

Working with the siblings of learners with SEND

Acknowledgements

This resource is reproduced with the kind permission of East Sussex County Council Anti-Bullying Team, from their Practitioners' Toolkit: *Responding to bullying of children & young people with special educational needs and disabilities.*

Working with siblings of learners with SEND

Evidence from casework undertaken in East Sussex suggests that siblings of children with SEND are vulnerable to bullying behaviour.

All of the anti-bullying strategies outlined in the toolkit can be used with this group of young people who will require support in their own right. The session outlined below focuses on positive responses to name calling which is the most common form of bullying.



Siblings of a young person with SEND have a unique role to play in preventing and responding to bullying behaviour. They often take on a protective role and may need to learn how to intervene positively on behalf of their brother or sister to stop bullying behaviour.

Equally, where a child or young person with SEND has accessed anti-bullying training and personal development sessions, evidence suggests that these strategies are often quickly forgotten. You might be able to call upon siblings to help reinforce or reassert the anti-bullying strategies with their brother or sister.

Additionally, it is not unknown for a sibling to join in the bullying of their disabled brother or sister, for fear of being targeted themselves. If this is the case, then alternative support will need to be considered. The causes and reasons why bullying occurs can be complex.

Dealing with name calling

Outcomes

By the end of the session the young person will:

- Understand that angry or rude responses can fuel the bullying behaviour
- Understand the importance of an appropriate response
- Have some answers to practise in response to the name calling

Resources

- Copy of the deflecting name calling worksheet
- Copy of my response worksheet

IT IS GOOD PRACTICE TO INFORM PARENTS/CARERS OF THIS ACTIVITY IN ADVANCE

CONFIDENTIALITY Explain that everything that is discussed within the four sessions is private and confidential. You won't tell anyone else what you discuss in the sessions, unless you believe that the young person is at risk of harm or of harming others. If this is the case then you will have to share this information with others. However, before you do this you will tell the young person and you will **ONLY** talk to the designated Child Protection Officer about it.

You may wish to start the session off by saying that it's not uncommon for siblings of children with SEND to feel lots of different emotions related to their brother or sister.

These can include feeling:

- Protective of them
- Angry or jealous that they get more attention
- Embarrassed about them seeming different
- Worry about them, particularly about what will happen to them in the future
- Lonely or isolated
- Guilty

Ask them what has been happening to them in relation to bullying, anxieties, feelings. Listen attentively – you may be the first person who has had the time to listen and take them seriously. This can be one of the most helpful things you can do for them.

ACTIVITY 1 Scaling

Once you've talked to the young people about their feelings around bullying, and being the sibling of a young person with SEND, the scaling activity will enable you and the young person to identify possible areas to work on, while establishing where they are and where they want to be. The idea is that the young person is helped to communicate negative things in a positive way by shifting them from problem-talking to solution-talking.

On the scaling chart, ask the young person to rate on a scale of 1-10 (10 being brilliant) how happy they feel at school, at home or when they are out and about (or how confident they feel at dealing with the name calling).

Whatever they rate themselves ask them how they have reached that point.

Example, "You've rated yourself as 3. That's good. What makes you score 3 not 1? What has gone well? What else? How have you managed the bullying so far? What has worked?"

This makes them feel more positive about what they have tried so far. Ask the young person where they realistically would like to be after these sessions and how they might get there. Keep this sheet for use in further sessions.

If the young person is self-rating at 1-2, please be aware of potential mental health issues such as depression, which could be linked to, or exacerbated by, bullying.

For further information from Mencap, please visit the Anti-Bullying Information hub, or follow this link:

<http://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2008-03/Bullying%20wrecks%20lives.pdf>

ACTIVITY 2 Good and bad responses to name calling

When talking to the individual young person about name calling it is not enough to role play just the good responses, for example 'whatever', or, 'that's what you think'.

You also need to role play the bad responses and going through how the responses make your body feel, what you're thinking and what responses it provokes from the other person?

For every nasty name called go through the consequences of replying and a good/bad way. This makes the work more experiential for the young people.

Explain that showing the individual or group that you are angry or upset by the name calling can fuel the bullying behaviour, and is quite possibly the reaction they want. Explain that we all have 'soft spots' e.g. names that we don't like being called or things about us that we don't like, but once the person doing the name calling has identified these the more they will keep calling you that name.

However, trying to ignore the name calling can make us feel more upset or angry and also sends out the message that it's ok to treat you like that as you won't stick up for yourself. Therefore, we need to find a way that doesn't ignore the name calling but at the same time doesn't make things worse.

Ask the young person how they normally react to name calling.

Can their normal response make the person calling them names angry or upset?

Was the young person being nasty back as a defence reaction?

