

Six Decades of Bullying

Have a conversation with students with the aim of defining bullying.

In the play the two characters try to define what bullying is and state the following.

Bullying: persecute or oppress by force or threats.

Persecute: to subject a person to hostility or ill-treatment.

Oppress: to weigh down with cares or unhappiness.

Bully: a person who makes another person miserable or unhappy.

Not in the performance but an interesting recent committee decision.

2017. Fiona De Jong former CEO of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) accused Mike Tancred media manager of the AOC of bullying. A committee of three retired judges judged that it was not bullying. Mike Tancred's behaviour did not "rise to the level of bullying because it was not repetitive conduct against Fiona De Jong". So according to these former judges the abuse of the victim must be repeated and ongoing before it is deemed to be bullying. But if this is the case then surely the question is how many times does the abuse need to take place before it can be deemed to be bullying?
Mike Tancred has stood down from his position during the inquiry into his conduct.

The national definition of bullying for Australian Schools says: Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and / or social behaviour that causes physical and / or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons.

Regardless of the definitive definition of what constitutes bullying in Australia today it is agreed that bullying is not acceptable in any form or for any reason. Part of preventing bullying is to raise awareness and change the opinion of people who believe this type of behaviour is "part of life" or "makes you or breaks you".

You should never be put in a position where someone else's comments or harassment make you question your life.

However, according to some statistics (See kidspot.com.au in references) bullying happens to a large percentage of us.

Here are some facts to consider:

It's estimated that 200 million children and youth around the world are being bullied by their peers.

(According to 2007 Kandersteg Declaration Against Bullying in Children and Youth)

One out of 4 students in Australian schools will be affected by bullying (Research commissioned by the Federal government)

1 in 10 children have been cyber bullied or will be cyber bullied in Australia.

In some of the questions below you will be asked to explore your opinion and other people's opinions on bullying and the effects it can have.

In this performance we explore a variety of bullying. These include:

Face to Face

Texting

Social Networking

As you saw in the play the victim and the bully are not always children. Adults can be bullied and can also be bullies. In the play students bullied teachers and students - and teachers have bullied teachers and students.

Face to Face

In the story from the 1960's we explore Face to Face bullying, this includes both verbal bullying and physical. In this example we see that Mr Brown is bullied and tormented for his stutter, not just from students but also the principal and work colleagues.

Although the names have been changed, this is a real story of bullying from a real school in the late 1960's.

Class Discussion

Do you feel sorry for Mr Brown in this situation?

How do you think this type of torment made him feel?

Do you think this type of bullying in the workplace still goes on today?

What strategies could Mr Brown have employed to try to stop the bullying?

Do you think Mr Brown is bullying Greg because of his own treatment?

In the 1960's not just in Queensland but in most of Australia there was an expectation of what men and woman could and could not do. As is seen in the play this was reflected in the subjects offered at the school and the expectation of which gender does what.

eg: Boys are taught woodwork and metal work and girls are taught food tech, home economics, secretarial roles.

How would you feel if you were told you couldn't participate in something you loved because of your gender?

Do you think this gender bias still exists in our society today?

Why or why not?

Texting

Using the real story of Allem Halkic we look at how bullying via text can still have huge consequences and how you can be punished under Australian law for texts.

The bully in this instance Shane Garada sent over 300 threatening text messages to Allem over the course of a few months. Garada pleaded guilty to a stalking charge and received 18 months community service.

The magistrate over this case (Peter Reardon) said that although Garada never told Halkic to take his own life “A message needs to be sent to the community that this sort of act should be punished”. Shane Garada became the first person in Australia to face prosecution for stalking via cyberbullying.

Further research resources

Bully Zero Australia Foundation has a section on Allem's story
<http://bzaf.org.au/alems-story/>

Cyber Bullying Megan Meier Case Study

In the show “Six Decades of Bullying” we look at a range of real life stories. One of the hard hitting stories was the suicide of Megan Taylor Meier (Born November 6 1992 and died October 17th 2006). She was an American teenager who committed suicide three weeks before her 14th birthday.

This case helped recognise cyber bullying both in the American legal system (Optional Case study *United States V Drew*) as well as being a milestone case internationally to begin to recognise cyber bullying in our legislative system. In the case of United States V Drew there was no charge for cyber bullying instead Drew is charged with “conspiracy and accessing a computer without authorisation, to inflict emotional distress.”

From this case Missouri legislators amended the state harassment law to include penalties and charges for bullying via computers, electronic devices and social networking.

Megan's family have put together a website to help raise awareness of issues surrounding this case, and retell Megan's story.

This website can be viewed by following the link below:
<https://www.meganmeierfoundation.org/megans-story.html>

Research Activity:

Research the current legislation in Australia in regards to Cyber Bullying.

Define Cyber Bullying?

When is Cyber Bullying against the law?

What legislation can you find that looks at social networking use?

Consider the statement below

“Cyber Bullying makes you feel like you cannot escape bullying, it takes bullying from avoiding someone at school or work, to feeling like they have invaded your whole life”

How true do you think this statement is, give reasons why people may feel this way when being cyber bullied?

Although Lori Drew is not found guilty in a court of law for Megan's death, what consequences does she experience?

Discuss the following statement:

“Ironic, don't you think; these bloggers think it's okay to cyber bullying Lori Drew because she cyber bullied Megan Meier.”

Do you think this behaviour is just as bad as the original cyber bullying that happened to Megan Meier? Discuss why or why not.

Have the diagnoses and treatments for depression and ADHD changed since 2007? This may be a subject for discussion or exploration further, knowing the statistics for depression is high in teenagers and young adults.

Research some strategies to help you if you are being cyber bullied?

Websites to look for include www.bzaf.org.au

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/cyberbullying-what-it-and-how-get-help-violence-harassment-and-bullying-fact-sheet>

<https://www.acorn.gov.au/learn-about-cybercrime/cyber-bullying>

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues/cyberbullying>

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/tips/understanding-cyberbullying/>

If you contact someone and you feel like you didn't get the help you need, keep trying.

One of the most important messages we want to leave you with from this performance is you can survive bullying.

There are numerous case studies of people who were bullied to research and seek inspiration from. If those people can survive, so can you.

If you are being bullied please contact someone who can help, and aside from your parents, close friends and teachers, you can contact people on the following numbers. You can also research into cases of people who have bounced back from bullying and the strategies they used.

Contacts:

Beyond Blue

1300 224 636

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Bully Zero Australia Foundation

1800 028 559

<http://bzaf.org.au/>

Kids Helpline

Age 5-25
1800 551 800
<https://kidshelpline.com.au>

Headspace
Age 12-25
1800 650 890
www.headspace.org.au

Lifeline 13 11 14

References

<http://www.kidspot.com.au/school/secondary/peer-pressure/facts-and-figures-about-bullying>
[http://www.aphref.aph.gov.au-house-committee-jscc-subs-sub_136.3%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.aphref.aph.gov.au-house-committee-jscc-subs-sub_136.3%20(1).pdf)
<https://www.acorn.gov.au/learn-about-cybercrime/cyber-bullying>
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues/cyberbullying>
<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/tips/understanding-cyberbullying/>
<https://www.meganmeierfoundation.org/megans-story.html>