

The Method of Shared Concern

User's Guide

Preview extracts of pages 10-11

- The Method of Shared Concern was originated by the Swedish psychologist, Dr Anatol Pikas. The video describes a version of this method as interpreted in Australia by Dr Ken Rigby (6) and enacted by practitioners who were trained by Anatol Pikas.
- The Method is essentially a **problem-solving approach** that seeks to arrive at a durable solution through a series of meetings with individual students and with groups of students. In doing so, it seeks to avoid the use of punishment.
- There is a clear, well defined process to be followed (**provide handout showing the Six Stages to everyone**). However, no two cases of bullying are identical. Students may respond differently, and practitioners (whether counsellors or teachers) need to adapt to how the students respond.
- Whilst it is not recommended that the terms 'bully' and 'victim' be used in conversation with students, for the sake of clarity they have been used in both the video and this Guide.
- The DVD is in two parts. At the end of each part we will discuss what has been viewed using a set of questions provided in this Guide.

Discussion Questions

The following is intended to facilitate discussion. After viewing each Part of the video, it would be helpful if the group leader posed the following questions. Given [in the square brackets] are suggestions about what may be said. However, don't volunteer too much by way of information too quickly as it might hamper constructive discussion. If time is limited you may choose not to cover all the questions.



Case Study One

(After viewing Part One of the video)

1. The Method first requires that relevant information about a case of bullying be gathered, **without** interviewing the victim. **What can a school do to maximise the chances that such information does come to light?** [Consider for example, the role that may be played through education about bullying in the curriculum; rigorous surveillance of places where students interact; attention to absenteeism; and the use of student helpers. (7)]
2. **How does Bill explain the purpose of the meeting?** [He emphasises his role in the school in helping children to be safe. He then explains that he is seeking help in connection with a boy (Tom) about whom he has concerns.]
3. **What attitudes did Geo and Joe have when they were first interviewed by Bill? What did Bill do to set their minds at rest?** [They appear defensive, probably expecting to be interrogated and possibly punished. Bill makes it clear that they are 'not in trouble' and that the aim is to find a joint solution.]
4. **What acknowledgments of the victim's plight were elicited during the interview with the suspected bullies? How was this done?** [Geo suggests that Tom may lack friends and Joe that Tom could feel scared. Note how Bill built upon their observations in reaching a judgment of how Tom must be feeling.]

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Appendix 3

Shared Concern Quiz

The following Quiz is intended to be **photocopied** for staff planning to use the Method in their school. The answers are provided at the end of the Quiz. It is advisable to achieve a score of at least 16/20 before using the Method with students.

Circle the answer that is closest:

1. It is considered best to gather information about the bullying initially from:
 - (a) The victim.
 - (b) Parents of the victim.
 - (c) People who have been told about it.
 - (d) People who have seen it happening.
2. In selecting the first suspected bully to interview, the practitioner should:
 - (a) Start with the suspected ringleader.
 - (b) Choose the person who seems to have been the least involved in the bullying.
 - (c) Pick at random.
 - (d) Consult with teachers.
3. In interviewing each suspected bully, after introducing yourself and explaining your role:
 - (a) Ask what he or she knows about it.
 - (b) Express concern regarding the victim's situation.
 - (c) Ask the bully whether he or she is enjoying life at school.
 - (d) Inquire as to whether the suspected bully is at all concerned about the current plight of the victim.
4. Once the suspected bully has acknowledged that the victim's situation is not so good, the practitioner should:
 - (a) Explore why the 'bully' believes that this is so.
 - (b) Ask what 'we' can do to improve the situation.
 - (c) Ask the 'bully' how he/she would feel in the victim's situation.
 - (d) Make it clear that everyone has a responsibility to help the victim.
5. If the suspected bully is not cooperating:
 - (a) Suggest that he/she knows more about the situation than he/she is prepared to admit.
 - (b) Try a new tack. For example, ask how the suspected bully and friends generally spend their leisure time together. Then come back to the victim's predicament.
 - (c) Terminate the interview and make no further arrangements to meet.
 - (d) Tell the suspected bully that you will be getting in touch with his/her parents.
6. In the course of the interview:
 - (a) Indicate that it is quite understandable that he or she would sometimes engage in bullying the 'victim'.
 - (b) Avoid blaming the bully for any action he or she has taken.
 - (c) Agree with everything the 'bully' says in justification of any bullying engaged in.
 - (d) Suggest that he/she may personally be afraid of being bullied by a member of his/her group.
7. Before interviewing the suspected bully:
 - (a) Obtain parent or guardian permission to do so.
 - (b) Make sure that you have good evidence that the 'bully' is actually guilty of the bullying offence.
 - (c) Talk over the matter with the victim.
 - (d) Do none of the above.
8. Before concluding the interview:
 - (a) Thank the 'bully' for any positive suggestions he/she has made about how the victim can be helped.
 - (b) Explain that he/she may or may not be interviewed again at a later stage.
 - (c) Indicate that he/she would be letting you down if his/her promises are not honoured.
 - (d) Mention that you are now going on to talk to the victim.