

# Education Letter

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## MESSAGE FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

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# Strategies and Solutions to Stop Bullying

**T**hrough our research on bullying prevention programs, we realize that it is important to focus not only on the relationship skills of the children involved in bullying, but also on the social dynamics in children's peer groups and the roles that adults play in shaping children's experiences. This *Letter* comprises a series of articles that provides a systemic understanding of bullying and the relationship solutions required to address it. Addressing bullying is everyone's responsibility and solutions are needed that support the individuals involved, the peers that observe and watch it, the adults that create a positive and safe climate at school, and everyone who interacts with children and youth where they live, learn, play, and work.

In this issue we focus on using our understanding of relationships in bullying to consider solutions. The first article by Wendy Craig considers the nature of bullying as a problem of relationships. It points to the different ways children engage and become involved in bullying and notes that there is no one size fits all solution. It suggests that bullying develops over time and intervention is needed in the way bullying relations are dealt with.

Debra Pepler, in her article on relationship solutions for relationship problems, identifies the relationship challenges for those who are victimized and for those who are bullied. Relationships are important in bullying and she points to significant roles adults play in monitoring, organizing, and supporting children in their relationships with others. The article by Patricia McDougall and Tracey Vallaincourt describes the challenges that peers face in deciding to intervene to stop bullying. By understanding their perspective on what prevents them from intervening we can tailor our interventions to help them address these barriers.

David Smith highlights the role that all educators can play in preventing bullying. Educators through their daily interactions with students can create a positive school climate that promotes healthy relationships for all students.

...continues on page 2

## Bullying

Bullying is a Relationship Problem ..... 3

Relationship Solutions for Relationship Problems .... 5

Bullying in context: Why do they stand by and when will they stand up? .. 7

School Climate and Bonding: Pathways to Resolving Bullying ..... 10

A "Site Map" to Cyber Abuse Prevention ..... 12

Addressing Bullying in Canada: Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence ..... 15

...continued from page 1

The next article outlines intervention strategies that can help prevent a new and evolving form of peer abuse: cyber-bullying. Michael Saini, Charlene Cook, and Faye Mishna review strategies for parents, educators, and all adults working with children and youth that can help to ensure that children and youth are safe when they use information technology.

The final article by Joanne Cummings highlights that we need a consistent response to children and youth in all of the contexts they are. She outlines a current national initiative to reduce bullying and that brings together researchers and national organizations that work with children and youth.

Bullying is a complicated issue and an effective response involves creating positive and safe relationships between children, between child and adults, and among adults. Together we can make a difference to stop bullying.

## Resources of Interest

<http://bulliescanbetransformed.com>

The site contains a mission statement, information about bullying and a link to buy the **Bully Transformation** resource guide.

<http://www.bullyproofing.com>

Creating Caring Communities has created this website which contains research publications, training resources, and specific information about the **Bully-Proofing** program they offer.



Verna Vowles, Artist

# Bullying is a Relationship Problem

Wendy M. Craig, *Department of Psychology, Queen's University*

Over the past twenty years, the dominant perspective of bullying has been as an aggressive behaviour problem that requires a punitive approach with consistent sanctions for those who bully (McGrath & Stanley, 2005; Olweus, 1993). Recent research has highlighted the diversity among those children who bully: some have serious problems with aggression and behavioural regulation; others are socially skilled and central members of the peer group who have learned to acquire power through bullying (Farmer, Estell, Bishop, O'Neal, & Cairns, 2003; Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl, & Van Acker, 2000; Xie, Cairns, & Cairns, 2005). Although bullying is a form of aggression, it appears as if at least some of the children



who consistently bully, do not suffer from the disruptive behaviour problems that generally characterize aggressive children. Therefore, the behavioural management and punitive approaches typically used to intervene with aggressive children may not be well suited to shifting the behaviour patterns of socially competent children who understand the social dynamics of their peer group and use power and aggression to augment their status among peers. These approaches may also fall short of meeting the needs of children who bully because they have not acquired the skills, motivation, and understanding that are essential for prosocial behaviour and healthy relationships.

