

Making your child's school safer – how to effectively address bullying and sleep deprivation due to after-hours device use.

Presenter: Jac Van Velsen

WISA Wellbeing in Schools Australia

Vision

School communities building resilience in all students, especially the most marginalised and those at risk of marginalisation, so they can reach their potential in education and in life.

Purpose

To work collaboratively with and support school communities in building a strategic whole of school approach to health and wellbeing that creates a socially just environment where all students can thrive, particularly those at risk of or who are being marginalized.

Supporting the Wellbeing of all students is school core business

The Australian Government recognises that schools play a vital role in promoting the social and emotional development and wellbeing of young Australians.

Student resilience and wellbeing are essential for both academic and social development and this is optimised by the provision of safe, supportive and respectful learning environments. Schools share this responsibility with the whole community.

Dep't of Education & Training website 2016

Why Wellbeing is school core business

Students with high levels of wellbeing are more likely to have:

- higher academic achievement and complete Year 12
- better health, mental health and a more pro-social, responsible and lawful lifestyle.
- greater participation in the workforce
- more social inclusion

Adapted from Australian Gov't Dept. Educ. Employ't & Workplace Relations (2008)

Students in our classrooms

– Australian data

- One in six children in Australia lives below the poverty line (Australian Council of Social Services 2014)
- One in four children has witnessed violence against a parent (National Association for Prevention of Child abuse and Neglect)
- One in four students in Yrs 4 - 9 report being bullied every few weeks (Cross 2009)
- Cyber-bullying now affects 50 percent of 10 – 14 year olds (Y.Studies Aust., Cross et al 2010)
- Indigenous students achieving national minimum standards in NAPLAN^[2] is on track in only one - Yr 9 numeracy, of the 8 areas (reading & numeracy Yrs 3, 5, 7 & 9). (Closing the gap 2018)
- 7% of young people under age 18 have a disability. 86% in mainstream schools. 43% had learning difficulties. 35% had trouble fitting in socially (Australian Bureau Statistics 2014)

Students in our classrooms

- Australian data

- 14% of 4 – 17 year olds experienced mental health disorders. (Second Australian Child & Adol. Survey of Mental Health and Well-Being 2015)
- 17% of 4 -17 yr olds used services for emotional or behavioural problems. 53% using both school & health services (Second Australian Child & Adol. Survey of Mental Health and Well-Being 2015)
- One in five students go to bed hungry and school hungry at least once per week (Aust. Child Wellbeing Project 2016)
- 11% of the Australian population are of diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity (Fed. Dept Health 2001)
- 50% of all young people experience bullying at some time (K. Rigby)

Students in our classrooms - Australian data

- 80% of homophobic bullying involving LGBTI young people occurs at school and has a profound impact on their wellbeing and education
(Aust. Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society 2012)
- The number of children aged 0 – 12 years on care and protection orders doubled between 2000 and 2011 to eight in every one thousand children (Aust. Institute of Health & Welfare 2012/13)
- In 2013/14 198,966 children were suspected of being harmed or at risk of harm from abuse and neglect (AIHW 2015)
- 31% of Australian adults said they wouldn't believe a child who disclosed being abused (Aust. Institute of Criminology 2006)

Bullying and health

Health is defined in terms of wellness, that is physical, mental and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease.

World Health Organisation 1947

Later spiritual and emotional aspects were added to health.

Bullying undermines our health and wellbeing and the impact can be different for each person and sometimes lifelong.

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International rights of the child

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The importance of protecting children's quality of life and their rights to be educated in a safe environment, free from all forms of violence, victimisation, harassment and neglect.

Key Messages re Bullying and Harassment

- profound **long term impacts**
- whole school community approach is vital
- needs definition, clarification
- **never OK**
- **everyone** must challenge



What is bullying

- repetitive
- causes distress
(at the time and by threat of future attacks)
- power imbalance
- may be verbal, physical, social, online or psychological
- effect on ‘recipient’ and broader group

“We need to take time to understand what we mean by bullying before rushing in.”

