



METHOD OF SHARED CONCERN

PRACTICE GUIDANCE





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This practice guidance is an extension of the Bullying Prevention module: *Effective Interventions and Support*.

It will provide you, as an educator with practical strategies to help form stronger and positive relationships in your school community and successfully undertake the Method of Shared Concern intervention.

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How to use this practice guidance:

-  Conversation starters
-  Suggested actions
-  Actions to avoid
-  Note-worthy point

There are two things that can help children and young people feel confident when reporting bullying:

1. Positive relationships with adults and peers at school – refer to the CO-LATE model practice guidance.
2. Helping children and young people to help each other. The Method of Shared Concern is one way to do this.

Using the Method of Shared Concern

The Method of Shared Concern brings together children or young people believed to be involved in a bullying situation. The aim is to disrupt the power dynamics that are reinforcing the bullying behaviours and help children and young people to help each other.

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The 5 Steps in the Method of Shared Concern are:

1. One-on-one conversation with the students involved in the bullying situation.
2. A meeting with the student impacted.
3. A follow-up conversation a few days later.
4. Facilitator to hold a group meeting.
5. Facilitator holds a final summit meeting.

One-on-one conversation with the students involved in the bullying situation

The aim is to confirm with the individuals involved that there is an issue that needs to be dealt with. It's not about seeking an admission of fault. This includes students directly involved or bystanders of the incident/s.

Things to think about:

- ✓ Separate conversations to allow for individual accounts.
- ✓ Build positive rapport with students involved and create a sense of empathy for impacted student.
- ✓ Generate a commitment to help collaboratively improve the situation.
- = "What would you like to happen if you were in X's shoes?"
- = "What actions have you seen that helps make others feel like they belong or feel safe?"
- = "What do you know about the situation? What do you think the biggest concern for X is?"
- ✗ Avoid statements like "I have heard that...." Or "Another student said...."

Meet with the student impacted

Let the child or young person know that those involved have acknowledged the situation is not good and have agreed to help.

This includes those with direct involvement as well as bystanders.

- ✓ Listen and be non-judgemental.
- ✓ Acknowledge that the situation isn't good and that you have agreed to help.
- ✓ Use open-ended questions.
- ✗ Leading questions.
- = "It is important school is a safe and happy place for everyone, and we are concerned this is happening. It's important we can all help here."

Follow-up

Follow up a few days later with the students involved to check on progress. You should do this with each student separately.

- ✓ Provide discrete supervision (for example in transition points such as the hallway or isolated places like the oval).
- ✓ Follow-up conversations with students to see if those involved have made positive changes.
- ✗ Avoid responding with consequences if students haven't played their part.

A group meeting with the impacted student

Meet with all group members together and ask each individual what they have done to improve the situation.

Points of discussion include:

- ✓ Actions they have taken.
- ✓ Observations of how the impacted student has been feeling.
- ✓ Provide positive reinforcement that is observable and specific to continue the changes.
- = "I appreciated how you included X in your team during lunch time soccer."

Hold a summit meeting which includes the young person impacted

- ! The teacher's role continues as facilitator.
- ! Give impacted student permission to leave if they feel uncomfortable.

Points of discussion include:

- ✓ Open the discussion by highlighting positive changes that have happened and how this can be built on in the future.
- ✓ Formalise an agreement with students to confirm that positive actions will continue.
- ✓ Student ownership and voice in the resolution.
- ✓ Reaffirm the positive steps each individual has taken and highlight the importance of their actions.
- = "Asking X how their weekend was seemed to really make their day! How does it feel to spread positivity like that?"