Through our research on bullying, we have come to understand bullying as a relationship problem, suggesting that the problems arise from complex interpersonal dynamics rather than simply from an individual child's problem with aggression or with being unable to defend him or herself. Within the relationship context of bullying, those children who bully are learning how to use power and aggression to control and distress another; those children who are repeatedly victimized become trapped in abusive relationships that are increasingly difficult to escape. Our observational and survey research has led us to recognize bullying as a relationship problem, leading to a basic tenet for interventions: A relationship problem requires relationship solutions. Within this positive perspective of promoting healthy relationships to prevent and intervene in bullying, we avoid labeling children as "victims" or "bullies," but take a broader perspective on children's strengths and challenges. Therefore, the goal of interventions with children who bully, who are victimized, or who are bystanders to bullying is to enhance their relationship capacity to promote their healthy relationships in the present

*...continues on page 4*

*"Being bullied makes you feel alone. I am alone and need help"*

Grade 4 girl

...continued from page 3

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and to lay the foundation for healthy relationships throughout the lifespan.

From a developmental perspective, we are concerned about involvement in bullying because these problems can start in early childhood and persist through the school years, peaking during school transitions (Pellegrini & Long, 2002; Pepler, Jiang, Craig, & Connolly, in press). When children enter adolescence, new forms of aggression combined with power emerge. As children develop cognitive and social skills, they become more aware of others' vulnerabilities and differences and of their own power relative to others. Bullying becomes diversified into more sophisticated forms of verbal social electronic, sexually- and racially-based aggression. All of these forms of bullying are destructive and need to be actively addressed. The lessons of power and aggression learned in playground bullying can transfer to sexual harassment, dating aggression and may extend to workplace harassment, as well as marital, child, and elder abuse (Pepler, Craig, Connolly, & Henderson, 2001). In tailoring our responses to bullying, we must consider children's developmental stages and gender, so that our relationship solutions match the students' developmental needs. Interventions need to begin early to prevent the development of this destructive relationship problem.

Being safe in relationships is a fundamental human right. Every child and youth has the right to be safe and free from involvement in bullying. Bullying affects children and youth who are bullied, those who bully others, and those who know it is going on. It is everyone's responsibility to address these destructive relationships.



Verna Vowles, Artist

# Relationship Solutions for Relationship Problems

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## **Transform the use of power from negative into positive leadership**

In addressing bullying problems adults are responsible for interrupting troubled interactions and supporting the development of essential skills and attitudes. There is no one type of child who bullies or is victimized and a wide range of children involved in the various roles in bullying dynamics. Adults need to be sensitive to children's strengths, weaknesses, and needs and tailor their supportive interventions to individual children's developmental needs. With the complexity of learning relationship skills there can be no simple recipe for finding the appropriate relationship solutions.

Children who bully have learned to use their power aggressively; they are asserting their social power. The challenge is to redirect this leadership potential from the negative strategies of bullying to positive leadership skills and opportunities. These children require support to find positive ways of gaining power and status among peers. To achieve a relationship solution, children who bully their peers need to be provided with formative, rather than punitive consequences – interventions that provide a clear message that bullying is unacceptable, build awareness, skills, empathy, and insights, and provide alternatives to bullying.

## **Protect and connect children who are bullied**

Victimized children are reticent to tell a teacher or parent: they fear retaliation, are ashamed, or feel they should solve bullying problems on their own. It is important to ensure that the bullying be stopped and that a victimized child is embedded in a social group and not left alone at the margins of the peer group. Teachers can help promote positive relationships through establishing buddies, circles of support, peer mentors, and by finding ways to highlight the victimized child's talents for others to see.

There is no single profile of children who are victimized. Responses to these children must depend on an assessment of their individual and relationship strengths and weaknesses. Some of the difficulties that children who are victimised experience include problems with: social and assertiveness skills, emotional and/or behavioural regulation, and internalising problems.

Support can be provided through empirically validated social skills or other programs, but the majority of support will be provided through consistent moment-to-moment support from teachers, parents, and peers. It is the combination of promoting relationship skills and a positive environment that will enable them to escape the abuse and gain confidence in developing friendships.

*...continues on page 6*

*"Bullying is always wrong no matter what the situation is. We all should try to prevent bullying. Students are suffering for no reason and it is not right. When we see someone being bullied, we should talk to the victim and tell the bully to STOP. In bullying, nobody wins."*

Grade 6 student



...continued from page 5

## Resources of Interest

<http://acsp.cpha.ca/antibullying/>

This website provides comprehensive information about bullying, **school intervention programs**, teaching strategies, and parent resources.

