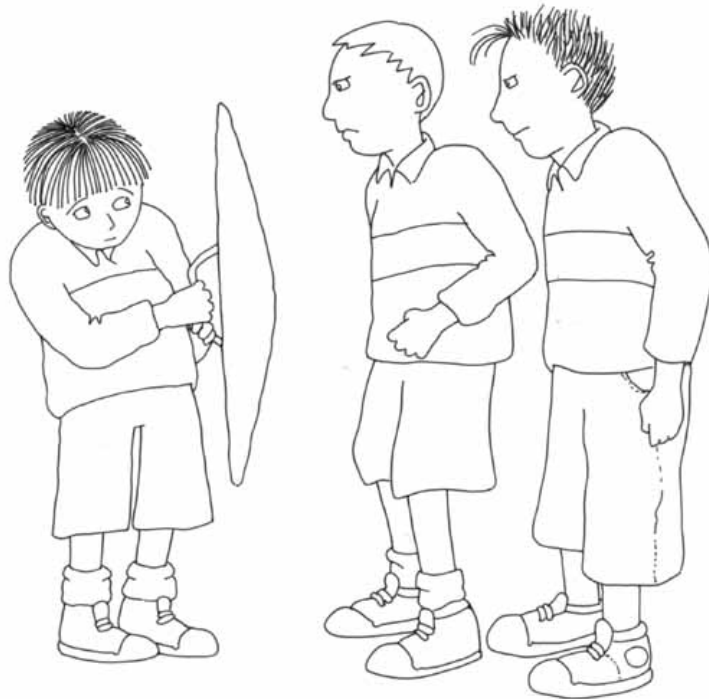


HAPPY SCHOOLS

Anti-Bullying Shield Activity



This activity is designed to help students gain back some sense of control and power in bullying situations. The concept is based on the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy strategies of cognitive restructuring (rebuilding a way of thinking about something), self-talk, problem-solving and internal representations of cognitive approaches to increase resilience.

Create the shield as part of an ongoing program to teach students about the effects of bullying on individuals and how they can protect themselves against the psychologically damaging effects of abuse.

Front of the
shield ...
the 'bad
stuff'



Inside of
the shield
... the 'good
stuff'



How to build and use the protective shield:

1. Have students design and cut out their personal shield (sample shape on page 3). They can decide on the shape and material used. However, cardboard is ideal. The shield should be about A3 size.
2. On the **outside of the shield**, have students write down all the **bad things** that are done and said to them by bullies. Make sure they are confident the examples are 'true' cases of bullying.
3. In between the statements (maybe in a different colour) have students write down how these words and actions make them **feel**. Make sure they use words such as 'sad', 'lonely', 'angry' and 'unimportant', rather than words like 'upset', which is too broad, or 'want to fight them', which is an action. Several feeling words should be recorded on the shield.
4. Take a moment to discuss how, although they often have no control over what others say or do, they *can* prevent these bad feelings getting in to hurt them.
5. On the **inside of the shield**, have students write down all the **good things** they know about themselves: what they are good at, things they like doing and self-affirming statements such as 'My family loves me', 'I have lots of friends', or 'I am a kind person'. Also add to the inside of the shield how looking at these statements makes them **feel**.
6. Discuss how they can choose whether to let the bad feelings in or whether to 'use their shield' to protect themselves.

The shield is a visual representation of cognitive strategies. The aim is to have the children **read the inside of the shield every day** to reinforce positive statements and create resilience against negative influences. Explain that it takes time for their shield to work automatically in bullying situations, so they need to practise.

An additional activity involves drawing a sword (making one may create more problems!) and writing on it more direct approaches, such as reporting the incident, walking away, ignoring, writing the incident down and reminding themselves about why bullies bully. These are

more behaviourally-based strategies and work well in the short-term, while the shield has more long-term benefits.

(The shield may be used for other incidents, like teasing and for children who simply interpret neutral situations as hurtful.)



The shield can be any size or shape ... it is the *personalised labelling and thinking* it represents that is important