

Title of Session: School Counselors - Safe Schools

Moderator: Barbara Muller-Ackerman

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Room: On Tap Café

BJ: but, since many of you are apparently new to Tapped In, may I do a little housekeeping?

BJ: first, you might want to go to the Actions menu in the top right of the chat window and click on DETACH

BJ: that will make your chat window larger and easier to read

AmberLM: I am just trying to explore and get a grip on the different uses of tapped in. I am just going to read for a bit . I am a K5 teacher. Thanks for the tip

BJ: Barbara may show you some web sites...

JonathanDB: Cool!!!!

BJ: when she does, she'll enter a url which will appear as a hyperlink

BJ: when you click on the hyperlink a new window will open for you

BJ: I also recommend that you read the 10 steps to having a successful chat in Tapped In

BJ . o O (strongly recommend)

BJ: to find the 10 steps, reattach your chat window

BarbaraMu joined the room.

BJ: and go to NOTES on the blue menu on the left of your screen

BJ: Take a moment to read those steps...it will help you enjoy this chat a lot more.

BJ waves hi to Barbara

BJ: Welcome to Tonight's discussion for school safety

BJ: our discussion leader is Barbara Muller Ackerman

BarbaraMu: Hi- I'm Barbara Muller-Ackerman, an elementary counselor in NJ and moderator- thanks BJ

BJ: can you please introduce yourselves so that she has some idea of her audience?

KathyFo: I work as a trainer, but want to keep my teacher certification current which is why I'm here.

DanyelK: Hello, I am an elementary Spanish teacher in MN

ShannanM: I'm a teaching fellow at UH working on a teaching certification in P.E.

AmandaG: I'm a high school English teacher in VA

DanyelK: Am I in the right place for the school counselors school safety discussion?

BJ: looks like you have quite a variety of participants, Barbara

BJ: yes, Danyel

BarbaraMu: Okay- the topic for tonight is Safe Schools and, while there a lot of different areas we could talk about, since we are so diverse, I wonder if there is any particular interest

BarbaraMu: Bullying rather than crisis management?

KathyFo: I've been working on a teacher inservice on bullying prevention.

BarbaraMu: This past week was National Safe Schools Week. Did anyone have anything happen at their campus to acknowledge the week?

AmandaG: no

KathyFo: not aware of any other than say "no" to drugs

ShannanM: not that I know of

DanyelK: no - I wasn't aware

BJ: gosh, Barbara...sounds like national safe schools week needs better publicity!

BarbaraMu: Say no to drugs tends to come up during this week which is Red Ribbon Week-

BarbaraMu: focuses on anti drug and healthy lifestyle messages

ShannanM: I did see the DARE people at Wal- Mart

BJ: Hi, Luther. Welcome to the Safe Schools discussion

BJ: was there a particular topic that safe school's week addressed?

LutherW: HI. Sorry I'm late. Parent conference night.

BarbaraMu: Last week was Safe Schools Week...but, if we would like to focus on Bullying, the government just launched this site this summer. Take a look around at <http://www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.org>

ShannanM: Is it true that the DARE organization has gone bankrupt?

AmandaG: it can up as page not found for me.

ShannanM: the page cannot be displayed

KathyFo: think I've been to that site but it wouldn't come up for me now either. even holding ctrl

BarbaraMu: No- DARE has had some bad press but it is not bankrupt

KathyFo: in your opinions can bullying occur just one time or does it have to be repeated to be bullying?

BarbaraMu: Has anyone been able to access the site?

ShannanM: Oh- someone told me that..... cannot access the site

KathyFo: can't access that link tonite

BJ can't open it

BarbaraMu: With any behavior we are usually looking at a pattern of behavior- but some behavior is so inappropriate, or our message is so strong (zero tolerance) that once is enough to warrant intervention

DanyelK: I can't get it either

BarbaraMu: School counselors tend to be proactive so lessons are often conducted in classrooms in order to get the information out

BJ: try this: <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp>

KathyFo: glad to know it that it need not be repeated

BarbaraMu: <http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/>

BarbaraMu: Looks as though the government decided to simplify the link!

BJ: you go to a different link with <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp>

BJ . o O (which is the government site)

ShannanM: BJ can always fix it!

ShannanM -)

BarbaraMu: I agree!

BJ: the .com site is by a private person

BJ: which one did you want us to look at, Barbara?