Explain that the less we react the more bored those doing the bullying behaviour will become and eventually give up.

Some young people may be quite happy to tell you what names they or their sibling with SEND are being called. However, others may be really self-conscious and embarrassed about the names they are being called.

Consequences of good and bad responses sheet.

Example of the name calling: 'Your mum's fat'

Good response	Bad response
Reply in a bored way 'Yeah whatever'	Reply in an angry way. 'Your mums fat & ugly but I'm not complaining'
Walk away	Argument starts and more insults and swearing.
I feel calm/ happy because I haven't got in to an argument.	Teacher breaks it up and makes me stand against the wall until the end of break.
I go in to my lesson calm	I feel angry and upset when I go in to class
I get on with work quickly	I don't want to do my work.
I chat to people nicely	I am angry at people who ask me what I was fighting about.
I finish the day in a good mood	I can't wait to leave school and am in a bad mood because I now have a detention.
The person that called me the name will leave me alone because they will get bored.	The person who called me the name knows I didn't like the first name and now knows how to wind me up and get me into trouble next time. Also they may have thought it was fun, but I didn't think it was.

ACTIVITY 3 Responding to name calling

You can ask the young person to write down the name(s) they are being called on a sheet of paper (help them if necessary).

Role play name calling with the young person, then get them to give a good and bad response. Then discuss how they are feeling and how the response might affect the way they interact with their peer/teacher/family.

Going through the bullying incident step by step allows the young person to recognise the long and short term consequences of the bullying behaviour and the affect it can have on them and those around them.

If the young person is unable or unwilling to tell you the names they are being called then ask them to call you some horrible names! They will find this really difficult so prompt them or tell them what to say. Ask the young people to say nasty things so that you can model 'fogging' with clever answers or by acting bored e.g. "Your hair is a mess" "I know, I'm having a bad hair day" or "Whatever"

Tailor your modelling behaviours to the capabilities of the young person you are working with. The safest (and easiest) method is to act bored: everyone can do this.

With the names that the young person is being called use the blank '**good response, bad response**' table to think of a number of positive responses they can give which they can take away and practise before the next session.

You may wish to further reinforce this activity with the young person by using the outline of the gingerbread person and getting them to draw how they feel for a good response and a bad response to the name calling.

ACTIVITY 4 Homework- out-of-class activity

Ask the young person to practise at home with their parent/carer their responses to the names they, or their sibling with SEND, are being called.

You will need to contact their parents/carers at the end of the session to let them know what the task is.

It might also be useful to let other adults who have contact with the young person know also, so that they can practise with them.

AND FINALLY... STRESS IT IS IMPORTANT TO TELL AN ADULT IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED, EVEN IF YOU DEAL WITH A NAME CALLING INCIDENT AND WALK AWAY FROM IT.

The people who are bullying just might try to bully someone else.

Help us improve this resource

If you have ideas or suggestions that would improve this resource, such as alternative statements, or adaptations to make activities more affective with younger/older learners, or in the context of specific learning difficulties, we would really welcome your suggestions and comments:

Please contact antibullying@afa3as.org.uk

ABA Information Hub: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/1198

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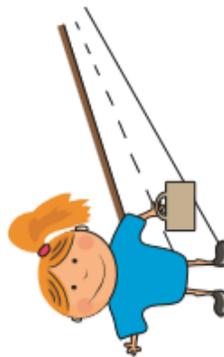
Where am I now?



Where do I want to be?



How far have I come?



PRINTABLE RESOURCES- **GOOD AND BAD RESPONSES... AND CONSEQUENCES**

Example of the name calling:

Good response	Bad response
Response:	Response:

PRINTABLE RESOURCES- **RESPONDING TO NAME CALLING**

What I'm called	My Response
	1. 2. 3.
	1. 2. 3.
	1. 2. 3.

There are many different ways of deflecting name calling without fuelling the situation. These are outlined below:

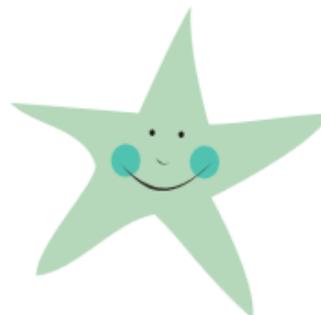
Agree (in a 'so what' manner)



- 'Yes, he's got a disability'
- 'Yeah, she can't see very well. Do you want to learn about it?'
- 'Yep, he can't walk well'

Disagree

Your ideas



Compliment your sibling with an opposite

- 'No, she's not stupid. She's actually pretty smart'

Your ideas

Agree, but

Your ideas

Act bored

- 'Whatever!'
- 'You've noticed!'
- 'That's not news to me'