<http://www.canadiansafeschools.com/teachers/overview.htm>

This site offers teachers **general tips** for dealing with bullying and loneliness among their students.

## Change those who stand by into those who stand up

Whether they realise it or not, bystanders hold significant power when it comes to promoting – or stopping – bullying. Help with bullying can come from peers intervening directly, telling a trusted adult, or at least not reinforcing the bully. When peers step in bullying behaviour stops within 10 seconds 57 percent of the time (Hawkins, Pepler & Craig, 2001). There is a need for all children to be trained in appropriate conflict mediation and intervention skills.

When more than one child steps in it helps to shift the power imbalance. Even if children are not comfortable standing up themselves, they must be encouraged to tell a responsible adult. Establishing conditions in which children feel responsible can promote peer intervention and positive peer dynamics.

## Promoting relationships to prevent bullying is everyone's responsibility

If adults are not aware of the dynamics in children's peer groups, natural peer processes will place some children at risk for victimization. We need to discourage groupings of children who are similarly aggressive and engage in bullying together. When troubled children are together, they reinforce each other's deviant behavior and help each other become even more aggressive.

To reduce incidents of bullying teachers can set up working groups in which there is a balanced mix of student aptitude for the assignment. By organizing and reorganizing social groupings, teachers can avoid embarrassment and humiliation for those who have not been chosen by any group. This form of intervention, organizing children's social groupings we term *social architecture* (Pepler, 2006; Pepler & Craig, 2007).

With the increased emphasis on academic testing, less time is available to focus on children's social-emotional development. Yet the persistence of bullying undermines achieving such goals. Bully needs to be addressed if academic and other goals are to be achieved. The role of the teacher is crucial.

If teachers are supportive and respectful of children's differences and difficulties, children will observe that style, imitate it and interact more positively. Working to monitor one's own use of power and finding the resources to maintain positive relationships with all students are key in finding relationship solutions to the relationship problems of bullying.

Children need consistent lessons to develop the complex skills required for healthy relationships. They can only learn these skills in the context of positive relationships with the adults in their lives and with their friends and other peers. The solutions will focus on promoting relationship skills for all children, those who bully those who are victimized, as well as those who are bystanders.

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# Bullying in context: Why do they stand by and when will they stand up?

PATRICIA MCDUGALL, *Department of Psychology, St. Thomas More College,  
University of Saskatchewan Tracy Vaillancourt, Department of Psychology, McMaster University*

## **Bullying as an abusive relationship**

The phenomenon of bullying has become a worldwide concern, garnering attention from researchers, policy makers and educators. As Craig and Pepler have argued above, bullying is a relationship problem. They note that bullying is a systematic abuse of power in which the difference in power between the bully and the victim widens and is consolidated over time. Our own work has shown that young people who bully do so, at least in part, because it helps them to gain and maintain power in the peer group (Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2003). It is this dynamic of power – those who wield it, those who do not – that has made it difficult to bring about substantial changes in settings involving social hierarchies.

We have found that bullying is largely an underground activity, seen rarely by teachers or other adults who supervise children, but very often witnessed by peers. More disheartening is the finding that peers seldom intervene on behalf of children who are victimized. Salmivalli and others (1996) found that when bullying takes place children play different “participant roles” that go beyond those of bully and victim. They found that about 7% of students laugh or entice the bully, whereas 20% are seen as active followers of the bully. Only about 17% of students were viewed as defenders of the victim. Such statistics point to a “bystander problem” that begets the question: “why do kids stand by when they see bullying going on, and more importantly, when will they stand up?”

Social psychologists have been interested in bystander behavior in general much longer than developmental psychologists interested in bullying. This work of social psychologists can inform our understanding of bullying seen as a developmental problem. For example, in their experimental work on aggressive situations, Darley and Latane (1968) noted what they called “the bystander effect”. This is the fact that in the presence of other people willingness to step in, in an emergency situation, decreases along with feelings of personal responsibility.

There has been considerable research on why people fail to intervene. Possible reasons include diffusion of responsibility amongst the group, uncertainty about the seriousness of the event, not wanting to look silly, and being afraid of retribution. This thinking about failure to intervene forms a background to our research on understanding the circumstances under which young people would be more or less willing to intervene in bullying situations at school.