Prof. Ken Rigby University of South Australia

Different types of bullying

Face to face bullying

- Easier for adults to detect
- May be physical or verbal

Covert bullying (including cyberbullying)

- It is hidden and harder to detect
- Involves ‘relational’ bullying – which is intentional manipulation and damage of peer relationships leading to social exclusion
- Appears to be **linked to both absenteeism and poor school performance.**

Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Cross et al., 2009

What is Cyberbullying

Definition

When a group or an individual use information and communication technologies (ICT) to intentionally harm a person over time, who cannot easily stop this bullying from happening.

Friendly Schools Plus 2014

Most students who cyberbully also bully face to face.

Schools also need definitions of harassment, aggression, violence and conflict

Legal issues including Brodie's Law in Victoria

Criminal legislation related to bullying and cyberbullying

- Stalking
- Making threats to kill or harm
- Malicious damage
- Racial vilification
- E-crime – bullying involving a computer or electronic communication device

Brodies Law

- All forms of serious bullying since June 2011 anywhere in the community including schools or online
- Acknowledges the serious nature and consequences of bullying
- Sends a strong message that threatening bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

When does bullying behaviour appear to peak and gender patterns?

Year 5 and again at times of transition such as Yr 7.

Types and nature of bullying

- **Verbal bullying** cruel teasing and name calling equally most common for boys and girls
- Boys more direct (physical, teasing)
- Girls more indirect /covert (exclusion, rumours)
- Girls are bullied as often as boys
- Boys are reported to bully more than girls

Knowing the signs

Impact of bullying on students

Mental Health

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Suicidal ideation
- Low self esteem

Physical Health

- Somatic complaints
- Poorer health
- Physical harm

Social Effects

- Lonely
- Fewer friends
- Feel rejected by peers

Other effects

- Dislike of school
- Unhappy at school
- Fear going to school
- Higher absenteeism
- Lower academic competence

Knowing the signs - Students who bully (frequently)

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Unchecked bullying and life trajectory

Bullying is a strong predictor of subsequent delinquency and anti-social behaviour ...

(Merrel et al., 2008; Olweus, 2011; O'Moore, 2000; Ttofi et al., 2011)

... and these aggressive behaviour patterns can persist, increasing the likelihood of acting violently as an adult (Farrington, 1993).

Bullying undermines health and wellbeing

Repeated exposure to bullying undermines the health, and wellbeing of more vulnerable pupils (Egan & Perry 1998; Rigby, 1999)

... significantly increasing the likelihood of psychiatric disorders in adulthood.

(Bond et al., 2001; Egan & Perry, 1998; Peter et al., 2008; Ttofi, 2011).

The longer that victimisation persists, the greater the risk of maladjustment

(Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004).

Welcome back to school everybody.
I'm Mr. Brown, your new teacher and this is
capsicum spray to help things run smoothly...



What did our children say?

Of those who are bullied:

- 30% will tell no-one
- 22% ask person bullying to stop
- 19% report they bully back

Boys (anger) tell less than girls (depressed)

- Friend (5% boys Vs 32% girls)
- Teacher (8% boys Vs 22% girls)
- Parents (18% boys Vs 22% girls)

Why many students do not report bullying to teachers

2016 online survey of 1,688 students in Years 5 to 10, provides data on how many bullied students actually do seek help – and from whom

53% said they sought help from other students in the first instance.

51% went to their parents.

38% said they would go to teachers or counsellors

Rigby, K. and Johnson, K. (2016), The Prevalence and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies employed in Australian Schools

Reasons bullied students did not seek help from teachers

- **Uncertainty about the role of teachers in addressing cases of bullying.** “It is none of their business.” “They are here to teach us.”
 - **Bullying is a personal matter.** “I don’t feel comfortable telling someone I don’t really know.” “There is no-one in the school I can trust.”
 - **Lack of belief that they would take the bullying seriously.** “They might laugh. I have seen them brush off students’ problems.”
 - **Fear of repercussions.** “I don’t want to be teased because I told a teacher.”
 - **Not wishing to get others into trouble.** “The people (the bullies) were my friends and I don’t want to lose them.”
- A sense of personal inadequacy.** “I would feel weak and embarrassed.”

