

HRSA Misdirections Video Transcript

Title Card

Misdirections in Bullying Prevention & Response

VIDEO: Kids on playground, kids in hallways in between classes.

VIDEO: Bullying situation begins.

VO: We all want to prevent bullying. It's a clear goal - but how we stop bullying behavior is not always clear.

CATHERINE BRADSHAW:
Bullying is very complex. It's critical that we keep in mind some potential misdirections when we're thinking about trying to prevent bullying.

Title Card (Voice Over Language)

This video will discuss five Misdirections, they are: (narrator should read this)

- Zero Tolerance
- Conflict Resolution & Peer Mediation
- Group Therapeutic Treatment
- Overstating or Simplifying the Relationship Between Bullying and Suicide
- Simple, Short-Term Solutions

VO: Bullying is a complex issue. As a result, some approaches that work well in other situations may be problematic when applied to bullying. We'll discuss five misdirections to avoid.

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Misdirection #1: Zero Tolerance

VIDEO: A kid leaving school alone or picked up by parent.

VO: Zero tolerance or "three strikes and you're out" policies are often used by schools in reaction to violent offenses like carrying weapons or fighting. When it comes to bullying, zero tolerance is typically ineffective or can even make the bullying situation worse.

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Why Zero Tolerance is Not Recommended:

- Unrealistic and disruptive, given the numbers of students involved in bullying
- Doesn't allow for intervention and may isolate children who bully from needed role models
- Suspended or expelled students may have a lack of supervision when they stay home
- Severe punishments can deter reporting

VO: Zero tolerance is not recommended because it's unrealistic and disruptive given the number of students involved in bullying, it doesn't allow for intervention and may isolate children who bully from needed role models. Suspended or expelled students may have a lack of supervision when they stay home and severe punishments can deter reporting.

BRADSHAW: When there's a zero tolerance policy in place sometimes that can actually cut down on the number of individuals that are comfortable reporting a bullying offense. They might be afraid of the zero tolerance policy or view it as too harsh or just solely punitive in nature and doesn't actually provide an opportunity for intervention to stop the problem.

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Misdirection #2: Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation

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Why Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Are Not Recommended:

- Implies both parties bear responsibility
- May further victimize the target
- Bullying is abuse

VO: Conflict resolution and peer mediation can be effective ways to address many types of student conflicts - but not bullying. Conflict resolution and peer mediation is not recommended because it implies both parties bear responsibility and may further victimize the target.

VO - BRADSHAW:

In the case of bullying, we don't have a situation where there's just a disagreement. It's a situation of abuse.

BRADSHAW:

Quite often the victim doesn't really want to be seen in the role as a victim, and doesn't want to be identified or brought out or made to feel even more emotionally targeted or physically targeted within that group. Bringing them face to face with the perpetrator often can validate those roles and that power differential between them.

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Misdirection #3: Group Therapeutic Treatment

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Why Group Therapeutic Treatment is Not Recommended:

- Group members may model bad behavior
- Group treatment that involves aggressors and children who are bullied can reinforce bullying behavior

VIDEO: Group counseling session

VO: Some schools address bullying behavior by implementing group therapeutic treatments like anger management counseling or empathy building. Group therapeutic treatment is not recommended because group members may model bad behavior and group treatment that involves aggressors and children who are bullied can reinforce bullying behavior.

BRADSHAW:

Similarly, you wouldn't want to have a group where you brought together victims and perpetrators within the same group, because that might serve to be very disempowering for the children that were targets of bullying. It could also reinforce that power differential between them.

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Misdirection #4: Overstating or Simplifying the Relationship between Bullying and Suicide

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Why the Term "Bullycide" is Not Recommended:

- Suggests that suicide may be caused by only one factor

VO: "Bullycide" is a term that's come into recent use and should be avoided. This term suggests the overly simplistic notion that a suicide may be caused by only one factor. Those who actively work to prevent bullying can help prevent bad outcomes, including suicide, but bullying prevention efforts do not, in and of themselves, constitute suicide prevention. Although bullying may be a factor in suicide risk, it is often not the only one.

BRADSHAW:

We also know that suicidal ideation is pretty common among youth during adolescence. There are issues around impulsivity that very well could lead to a suicide that is

actually completed. So it's important for us be aware of that potential link between mental health and suicide and the role that bullying could serve within that, but we don't want to overstate that link here. We also want to be cautious to clarify that there isn't an epidemic of these concerns, but when there are certain instances of bullying that are linked in some way with suicide, that we recognize the role other factors like mental health could play in them.

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Misdirection #5: Simple, Short-Term Solutions

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Why Simple, Short-Term Solutions Are Not Recommended:

- Unlikely to reduce bullying problems

VIDEO: Montage of posters

VIDEO: Show an assembly gathering at a school.

VO: Some schools address bullying as a topic on a single day during a staff training session, a parent-teacher meeting, an assembly or even in the classroom. These types of efforts can represent important initial steps of a comprehensive, long-term bullying prevention strategy, but they may not be effective in reducing bullying problems if implemented in a piecemeal way.

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A comprehensive plan is necessary to be effective.

BRADSHAW:

Independent or piecemeal types of approaches probably are really not going to be impactful. They might very well raise awareness during that one day, but they are not going to be sustainable types of efforts. So we really recommend having a more comprehensive and integrated approach that involves a variety of activities.

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Misdirections and Best Practices

BRADSHAW:

Even though there are a number of misdirections we should really try to avoid in our bullying prevention efforts, there are a number of reasons why communities and practitioners should be optimistic about the issue of bullying prevention. There are a number of best practices that have been identified. We also recognize the importance of the research documenting significant impacts of bullying on youth development and youth outcomes. So this is a critical time for us to take stock on the research and to identify what best practices and some potential strategies we should avoid.

VIDEO: happy looking kids in a hallway or outside school - Should not just be classroom or school-based settings.

VO: So how do we prevent and stop bullying? It takes a comprehensive approach to help create the right culture for children and youth. Stopbullying.gov is a resource developed by experts in the field to help develop long-term solutions that inspire a safe, respectful culture in your school and community. Visit stopbullying.gov for more information.

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Visit StopBullying.gov for more information.

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Thank you to Catherine Bradshaw, PhD, M.Ed. for contributing to this educational video.