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*Remember the Golden Rule.  
The rule is “Treat others the way  
you want or like to be treated.  
Include everyone in a game or  
activity. If you are being bullied,  
or see someone being bullied,  
ask them to please stop!  
We all must report a bully to  
a dependable adult. Tattling  
is trying to get someone in  
trouble, and reporting is trying  
to get someone out of trouble.”*

Grade 6 student

## Resources of Interest

<http://www.stopbullyingworld.com>

The front page lists strategies to minimize the effects of bullying. There are links to published articles (outlining current research), books, websites, videos, bullying conferences, presentations and workshops. Membership applications for **International Bullying Prevention Association** are available to download. A mission statement and Code of Ethics are also available to read.

<http://www.teachsafeschools.org>

The Contributors to **TeachSafe-Schools.org** are committed to the mission of the Melissa Institute: to bring the results of research in violence prevention and treatment to the educators who are working diligently in our schools to ensure the safety and success of all students and faculty. There are many toolkits and a wealth of information about bullying interventions listed on this website.

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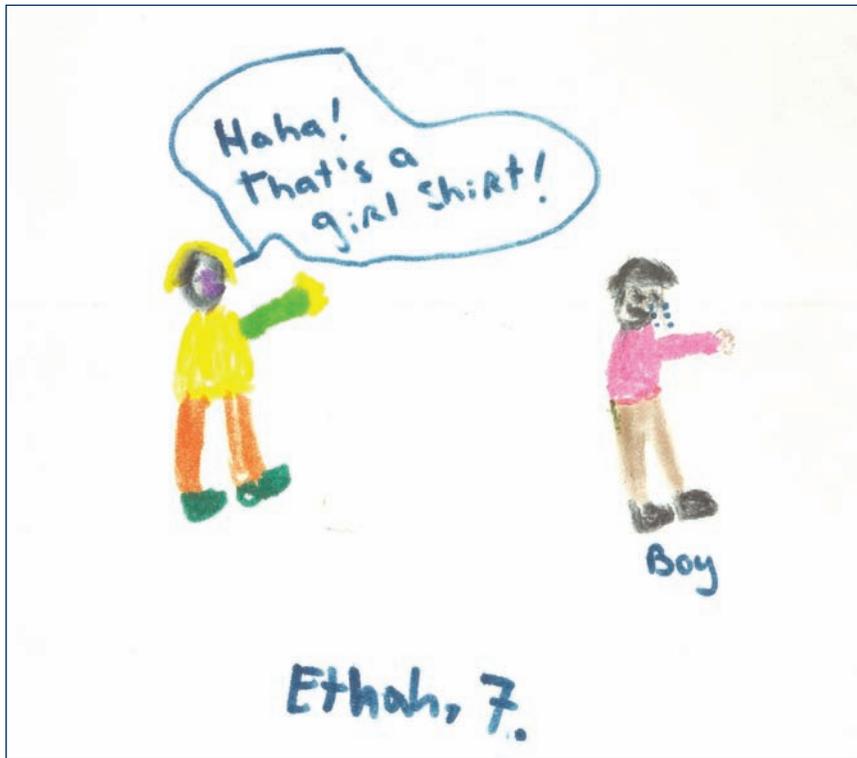
## When do students intervene in bullying

We designed a measure to look at student's willingness to intervene in bullying situations (Haffner, McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2007). To date, 200 students in grades 5 to 8 from two elementary schools in a western Canadian city have completed our scenario-based measure. Student reports indicate they are less likely to intervene after someone else has stepped in to do something and similarly more likely to stand by if they are fearful that the person who is bullying will seek retribution.

Perhaps not surprisingly, students are less likely to intervene if the person who bullies is high in social status or popularity. Under what circumstances, then, might young people be more willing to stand up? Our findings suggest that students are more willing to intervene in bullying situations when they are in a group – versus alone – and when they think the event happens repeatedly – as compared to being an isolated occurrence. Perhaps a sign of empathy, students report greater willingness to do something or say something when they think the person victimized is being hurt badly – versus not – and when they like the victim – as opposed to disliking the bully.



Verna Vowles, Artist



## Taking action against bullying

Bringing about substantive change in the incidence of bullying has been extremely challenging. Intervention is a complicated business, especially when the behaviors we are trying to get youth to change are precisely those that get them what they want and help them to hold onto power in the peer group. We believe that our research on young people's willingness to intervene gives us some insight into the messages we will want to communicate to students in a very deliberate manner.

