



# **OLWEUS** BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM

from



**A CSAP Model Program**

**A Blueprint for Violence Prevention  
Model Program**



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## What is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program?

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is a multilevel, multi-component, school-based program designed to prevent or reduce bullying in elementary, middle, and junior high schools (students six to fifteen years old). By restructuring the school environment, the program helps reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying. School staff are largely responsible for introducing and implementing it. Their efforts are directed toward improving peer relations and making the school a safe and positive place for students to learn and develop.

While intervention against bullying is particularly important to reduce the suffering of the victims, it is also valuable for the sake of the aggressive students, as bullies are much more likely than other students to expand their antisocial behaviors. Research shows that reducing aggressive, antisocial behavior may also reduce substance use and abuse.

The goals of the program are:

- to reduce, if not eliminate, existing bully/victim problems among elementary, middle, and junior high school children in and outside of the school setting
- to prevent the development of new bully/victim problems
- to achieve better peer relations at school and create conditions that encourage victims and bullies to get along and function better in and outside of the school setting

## Who is the target audience?

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is designed for students in elementary, middle, and junior high schools. All students participate in most aspects of the program, while students identified as bullying others, or as targets of bullying, receive extra attention.

## What are the benefits of the program?

Using the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program:

- reduces existing bullying/victim problems
- prevents development of new cases of bullying
- improves peer relations at school

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## What are the core components of the program?

Core components are implemented at the school, classroom, and individual levels.

***School-level components*** include an anonymous student questionnaire assessing the nature and prevalence of bullying at each school, a school conference day for discussing bullying problems and planning the program's implementation, the formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee to oversee all aspects of the program, and the development of a schoolwide system of supervising students during break periods.

***Classroom-level components*** include establishing and enforcing classroom rules against bullying and holding regular classroom meetings with students to increase knowledge and empathy and to encourage prosocial norms and behavior. Meetings with parents to foster their active involvement are highly desirable both at the classroom and school levels.

***Individual-level components*** include interventions with children identified as bullies and victims, and discussions with their parents.

The program includes these two products, to be received by every teacher in the school:

***Teacher's Guide:*** This manual (about 120 pages) provides background information on the program and guidelines for implementing the classroom-level components, including class rules, class meetings, and parent meetings.

***Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do:*** This book surveys the issue of bullying in today's schools and how the Olweus program can address it.

The following components are also available:

***Student questionnaire:*** This CD-ROM contains both the student survey instruments and reporting software for the Olweus program. Copies of the survey can be printed out and administered. The results are hand-entered into the reporting software and tabulated to obtain information on the amount and variety of bullying in a school.

***Sticks and Stones Video:*** This video provides a good overview of the problem of bullying and information on how the Olweus program is implemented.

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The following two curricula are not part of the basic program, but are recommended by the Olweus Group as supplements:

***Quit It! Curriculum:*** For grades K–3, this curriculum provides ten interactive lessons and supplemental games, exercises, role-plays and stories to help children explore the issue of bullying.

***Bullying Curriculum and Video:*** For grades 4–8, this five-lesson curriculum and accompanying video use hypothetical scenarios to teach children positive and proactive ways to handle bullying. The video can also be used as a tool to educate parents and teachers about the issue.

## What is the program’s history?

In 1983, after three adolescent boys in northern Norway committed suicide, most likely as a consequence of severe bullying by peers, the country’s Ministry of Education commissioned Professor Dan Olweus to conduct an extensive research and intervention project on bully/victim problems. The resulting Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, developed at the University of Bergen, has been refined, expanded, and evaluated with positive results in two other projects in Norway. As part of the Norwegian government’s plans for delinquency and violence prevention among children and youth, the Olweus Program is now being implemented on a large-scale basis all over Norway.

The program has also found success in other countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. During the 1990s, Professor Olweus worked closely with American colleagues, notably Dr. Sue Limber and Dr. Gary Melton at Clemson University in South Carolina, to implement and evaluate the program in the United States.

## Is the program research-based?

Two types of evaluation design have been used to assess the program. Several evaluations used what is often called an “age-cohort design” with time-lagged contrasts between adjacent but age-equivalent cohorts. One strength of this quasi-experimental design is that several of the cohorts serve both as intervention and control/baseline groups (in different comparisons).

In one evaluation project, a traditional control group design was used.

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The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a research-based program that has been shown to result in:

- a 30 to 70 percent reduction in student reports of being bullied and bullying others; peer and teacher ratings of bully/victim problems have yielded roughly similar results.
- significant reductions in student reports of general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy.
- significant improvements in classroom social climate, as reflected in students' reports of improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, and more positive attitudes toward schoolwork and school.

