Bullying – Breaking the Code

Breaking the Code is dedicated to all the youth, teachers and educators who desire to make a positive impact in the school environment, to those who have little understanding of the part they may be playing as a bystander to keep bullying alive and well in their social environment and to the teachers, youth educators and parents who can also play a part in exposing the social structure of bullying.

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Overview

- All of us would agree that we want youth to be safe. We talk with them about bullying and hope they understand the significance of what we are saying. Sometimes we wish we could better illustrate the reality of what we are talking about. We want youth to better understand how bullies operate in the social environment and the part each student plays that can give into the support bullying behavior, or expose and stop it. Breaking the Code (BTC) was developed for this purpose.

Breaking the Code - BTC

- BTC is a research-based prevention simulation and guided discussion. It provides students with a visual understanding of how a social hierarchy of bullying permits a climate of inequality and harassment to continue for those who are singled out as the targets of mistreatment. The simulation tells a story of high school youth faced with everyday situations where they are pressured to allow or give in to the bully's social code.

Objectives

Youth will:

- Understand the power of their decisions as bystanders in bullying situations.

- Indentify options for responding to bullying situations.

- Be motivated to take a stand against bullying.

Purpose

- The purpose of BTC is to impact the beliefs and attitudes middle and high school students have about bullying. It attempts to show how bullying allows a hidden code of conduct or a "pecking order" of power to exist in a school's social climate and how a simple seemingly insignificant decision a bystander makes has the power to strengthen or weaken this code and structure.

Purpose Continued

- BTC encourages youth to take a stand against all behavior that treats others as inferior and change the social environment of their school and community. BTC highlights the existence and harmfulness of a hidden and unchallenged bullying social structure. It incorporates social issues such as shunning, intimidation, gossiping, lies, discrimination, threats, physical abuse, and making fun of others.

Simulations

- BTC is both reality and research-based. For example, the hallway, lunchroom, and PE locker room are reported to be among the most common places for bullying to occur in schools. This is reflected in the bullying scenarios. The simulations are designed to be flexible enough to fit within the time restraints and issues that a particular school is facing and can be adjusted.

Scenarios

- In Breaking the Code, the story covers eight scenarios which the main characters either witness or are involved in situations of bullying. During each scenario, one or more characters are faced with a decision to make by their own choice or by drawing a "Decision Card". The "Decision Card" represents the possible choices they have to make.

Scenarios - Continued

- The consequences of their decision upon the bullying hierarchy are represented visually. The characters are asked to stand or sit depending on the change or their status in the hierarchy. Cards with symbols are also given to characters to clip to their nametags when the character's power or status in the hierarchy is affected.

Scenarios - Completed

- Additional students are given spectator sheets to complete with their own personal decisions and comments about each scenario they view. These can be used during the guided discussion. Research data regarding bullying is embedded throughout the simulation. This data can be read aloud or referred to by the facilitator as the simulation unfolds. The simulation is followed be a guided discussion, focusing on the emotional impact of those who portray the main characters and the observers.

BTC Goal

- The goal is to help youth understand the power they hold to change the social climate of their school and community. This goal is strengthened by the awareness of the unspoken Code, how it operates in a social environment, the reality of the harm it can bring, and the role the bystanders play in supporting or destabilizing the Code.

Breaking the Code - setup

- BTC is designed to be used in a typical middle or high school classroom setting of about 25 students.

- A minimum of 12 active participants with the remainder of the class as spectators

- It can be used in after school programs or other group settings.

- A short pre & post-program evaluation is included to measure the program's impact

Facilitation Guide

- Breaking the Code Kit
- Simulation/story based on a group of students ranging from ages 12 – 17, who go to the same school.
- 12 participants/name tags
- Facilitator (chooses skit or narrator version)
- Assistant Facilitator – disperse cards (decision and symbol cards)
- Layout design
- Guided Discussion

BTC components incorporated these facts:

- Bullying occurs when there is an imbalance of power

- Types of bullying: physical, verbal aggression, relational aggression

- Most common places for bullying are unsupervised or minimal supervision

- Targets of bullying are repeatedly exposed to negative actions

Components - continued

- Targets of bullying are often loners
- One friend can make a difference in our ability to handle bullying
- Bystanders reinforce bullying by walking away, passively watching, or actively supporting
- Bystanders hinder or stop bullying by intervening on behalf of the target or expressing disapproval

Components - continued

- The longer bullies continue their behavior without consequences, the great possibility their behavior will not only continue but worsen

- Socially responsible behavior can be fostered by providing clear guidelines of action and reporting bullying

Staging the Simulation

- Prepare – know the material; set-up 5 to 10 min.
- 12 participants
- Assistant Facilitator
- Time Required – can be adjusted to fit different time frames. One scenario can be done in 25 minutes. Suggested to do a couple at a time with discussion.
- Discussion should NEVER be left out. A minimum of 15 minutes should be used for discussion.

Skit Version – Scenario 4

- Lunch Room: Shunning and Exclusion
- Characters: Felicia, Lisa, Morgan, Rachel
- Narrator
- Facilitator
- Assistant Facilitator

Scenario 2

- Cyberbullying
- Characters: Rick, Morgan, Leon, Mark Louis
- Narrator
- Facilitator
- Assistant Facilitator

Handouts

- Breaking the Code Evaluation (front of sheet) Before Simulation(s)
- Breaking the Code Evaluation (back of sheet) After Simulation(s) and Discussion
- Bullying Simulation Symbols Sheet
- 10 Ways to Stand Up to Bullying
- Spectator Sheet(s)
- Order Form

Bullying - Breaking the Code

- Questions????? Thank you for attending!!!

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