What might happen, for example, if we educated students about the bystander effect and gave them concrete strategies that are designed to over-ride the tendency to hang back? If we know that there are certain circumstances that increase the likelihood of stepping in to do something, then it seems worthwhile to make them aware of how to create those circumstances. In short, we remain steadfast in our belief that to bring about the wide-scale change we need as a society; it is now time to empower those who stand as witnesses to acts of bullying.

*"...From grade 2-5 I was also a bully. I picked on this boy, and I regret it every day of my life. It makes me want to take myself out of this world for what I did..."*

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# School Climate and Bonding: Pathways to Resolving Bullying

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## Bullies and their peers

As we have seen above, bullying is a relationship problem. As bullying relationships develop, children who bully gain power over their victims and victims feel increasingly powerless. These dynamics consolidate over time, making them difficult to untangle and disrupt. Children involved in bullying tend also to have other relationship problems with peers and teachers.

For example, children who bully tend to be liked by other bullies and disliked by non-involved peers, a situation that can lead to increased involvement in bullying. Victimized children often have no close friends, and it appears that having a close friend, even one who is also victimized, decreases the incidence and effects of bullying. Children who bully or are victimized often have poor relationships with their teachers, while children with strong positive bonds with their teachers tend to be less involved in bullying.

Anti-bullying programs are now widely implemented in schools across the country and are required in Ontario and Saskatchewan. Typically, the goal of these programs is to raise awareness and to implement measures to assist the children involved in bullying. Unfortunately, there is very limited evidence that such programs actually are effective in reducing bullying (Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004). This lack of effectiveness may stem, in part, from the rather restricted scope of these programs; focusing as they typically do on children as the primary source of the problem and target for intervention.

## School climate and school bonding

A larger view of bullying, and one I believe holds promise for resolving bullying in the long term, includes the notion of school climate. The term is used here in its broadest sense, referring to the organization, communication, and relationships that typify the school organization. It has long been recognized that school environments have direct and lasting effects on children. Consequently, schools that create a caring and nurturing climate can have a positive and enduring influence on children. Regrettably, educators too often believe that time and energy devoted to the social aspects of schooling detracts from academic learning.

In fact, the opposite is true: social development and academic learning are inextricably intertwined. Stockard and Mayberry (1992), for example, found that student academic achievement is directly affected by the following aspects of school climate: high expectations of success, orderly school environment, high morale, positive treatment of students, active engagement of students, and positive social relations in school.

School climate influences the extent to which students feel bonded to the school and its teachers and staff – their positive attachment to them. This positive attachment affects the way they behave. When these attachments are strong, students are likely to adopt school norms and values as their own and be disinclined to defy its rules (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). Research shows that children with strong bonds to school are less likely to use drugs and alcohol and to be involved in delinquency and aggression. Additionally, strong school bonding promotes children's self-esteem, mental health, and academic achievement.

### Resources of Interest

**What is Bullying?** PREVNet  
<http://prevnet.ca/Bullying/tabid/94/Default.aspx>.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/resolve/violenceprevention/English/reviewprog/bullyintro.htm>

This site has a very detailed list of prevention programs and conflict resolution as well as an in depth description and summary of research of what is known about school bullying.

<http://www.bridges4kids.org/SC.html>

Links to prevention and information resources and recent news articles focusing on bullying are available.



## Improving school climate

### *Positive relationships*

Efforts to improve a school climate must begin with an examination of the kinds of relationships among all people in the school community. As a starting point, relationships with students must be warm and caring. While this is not normally a difficult task, it can prove challenging with children who do not reciprocate warmth and caring. Some children challenge the best-intentioned educators, and there can be moments of frustration, even anger.

However, it is critical that educators not use their power over students to express these feelings. There is a time and place to express them—away from the eyes and ears of peers – and in ways that preserve the dignity and self-worth of the student. Similarly, relationships among all staff must always be respectful, and conflicts should be resolved in ways that preserve the dignity and self-worth of all involved. The adult relationships within the school serve as influential models to students, some of whom may have limited exposure to caring and mutually respectful relationships outside the school.

### *Collaborative decision making*

An effective means of engaging students in their schooling is to invite their input into class and school decision making and policy making. While the age and maturity of the children certainly must be taken into account in deciding what kind of input should be solicited; there are ways to engage even young children in these processes. For example, a classroom code of conduct can develop through discussions with young children. At higher-grade levels, youth can participate in the elaboration of school-wide policies, such as an anti-bullying policy.