## **What is involved in the program's implementation?**

Implementation requires significant and ongoing commitment from school administrators, teachers, and other staff. Important elements of the initial phase include:

- establishing a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee and selecting an on-site coordinator (who also should be a member of the committee)
- conducting an anonymous student survey with the questionnaire
- holding a one-day training with members of the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee to discuss the nature and prevalence of bullying, the elements of the program, and initial steps such as organizing teacher discussion groups and planning a (relatively) fixed schedule of meetings
- arranging a half-day to full-day training with all teachers and other staff at school (including members of the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee). During the school training day, results of the student survey will be presented and the overall plan for program implementation will be discussed in detail.

Below is an optimal timeline for these initial activities, assuming a program launch at the beginning of the fall semester. (Less optimally, the program could be launched just after winter break, with the questionnaire administered the previous November and trainings held just after winter break.)

Target Dates	Activity
Spring	Select members of the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee and an on-site coordinator
April/May	Administer the student survey; hold a day-and-a-half to two-day training with members of the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee
Summer	Input and analyze data from the student survey
August/September	School conference day—hold a half-day to full-day in-service with all school staff
Beginning of the fall semester, following the school conference day	Plan, schedule, and launch other elements of the schoolwide project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish classroom rules against bullying</li> <li>• begin classroom meetings to discuss the nature of bullying and its behaviors</li> <li>• increase supervision; review and coordinate supervisory system</li> <li>• initiate individual interventions with students</li> <li>• start regular teacher discussion groups (schedule these before school year starts)</li> <li>• parent meetings</li> </ul>

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## What training is required?

Due to the high level of schoolwide commitment needed, training is strongly suggested. All school staff participate in a half-day to full-day training session. In addition, teachers are expected to:

- thoroughly read the *Teacher's Guide* and the book *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*
- hold weekly twenty- to forty-minute classroom meetings
- participate in regular teacher discussion groups during the program's first year

Additionally, school personnel on the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee will:

- participate in a day-and-a-half training with a certified trainer
- attend one-to two-hour monthly meetings

Technical assistance is also available to interested schools, including follow-up telephone consultation provided to the on-site coordinator every three to four weeks during the first year of implementation.

Depending on the school's size, a program will require a part- or full-time on-site coordinator.

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## Quit It! Curriculum (for Grades K–3)

### Scope and Sequence

Theme	Goals and Learner Outcomes
<p><b>Theme 1: Creating Our Rules</b></p> <p><b>Lesson One: What Is a Rule?</b></p> <p><b>Lesson Two: Creating Rules for the Classroom</b></p> <p><b>Lesson Three: Rules Outside the Classroom</b></p>	<p><b>GOALS</b></p> <p>The goals of these lessons are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to help students understand the reasons for rules of social behavior</li> <li>• to engage students in the process of creating classroom rules that foster civil behavior</li> <li>• to create a climate of safety, comfort, and cooperation in the classroom/school</li> <li>• to help foster positive relationships between girls and boys</li> <li>• to create rules that alleviate situations leading to teasing and bullying behavior</li> <li>• to establish that teasing and bullying behavior will not be tolerated</li> <li>• to convey consequences of teasing and bullying behavior</li> </ul> <p><b>LEARNER OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Students will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that they have decision-making skills</li> <li>• that they have a stake in creating civil behavior</li> <li>• that rules are important for their safety and comfort, and that students are expected to follow them</li> <li>• that breaking rules brings consequences</li> <li>• that teasing and bullying are against the rules</li> </ul>

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## Quit It! Curriculum (for Grades K–3) Scope and Sequence (continued)

Theme	Goals and Learner Outcomes
<p><b>Theme 2: Talking about Teasing and Bullying</b></p> <p><b>Lesson One: I Feel Welcome/Unwelcome</b></p> <p><b>Lesson Two: Where I Feel Safe/Unsafe</b></p> <p><b>Lesson Three: Teasing and Bullying Are...</b></p> <p><b>Lesson Four: Expressing Ourselves</b></p>	<p><b>GOALS</b></p> <p>The goals of these lessons are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to create a classroom climate that fosters open communication between students about teasing and bullying</li> <li>• to have students define what constitutes teasing and bullying</li> <li>• to have students assess the classroom and school climate in terms of teasing and bullying</li> <li>• to empower students to convey a sense of strength and confidence through their voices, their bodies, and their expressions.</li> <li>• to help students cope with feelings of anger and frustration</li> <li>• to help students recognize and assess the role gender and other factors play in teasing and bullying</li> </ul> <p><b>LEARNER OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Students will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that teasing and bullying are not acceptable behaviors</li> <li>• that the classroom is a safe space to talk about teasing and bullying</li> <li>• that everyone has a broad range of feelings, but how we express them is important in how we get along with others</li> <li>• that using their bodies to convey strength and confidence is one way to avoid being bullied</li> <li>• how to recognize signs of their own anger</li> <li>• ways for boys and girls to treat each other that are fairer, friendlier, and more respectful</li> </ul>

