-play to practice the response strategies. Counselor may want to use student experiences from the week as scenarios for the role-plays, if students are willing.
3. Students provide comments and suggestions on role-play performances.

Processing:

Students discuss how reenacting bullying situations in the role-plays made them feel. They plan how to put the new strategies into use more effectively and more often.

Closing:

Counselor reminds students that there is only one more session remaining. Students share any doubts or fears they still hold about responding to bullies.

⁹ Lesson plan adapted from Hall, K., "Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies." *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

Session #8: Graduation¹⁰**Objectives:**

1. NCSCOS (7.02) & ASCA (PS:A1.4), Document change as a part of growth.
2. NCSCOS (8.09) & ASCA (PS:B1.10), Evaluate alternative ways of achieving goals.

Lesson Outcomes

Students will be confident in their abilities to respond to verbal and physical aggression.

Lesson Assessment Strategies

Post-test/students provide a summary of what they've learned

Materials: Flip chart paper, marker

Introduction/Review:

Counselor briefly reviews the six steps of the problem solving process student-developed strategies.

Main Content/Experiential Activity:

1. Students develop the “greatest hits” list of strategies for responding to name calling and physical aggression (i.e., the strategies they have found to be most effective). Counselor or student records these on the flip chart.

Processing:

Students reflect on their experiences within the group, on what they learned, and how it felt to be a member of the group. The group also discusses what strategies they will use in the future and how they will continue to support each other.

Closing:

Counselor then asks each of the students to summarize his or her experience with the group, offers check-in and follow-up time during through one-on-one sessions, and then administers the posttest (Appendix A).

¹⁰ Lesson plan adapted from Hall, K., “Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies.” *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

Appendix A: Pre/Post Test¹¹

Name: _____ Date: _____

Please read each question and think about it carefully. Then, provide your answer on the lines below.

1. Think of the last time that someone called you a name.

What was your response?

How was your behavior?

What did you say?

2. Think of the last time someone pushed, shoved, or hit you.

What was your response?

How was your behavior?

What did you say or do?

¹¹ Adapted from Hall, K., "Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies." *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

Appendix B: Research Assignment Resources¹²

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¹² Borrowed from Hall, K., "Solving Problems Together: A Psychoeducational Group Model for Victims of Bullies." *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31(3), 201-217.

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