### *Success experiences*

Finally, schooling must give all children the opportunity to develop competence and experience success both academically and interpersonally. Creating such experiences can be challenging when they involve children with histories of academic and social difficulties. Teachers should work with these students individually to develop realistic, attainable goals and they must provide appropriate recognition when the goals are achieved.

Clearly there are no magic solutions for bullying problems. No book, video, or smartly packaged program can eliminate the problem. Ultimately, effective solutions to bullying will require hard work of educators and their commitment to fostering a school-wide climate of caring in which all students will grow and thrive.

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# A “Site Map” to Cyber Abuse Prevention

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## Cyber abuse on the increase

The incidence of cyber abuse is growing dramatically, including cyber bullying, cyber stalking, cyber sexual solicitation, and cyber pornography. The increase in reporting cyber abuse has been met with more emphasis on developing prevention strategies to protect children from the potential dangers of the Internet. In recent years, new prevention strategies have emerged, each with its unique delivery but most sharing the goal of increasing child and youth awareness of risky online behaviors.

Specialized programs have also been developed to protect children and youth from dangers of the Internet through education, blocking access to unapproved websites, improving parent monitoring of children’s online activities and developing specialized law enforcement programs. However, education remains the predominant prevention strategy.

Teachers in schools can use different strategies to inform children and youth about the potential dangers of the Internet. There are now a number of prevention programs available to educate children and youth about the possible dangers of the Internet and risky online behaviors. Let us look at these.

## Resources for education about cyber abuse

While programs have been empirically tested, some educational programs which have been tested and seem promising include:

The Safer **Surfing** program developed by the Metropolitan Police in England (Davidson & Martellozzo (2005). This program encourages safe use of the Internet. It educates children about strategies for safe use using an interactive session and the SAFER mnemonic: (S) – secrets don’t keep them; (A) – attachments don’t open them; (F) – false don’t believe them; (E) – exit don’t stay there; (R) – remember chat rooms are public provide no personal details.

The **Getting to Know IT All** program developed by Childnet International (Washrag, Andrews & Yee, 2005). This program is an interactive multimedia slide show aimed at empowering secondary school students, teachers, and parents to keep their computer secure, keep themselves safe online and know where to go for help.

**KidSmart** has developed print and in-school seminar information for children, parents and teachers about the risks of Internet chat rooms (KidsSmart 2000).

The **i-SAFE** curriculum focuses on teaching children about Internet safety in the United States. The i-SAFE curriculum involves interactive developmentally appropriate lessons for children from kindergarten through high school on such topics as the differences between person-to-person and online communication, how to be safe while online, cyber relationships, cyber bullying, predator identification, and identity theft (Chibnall, et al., 2006).

The **Missing** program, developed in Canada, involves the use of an interactive computer game designed to encourage youth to develop their own guidelines for safe Internet use. Based on a true story, the game allows children to assume the role of a police officer to demonstrate how people use the Internet to lure children (Crombie & Trinneer, 2003).

*"In junior high some girls would threaten me on MSN and call me names all the time. I was really uncomfortable going to school and often skipped just so that I wouldn't have to be there. Mostly because I would cry a lot and didn't want to end up crying in my class or during break."*

Most evaluation studies of prevention strategies measure success by considering whether children and youth increased their Internet knowledge and whether they decreased their risky online behaviors (Chibnall, et al., 2006; Wishart, Andrews & Yee, 2005). Research findings have shown the benefit of educational activities, suggesting that youth who receive education on Internet safety exhibit more knowledge regarding Internet safety strategies (Chibnall, et al., 2006; Davidson & Martellozzo, 2005; Gray, 1997), and are more aware of the dangers associated with Internet use (Davidson & Martellozzo, 2005). Although knowledge was shown to increase, no evidence suggests that these prevention strategies actually decrease risky online behaviors (Chibnall, et al., 2006; Crombie & Trinneer, 2003).

Internet safety and prevention is a young field beginning to take shape. The strategies developed to educate children and youth about Internet safety are gaining momentum.

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Verna Vowles, Artist

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...continued from page 13

## Keeping up with technology

More programs are needed to educate parents and caregivers about the potential risks associated with online activities. Parents need effective strategies to engage their children in conversations about their online activities, to monitor their children's activities, and use the best available blocking and filtering software to reduce the risk of their children being exposed to harmful content and images while online.

