Safe and Peaceful Schools: Using Undercover Anti-Bullying teams to restore and re-story classroom relationships

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Wellington
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Edgewater College, Pakuranga.
Edgewater College
Pakuranga, Auckland. NZ
pop approx. 700 students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZ Pakeha</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Indian</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
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Words hurt.
The questions

- **What is an UABT?**
  1. What is the nature of the problem and why ‘undercover’?
  2. What is the composition of the UABT?
  3. How are the members recruited?
  4. What will they do?

- **How do they work?**
  1. Why would they do it?
  2. Who helps them with their planning and how?
  3. Who knows about them?
  4. How is the team monitored?
  5. How long does the team last for?
  6. How does it end?
  7. How can their work be sustained?
Primary Prevention: School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

~80% of Students

Secondary Prevention: Specialized Group Systems for Students with At-Risk Behavior

~15%

Tertiary Prevention: Specialized Individualized Systems for Students with High-Risk Behavior

~5%

Restorative Practices Triangle
A Different Approach “Inside-Out”

- How does the school environment itself produce the environment where bullying survives?
- Schools must address the relational, situational and cultural dimensions of bullying (Davies, 2011)
- Norms are maintained by students and produce a “student social order” (Davies et. al. 2009) “Policing the culture”
- Use student centered solutions. Observers of bullying themselves know what they must do to preserve the social order and to produce themselves as normal and good students-
- Difference not should not be seen as an error to be tolerated and/or obliterated, but as an expression of diversity
“The person is not the problem; the problem is the problem”
Michael White

- Focus on the problem, not the person
- Bullying is always a relational problem, not a ‘person’ problem
- Bullying thrives on secrecy
- Positional power is a big factor
- Rejection of “categories of personhood” or labels
What are Undercover Anti-Bullying Teams

“A strategic intervention where the target of bullying, the counsellor and teachers together recruit a group of influential students who simultaneously support the target of bullying and influence the class relationships by co-authoring an alternative story of peace and harmony”
Undercover Anti-Bullying Team (UABT)

- A team of six students, four students (2 girls, 2 boys) with prestige and influence in the class ("bystanders") including the two worst perpetrators of bullying.

- Target helps select the team together with counsellor and teachers consulted

- Recruited for the sole purpose of eliminating bullying, then disbanded when task is completed

- A playful approach to a serious problem. (Freeman, Epston & Lobovits, 1997)
The 4 phases

1. Meet the student and decide if an UABT is needed and if so, record the target’s story and select team
2. Recruit the UABT and create the plan
3. Monitor progress
4. Definitional ceremony
The Steps - A Calendar

- **Day 1:** Interview the target by him/herself (20-30 mins) Complete the form together if appropriate for UT approach (15 mins)

- **Day 2:** Assemble and recruit the Undercover team - Read out the story of bullying, let them begin their plan (40 min). Teachers of core class informed of existence and purpose of team

- **Day 5:** Check in with the target to establish progress (15 min) Check with the teachers (email, 20 mins)

- **Day 7:** Meet the Undercover team to check their progress and give encouragement (15 min)

- **Day 9:** Check in with target to monitor progress (10 min)

- **Day 14:** Meet the Undercover team again to plan for the long-term. Final definitional ceremony and team evaluation surveys (20 min)
**Example Form**

### UNDERCOVER TEAM MEETING FORM

**Team Number:**

<table>
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<th><strong>Name of student to be supported:</strong></th>
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<table>
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<th><strong>Date of incident / concern:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Tutor Group</strong></th>
<th><strong>Core Group</strong></th>
<th><strong>Year Level:</strong></th>
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**Brief outline of incident / concern (where, when and what happened):**

- Physical assault
- Threat of assault
- Mocking/teasing
- Spreading rumours
- Theft
- Property destroyed
- Cyber bullying
- Exclusion from friendship
- Picking on personal difference
- Personal rejection
- Other
The Five Point Plan

- Magic question:
  “If you were going through the same thing, what would make a difference for you?”

- Simple, practical, achievable ideas best

- Different people can do different tasks

- Plan for undercover aspect and plan for the reaction of class mates

- Team required to be ‘friendly’ rather than ‘friends’ and to act in accordance with their family/school values.
Role of the facilitator
Could I do this?

- **Actively listens** to the story of the bullying and clarifies its actions without interruption or judgement
- Actively listens for exceptions to the story line of bullying
- Excited about the abilities of the students to create change and demonstrate their leadership
- Takes a keen interest in exploring possibilities for changing the relationships
- Serves as an editor who underlines the exceptions and possible alternatives to the narrative of active and passive bullying
- Helps the target of the bullying to understand how the problem operates and works with him/her to free themselves from it
- **Recruits** the wider school community to assist in the change process
Undercover Anti-Bullying teams offer all students:

- A new *understanding* of bullying and its *impact* how they can *dissolve* its power
- A new pro-social ‘*identity*’ and *support* to develop that identity
- Anonymity to *gain confidence* with that identity
- A *framework* and *structure* in which to act
- An opportunity for team members to *repair harm done* either deliberately (perpetrators) or by inaction (observers) without *loosing face and gain “immunity from prosecution”*. 
UABT Links to Restorative Practices: repairing the harm

- The class community is represented throughout the process by the students selected
- Confidentiality is a priority
- The facilitator is impartial, working with the students, acknowledging and valuing their expertise
- Stories are told and impacts are explored
- UABT process is carefully explained and informed consent is obtained before participation
- The process is respectful
- Power imbalances are attended to because all students have an equal responsibility
- Focus is on “putting things right” No discussion on ‘why’
- School values are made explicit
- Accountability involves making amends
- New understandings can result from the process
- Support people are valued
- Cultural factors are taken into account
Resources needed

- Meeting forms
- Room to meet
- Ability to provide canteen vouchers (budget)
- Principal or DP to sign certificates
- Canteen vouchers and certificates
- Time for the whole process (2-3 hours spread over 2 weeks)
- Evaluation forms
EDGewater College

Undercover Team Award

To Special Agent: __________________________________________

For supporting, encouraging and generally being friendly to a fellow student caught up in bullying.

This award indicates special abilities in leadership and courage and going beyond the call of duty in building a happy and safe school.

M Williams
Guidance Counsellor

A J Vester
Principal
Edgewater College Tuck Shop Voucher
Please supply goods to the value of $3.00. Cannot be exchanged for cash and no change given. Valid for 3 school days only.
M J Williams
Edgewater College
10/09/2015
Contact details

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- m.williams@edgewater.school.nz

- Safe and Peaceful Schools: Addressing Conflict and Eliminating Violence
- Corwin Press (2012). Available through Amazon or Fishpond or Book Directory.
Published articles