Rigby, K. and Johnson, K. (2016), The Prevalence and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies employed in Australian Schools

Activity – Safety and Wellbeing is everyone's business

Who has the responsibility to maintain a safe school?

- For students
- For staff
- For families

Why do some students bully?

- To get what they want
- To be popular and admired
- They are afraid of being left out
- Jealousy of others
- Seems fun
- Bored
- Works for them
- Power
- Their role Eg. As leader
- Their significant role models bully

How do children develop bullying behaviour?

- Their significant role models bully
- Being harshly, physically punished at home
- Insufficient adult supervision
- Bullying provides them with social rewards
- Bully others to prevent being bullied
- Getting attention

The single highest predictor of aggression in early childhood is parental attitude towards aggression.

Activity: Punish or Educate

Is punishment more effective than
Restorative/ Educative approaches?

All in all, punishment hardens and renders people more insensible; it concentrates; it increases the feeling of estrangement; it strengthens the power of resistance.

Friedrich Nietzsche



Intervention in school bullying

Friendly Schools Plus program www.friendlyschools.com.au

A whole of school evidence based approach to addressing Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Bullying including Cyberbullying that is linked to the *Australian Student Wellbeing Framework*

Use their handbook, parents guide & classroom pack
Policy Development, Ethos

Student management and support (**Interventions**)

- Method of Shared Concern*

- No Blame Approach* including No Blame
Classroom conference

- Restorative Chat and Family Group Conference*

- Mediation*

Classroom practice

Family links

Physical environment

Intervention strategies for schools to resolve bullying

Top five most effective methods

- *Method of Shared Concern*
- *No Blame Approach / Support Group Method*
- *Restorative Chat*
- *No Blame Classroom conference*
- *Mediation*

Professors Ken Rigby & Donna Cross

Goals of Restorative/non punitive interventions

- To understand the harm from those affected
- To develop empathy
- To listen and respond to the needs of everyone affected
- To encourage accountability & responsibility through personal reflection & action
- To reintegrate the aggressor/s into the community
- To create caring climates to support healthy communities
- To change the system where it contributes to harm
- To learn and develop emotional intelligence so repetition of poor behaviour ceases

Fundamental concepts of Restorative Practice

- Misconduct is a violation of people and relationships
- Violations create obligations and liabilities
- Restorative approaches seek to heal and put things right

Adapted from Zehr and Mika, 1997

Bystanders of bullying

Peers are present in 85% of bullying episodes in schools

- 54% passively watch
- 21% join in with the bullying
- 25% try to defend the student being bullied

Craig & Pepler, 1995; O'Connell et al., 1999

When bystanders intervene to defend the student being bullied, the **bullying stops in 57% of cases**

Hawkins et al., 2001

Student decision making impacts upon their health, development and wellbeing

An adolescent's perception of their power and agency affects the balance between short-term and long-term goal setting.

- **Support adolescent's capacity to make reflective decisions, considering risks and consequences**
- **Progressively empower adolescents in decision making as they mature**
- These strategies are particularly important for socially marginalised adolescents
- Creation of a sense of agency is an important reason that there is value in **creating opportunities for adolescents to exercise self-determination through meaningful participation, supported and facilitated by adults, in decision making that affects their lives and their communities.**

(Patton G et al 2016) Our future: a *Lancet* commission on adolescent health and wellbeing.

Roger Holdsworth - *Student participation in school leadership*

www.asprinworld.com - *Connect Magazine*

Schools are making a significant difference

Friendly Schools Plus, Respectful Relationships, Safe Schools & eSmart

Every gov't school must include bullying and cyber bullying statement in their Student Engagement Policy

www.ncab.org.au www.esafety.gov.au

<https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources/classroom-resources>

www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au

Teaching Social and Emotional Learning

Addressing social and emotional issues in schools improves academic and educational outcomes by 11% and **improves behaviour and decreases bullying.**

Parents can help by...