As technologies continue to advance at a rapid rate, prevention strategies must keep pace by providing relevant and applicable tools to help children and youth avoid the potential dangers of the Internet and other forms of technology. Although gaining knowledge is clearly important, these programs must actively aim to reduce risky behaviors in which children and youth engage.



Verna Vowles, Artist

# Addressing Bullying in Canada: Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence

JOANNE CUMMINGS, *PREVNet Partnership Manager*

## What is PREVNet?

PREVNet is a partnership involving the collaboration of two groups with research and applied expertise related to bullying: researchers and non-governmental organization. (NGO'S). It grew out of widespread concern about bullying in Canada. It is committed to addressing bullying problems effectively through knowledge exchange between researchers focused on bullying and practitioners concerned for the well being of children in their care. The partnership recognizes that the normal channels that researchers use for knowledge dissemination are inadequate for such a broad and deep project. Thus there was sought a form of collaboration adequate to this challenge. The partnership model is more community-based and comprehensive than national bullying prevention initiatives in other countries.

PREVNet partnerships serve as the catalyst for social-cultural change through enhanced professional and research practice and informed social policy. For example, practice within the 42 NGO partners is being transformed as professionals join researchers in sharing scientific knowledge, tools, resources, and collaborations.

PREVNet's vision is to create social-cultural change in Canada regarding the use of power and aggression through fostering healthy relationships for youth. Change happens along a continuum. It begins with awareness of the problem, moving to a deeper understanding through education followed by sparking interest and motivation, building involvement in making change, encouraging investment in change, and finally supporting and advocating for change.

## The four strategic pillars of PREVNet

PREVNet's efforts are focussed on four strategic pillars to promote social-cultural change. **Education and training** raise awareness and provide deeper understanding of issues. **Assessment and evaluation** provide tools to assess children's relationships – the data generate interest and motivation to address problems and inform program development. **Prevention and intervention** tools help develop and evaluate programs that promote safe and healthy relationships. **Policy and advocacy** activities provide a framework and collective voice for sustainable change.

These four strategies in PREVNet are needed because, while there are significant activities locally, provincially, and nationally to prevent and reduce risks of bullying and victimization, they often lack an empirical foundation. They also tend to use diverse assessment tools, are not rigorously evaluated, and operate in isolation without a platform for coordination and intellectual exchange.

*...continues on page 16*

*"A national strategy is needed to combat bullying in Canada and to bring this country into fuller compliance with the Convention. Such a strategy should include a national education campaign to teach children, parents, and teachers about bullying, and to promote conflict resolution and effective intervention strategies".*

– Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights: Children the Silent Victims (2007, p.73)

## Queen's Education Letter

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...continued from page 15

## What these strategies can accomplish?

With the PREVNet approach we hope that professionals who work with children and youth and their families will have: a deeper understanding of the importance of healthy relationships, tools to address problems of power and aggression in relationships, and tools to evaluate how effective they are at reducing these problems.

The 42 NGO partner channels exist for disseminating education, assessment, intervention, and policy tools into many settings. By working with NGOs in programming for youth, PREVNet can enhance and change the practices and services of those delivering the programs. The NGOs have expertise in program development and sustained delivery; researchers can provide capacity to ensure that these programs are based on current knowledge and are evaluated.

Through the partnership children in multiple contexts can be reached and provided with consistent help to promote healthy relationships across settings where they live, work, and play. PREVNet promotes research and development through linking researchers with NGOs to ask new questions within new contexts, with new methodologies, using large and diverse samples. In this way, the PREVNet partnership model provides a new platform for knowledge development, exchange, mobilisation, and uptake that will improve professional and research practice in Canada.



Verna Vowles, Artist

*"Let's all rise up for a world where respect is valued above all else."*

Right Honorable Michaëlle Jean, in extending her patronage to PREVNet

## Verna Vowles, Artist

Verna Vowles was a school teacher until 1980 and has painted since the 1950's. Beginning with oils and later working with watercolours. Verna Vowles' work includes rugged landscapes and varying degrees of abstract painting.

### REFERENCES

[www.prevnet.ca](http://www.prevnet.ca). You'll find: • Startling facts, myths and statistics about bullying • Valuable teaching and prevention tools • Helpful resources, links to national partners and much more.



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