

Title:

Resolving School Bullying: Empowering Victims through Restorative Practices

Abstract:

School bullying among pupils is certainly not a new phenomenon. There is considerable evidence suggesting that continued bullying can contribute to immediate problems such as anxiety, sleeping difficulties, or playing truant, and long-term problems such as study difficulties, low self-esteem or depression. Research evidence shows that when students encounter bullying, they often do not tell the full truth when the bullying comes to the attention of the authorities and may sometimes take revenge afterward. Unresolved school bullying problems are often a precursor of school violence and delinquency. There are cases where both perpetrators and victims are often classmates before the violent act occurs and physical violence is often a result of either the continuing bullying or revenge taken against the bullies by the victim. Apparently, bullying affects a substantial number of pupils in all schools. This paper discusses effective ways for breaking the cycle of revenge by restorative practices. Restorative practices are being regarded as useful options for dealing with bullying. They focus on taking bullies accountable to what they have done but at the same time strengthening social bonds to prevent pupils, either bullies or victims, from feeling isolated from or rejected by the school community. With real cases illustration, the paper discusses how restorative practices are used to empower victims assert their rights and resolve the conflicts. The paper concludes that restorative practices seem to be compatible with Chinese culture in that they emphasize guanxi and harmony comes first.

Biography:

Dennis S.W. Wong, PhD, is currently Professor of Criminology at the Department of Applied Social Sciences, and Associate Dean of College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, City University of Hong Kong. His areas of expertise include juvenile delinquency, bullying studies, and restorative justice. Prof Wong is honorary consultant on youth drugs abuse, school bullying, and offenders' rehabilitation for governmental organizations. He also serves as board member for a number of non-governmental organizations and academic societies. He is currently a member of Executive Board of Asian Criminological Society. He is a well-known criminologist in the Greater China region. Apart from publishing articles in local and international journals, he has published books related to criminology, juvenile delinquency, school bullying, alternative to prosecution, and restorative justice.