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## Quit It! Curriculum (for Grades K–3)

### Scope and Sequence (continued)

Theme	Goals and Learner Outcomes
<p><b>Theme 3: Exploring Courage</b></p> <p><b>Lesson One: Courage Is...?</b></p> <p><b>Lesson Two: Do the Right Thing/Listen to Your Strong Side</b></p> <p><b>Lesson Three: Breaking Down Barriers to Friendship</b></p>	<p><b>GOALS</b></p> <p>The goals of these lessons are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to explore the meaning of courage, including acts that can happen on a daily basis</li> <li>• to examine the role courage plays in helping to stop teasing and bullying behavior</li> <li>• to develop courageous strategies to stop teasing and bullying behavior</li> <li>• to explore the role and responsibility that bystanders have in incidents of teasing and bullying</li> <li>• to help students recognize barriers to friendship, including stereotypes about gender, race/ethnicity, disability, and other perceived differences</li> </ul> <p><b>LEARNER OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Students will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that everyone has a responsibility to stop teasing and bullying</li> <li>• that using violence to solve problems is not courageous</li> <li>• how to differentiate between being courageous and taking unsafe risks</li> <li>• that they can think of solutions to conflicts and practice ways of responding to teasing and bullying that are not aggressive or hurtful to others</li> <li>• that they can recognize some barriers to friendship and develop ways to eliminate them</li> <li>• that breaking down barriers to friendship takes courage</li> </ul>

## Bullying Curriculum and Video (for Grades 4–8) Scope and Sequence (continued)

Lessons	Learner Outcomes
<b>Lesson One</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the ways in which bullying occurs</li> <li>• identify reasons why children bully each other</li> <li>• believe that there is no good reason to bully others</li> <li>• identify ways they can help other students who may be bullied</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson Two</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify how it feels to be bullied by others</li> <li>• identify how it feels to witness others being bullied</li> <li>• describe the typical characteristics of bullies</li> <li>• identify ways to ask for help if they are being bullied</li> <li>• describe ways to help others who are being bullied</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson Three</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• realize that victims of bullying are not at fault</li> <li>• describe ways that friends can help friends who are being bullied</li> <li>• demonstrate how to respond to bullying without violence</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson Four</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify reasons why children bully others</li> <li>• realize that children who bully often end up getting into trouble later in life</li> <li>• identify ways in which adults can help them respond to bullying</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson Five</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify how bullying affects everyone in school</li> <li>• identify ways they can help reduce bullying at school</li> </ul>

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## Meeting National Academic Standards\* with the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Each student will meet the following standards.

### *Health Education Standards (Grades K–2)*

- identifies and shares feelings in appropriate ways
- knows ways to seek assistance if worried, abused, or threatened (physically, emotionally, sexually)

### *Health Education Standards (Grades 3–5)*

- knows characteristics needed to be a responsible friend and family member
- knows common sources of stress for children and ways to manage stress
- knows behaviors that communicate care, consideration, and respect of self and others
- understands how one responds to the behavior of others and how one's behavior may evoke responses in others
- knows strategies for resisting negative peer pressure
- knows the difference between positive and negative behaviors used in conflict situations
- knows some nonviolent strategies to resolve conflicts
- knows behaviors that are safe, risky, or harmful to self and others

### *Health Education Standards (Grades 6–8)*

- understands how peer relationships affect health
- knows appropriate ways to build and maintain positive relationships with peers, parents, and other adults
- understands the difference between safe and risky or harmful behaviors in relationships
- knows techniques for seeking help and support through appropriate resources
- knows potential signs of self- and other-directed violence
- knows the various possible causes of conflict among youth in schools and communities, and strategies to manage conflict
- knows how refusal and negotiation skills can be used to enhance health
- knows community resources that are available to assist people with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems

\*Standards are taken from John S. Kendall and Robert J. Marzano, *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K–12 Education, 3rd ed.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (MCREL), 2000.