- Asking their child what is wrong
- Remind child they have a right to feel safe
- Explain what bullying is and how to stop it
- Telling others about bullying is important
- Teach child to say 'Stop bullying me'
- Telling the school and asking for action
- Seeking help for their child with social skills

Take time to get to know your students home room teacher

- education is a three way partnership

A meta-analysis of 99 research studies found:

- **positive teacher-student relationships were linked to increased student engagement and achievement**

Students labeled as ‘at risk’ were more strongly influenced by the quality of the teacher-student relationship than those labeled ‘normative’

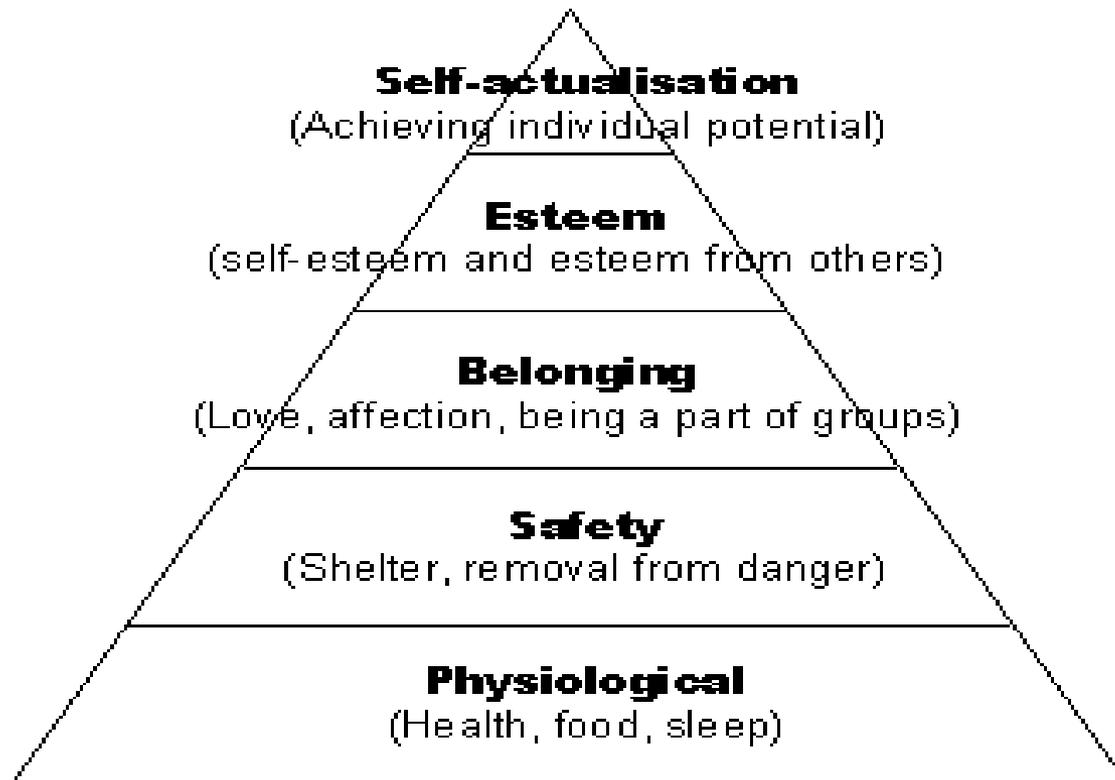
Roorda et al., 2011 as cited in Cahill H. 2015

Part Two

Sleep deprivation due to mobile device use and the impacts upon students

Addressing basic needs first

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - a strong foundation where all students have the potential to thrive.



Sle... ep. Why is it so important?

- Children and adolescents who do not get enough sleep have more trouble learning.
- They are less attentive and motivated, have poor problem solving, more confusion, increased irritability, reduced memory, impaired communication, slower processing of information, poorer judgement, diminished reaction times and more indifference.

