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Bully Victims Need an Adult Relationship

By Paula McCoach, School Counselor

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Kick Start Your Mentor Program to Stop the Bullying
by Paula McCoach, School Counselor

Whining about bullying and how rotten the bullies were and the poor students that they bullied used to be one of my regular activities. "We have to do something to help these kids" both the bullies and their victims," I would whine. But for years, I just talked to these kids and sent them on their way. After I got sick and tired of being sick and tired of talking about this – I did do something! I started a mentor program for these students!

Behavior referrals, grades, social problems, and poor achievement were our starting criteria for being in the program. Almost every staff member in the building had 2–3 mentees – everyone from the administration, teachers, and counselors to the educational assistants, cafeteria workers and custodians. Over 150 students were in that mentor program which began in 1998.

Each mentor was given a mentor folder with a permission slip, a brochure about the program, a profile sheet, and tips on being a mentor, a pencil and a "Welcome Back to School" card. The profile sheet identified their mentees, homeroom teacher, grade, birthday, and area of concern. Also included in the packet was a birthday card and pencil for the mentor to give their mentees.

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Giving gifts was left of to the discretion of the mentor. Some mentees came to expect gifts and the purpose of the mentor relationship was diminished. The kids came to expect them and thought that they were entitled' to getting things from the mentor. I had students asking me to be in the mentor program because they wanted to get stuff.

We really learned that first year to reinforce that the mentor program was about improving behavior and grades to be more successful in school – and we had to keep telling the kids that too!

As all of you know, people who work in a school are super busy, and we found that having even just 2 mentees was too much. It was difficult to develop the relationship and effect change because the mentors were stretched too thin. So in the years to come, and we are in our 7th year of the mentor program, we have assigned everyone only 1 mentee.

Another area of concern was keeping track of the number of mentors in the program. Over the years we have reduced this number – first we cut back to only the professional staff having mentees. Staff who wanted to be mentors and had the knack for working with these problematic students were asked to be mentors. A few educational assistants were also asked also because of their expertise in this area also.

Dramatic results were reported with a group of middle school girls. One of the girls had to actually break away from the group of girls who were bullying, so she could improve her reputation as a respectful and serious student. This was a difficult process, and she had 2 mentors working with her to help her make this difficult peer group change. The parent/guardian was not supportive. By the end of the school year, she had completely changed groups of friends, made the honor roll, and received a multitude of awards for academic excellence at the quarterly awards assembly.

So, don't worry that you don't have all the pieces in place. You will learn and improve your program each year. Just start helping these kids! You will be inspired and the kids will be thrilled and getting their education!

For more information on kick starting your mentor program, send an email to coach@bullyzapper.com

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Paula McCoach has been in public education for 23 years. She has been a school counselor for the past 10 in an alternative school and an elementary/middle school in Maryland. She has spearheaded mentor programs, CharacterEducation initiatives, & Bully awareness. For more information, send an email to coach@bullyzapper.com

Are You Frustrated You Have Not Been Able to Stop the Bullies?

By Paula McCoach

You are frustrated as a professional! You have given these bully victims all of your best techniques, and they are still being bullied. What should you do?

You are out of ideas! You have given this student your best shot. You know what you should do?

Keep trying.

Tell those bully victims to return to you every time they are bullied. Tell them to keep a list of what the bully says, when they say it and who says it. They can keep a chart.

Then, You should talk to the bully several times. Each time the consequences should become more severe for the bully. Some of the consequences should include discussing what harassment is and giving them the county policy on the consequences of harassment.

Secondly, a phone call to their parents should be made informing them that their child has been reported for bullying several times.

Thirdly, you can enroll that bully and victim in The Bully Zapper mentor program.

Note on talking to parents: be sure you have ample proof and several incidents to cite to the parent before calling them. I usually wait until I have an adult who has observed the bullying behavior to be sure I am reporting valid information.

Finally, after attempting several of these interventions, an office referral and/or involvement of the administration should occur. If the bully is in the Bully Zapper Mentor Program already and they are still bullying, they should be removed at this point and referred to the administration.

I feel that it is more important to promote successful mentor/mentee relationships, and refer the

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students who do not respond to more serious consequences. If these bullies are having some success with their mentors, they should be told that they need to leave this particular student alone or they will be removed from the program.

At this point, in or out of school suspension could occur, possibly a class or schedule change for either of these students, and/or a Pupil Services Team meeting on both of these students.

Most of all, you are to be commended for your work with victims and the bullies too. With the above techniques, I have had great success with stopping the bullying, rehabilitating the bullies and making the school environment more comfortable for the former victims.

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Are You Frustrated You Have Not Been Able to Stop the Bullies?
Bully Zapper Techniques Two and Three: Report and Keep a List!
School Bullying Stopped: 5 Ways to Stop Bullies with the Facts!
Bully Victims Need a Healthy Relationship with an Adult
How To Deal With Cyber-Bullying?

How to keep up the SPICE in your Love Life.
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