Sleep. Why is it so important?

Lack of sleep can also lead to behaviour and mood issues, impacting negatively upon relationships, empathy and leading to mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depressed mood.

What are some signs that your child or adolescent isn't getting enough sleep

- Depressed mood, irritability during offline social interactions
- Hyperactivity at school
- Reluctance/arguing about getting off phones/devices and going to bed
- Reduced academic performance
- Changes to communicating/social interacting at home and/or school
- Falling asleep during the day
- Difficulties waking up for school and sleeping in late on weekends to 'catch up'
- Getting to school late or missing school days

Sleep and its impact on mental health

- A study of 20,000 17-24 year olds in W.A. found those getting 5-6 hours sleep a night were far more likely to have mental health problems
- A study of 15,000 American teenagers found those going to bed after midnight were 24% more likely to suffer from depression than those in bed at 10pm

Felstead, B 2017

Interruptions to sleep in children and adolescents

In Australia, 25% of children aged 7-8 years report using mobile phones between 10pm and 6am – and this figure increases to 83% of children by age 17.

www.resilientyouth.org.au/blog/new-bullying-survey-australian-schools

Bullying is 24/7

The percentage of students experiencing bullying

- at school 47%
- Via phone or computer 22%
- Via both 18%

Rates of cyber bullying is spread evenly across all ages 7-18 years

Interruptions to sleep in children and adolescents

Using devices to play games or communicate with friends increases mental stimulation, making it difficult to wind down around bedtime or to get back to sleep when sleep is interrupted during the night.

Negative online social interactions can also contribute to feelings of anxiety and worry which can make it harder to sleep.

Sleep Health Foundation of Australia Anxiety and Sleep Fact Sheet

Impact of sleep deprivation

- Technology use before bedtime or during the sleep period has negative influences on the brain and overall health
- This can lead to poor learning, unhelpful behaviours, friendship difficulties and mental health problems

Impact of sleep deprivation

- Reduced cognitive function - impaired memory storage and problem solving.
- Negative impact on mental health - higher incidence of moodiness, depression, anxiety and risk-taking behaviour.
- Lowered physical well-being, lack of energy, reduced immune system functionality.
- Weight gain - lack of sleep affects metabolism.

Good sleep habits

- Maintain a bedtime routine
- Get physically tired
- Relaxation techniques such as tightening and loosening muscles
- Mindfulness techniques to calm your mind Eg Smiling Mind
- Stop using electronic screens at least one hour before bedtime
- Removing the phone from the bedroom at night is important for children and adolescents so that sleep is not interrupted
- Rules around not having mobile devices in bedrooms and turning devices off at night work best if they are being followed by the whole family, including parents

Please read this article on **stages of child and adolescent development**

Don't waste your breathe

By Andrew Fuller

Leading Australian Clinical Psychologist specialising in schools

Student agency

- Adolescents are rapid adopters and high-end consumers of exciting digital and social media.
- Girls tend to use social media more than boys, whose focus is more likely to be on gaming.
- There are potentially great benefits from strong social digital connections during this time, but these same media can equally amplify vulnerabilities from intense emotions.

(Patton G et al 2016) Our future: a *Lancet* commission on adolescent health and wellbeing.

E-safety commissioner www.esafety.gov.au

Risk taking during adolescence is normal, however media is exposing young people to greater risks

The potential of the new media to amplify social contagion is already apparent around adolescent violence, mental health, suicide, and self-harm.⁶⁵

Extremist groups are increasingly using social media to offer prospects of adventure, belonging, and fulfilment that many adolescents find missing in ordinary life.⁶⁶

(Patton G et al 2016) Our future: a *Lancet* commission on adolescent health and wellbeing.

Never underestimate your power

- Teens need someone who has more options than they have
- They need someone to believe in, to imitate, match and surpass
- They need to know you care
- They need boundaries
- They need someone who can guide and support them.
- They need someone to help them stay safe