BarbaraMu: There is a lot of information on both- most of the bullying sites are also now being produced to disseminate multilingual information

ShannanM: I prefer the one we can open

ShannanM -)

KathyFo: another question. much of the info I read indicates bullying is worse in elementary and middle school than high school. but most statistics look at 6th grade. Any info about younger ages?

BarbaraMu: They are also more and more interactive. Try this one...and then let's come back and talk about it a little bit. <http://www.talk-helps.com>

BarbaraMu: The site that BJ gave was the govt site but the one with the .com has a good powerpoint presentation that you can share with students. The free presentation is on the bottom right hand side.

BarbaraMu: Everybody back?

BJ is back

DanyelK: I'm back

ShannanM: o.k. I didn't see the other site.... where the presentation was

KathyFo: I'm back

BarbaraMu: that was the stopbullyingnow.com site

LutherW: Has anyone encountered techno (conference call) or cyber bullying?

BarbaraMu: if you click on the "free PowerPoint" it will launch into it

ShannanM: I guess I can try it later.... the page won't open for me

BarbaraMu: Cyber bullying is a huge topic right now because it is so insidious...

BarbaraMu: it's very anonymous and kids are emboldened by that

BarbaraMu: The laws are changing to try to keep up

ShannanM: we are having problems with that in my area now because of blogger.com

KathyFo: since I couldn't access the .com one, I'll try it later, too.

DanyelK: what is blogger.com

BarbaraMu: NJ has a particularly stringent law on bullying now- and schools are being asked to mandatorily report acts of bullying as you would report child abuse cases

ShannanM: high school kids are blogging and creating nasty messages about other students

KathyFo: go NJ!

ShannanM: it was on the 6'oclock news

DanyelK: what is blogging?

BJ: blogging is using web logs to post information.

BarbaraMu: They are online journals more or less

ShannanM: a site where you can post message about anything you want

DanyelK: ok - thanks

BarbaraMu: stream of consciousness or just spewing about a topic

ShannanM: and it's free

BarbaraMu: You have probably also heard that cell phones, with photo features, are also causing huge problems and adding to the bullying

ShannanM: well it can be used in a negative way, so how do you prevent that?

BarbaraMu: With all bullying, the message has to be clear and enforced...do you know a lot of districts doing that?

ShannanM: don't know

BarbaraMu: When we had Columbine and the threat of violence was so acute, there was zero tolerance around weaponry...but the message now is that sticks and stones can break my bones and words can really hurt me

ShannanM: not where I have taught

BarbaraMu: Sometimes, school staff chooses to ignore the comments being made

BarbaraMu: Sometimes, they participate through sarcasm

BarbaraMu: The message needs to be really clear about what will and wont be tolerated when it comes to how we treat one another

BarbaraMu: There are some excellent films for students on bullying.

DanyelK: but what is a staff member to do? there are so many rude comments made throughout the day...

BarbaraMu: The broken toy and joey are two of them

KathyFo left the room (signed off).

BJ: you don't have to allow the comments in your classroom, Danyel

BarbaraMu: What is the consequence for this particular infraction? If it's a rule in the class or the school, then what is the logical consequence when the rule is broken?

BarbaraMu: We are also doing a lot more to teach about the bully-victim-bystander paradigm

BarbaraMu: The power of the students who stand by and watch and do nothing is being addressed much more

ShannanM: first thing would be to make the student aware

BarbaraMu: At the high school level, some of this is done through history class through the Facing History, Facing Ourselves curriculum. <http://www.facinghistory.org>

ShannanM: that their actions will not be tolerated

LutherW: Kids can be taught appropriate behaviors, and enlisting bystanders in non-tolerance of bullying seems effective, but what do you do with teachers who use intimidation as a management technique?

BarbaraMu: Not a lot. I believe very strongly that the teacher needs to be modeling what it is that we want to see.

BarbaraMu: I don't think younger children understand sarcasm and it leaves them in an emotionally unsafe environment.

ShannanM: that teacher will learn the hard way.... that intimidation doesn't work in the long run

BarbaraMu: Same with intimidation. What are we teaching with that message?

BarbaraMu: We need to create schools which are emotionally and physically safe for students.

ShannanM: so what is your suggestion for that type of infraction?

BarbaraMu: When you take on any behavior, you have to have multiple and coordinated approaches

BarbaraMu: Think about the character education movement- that is done through integration in the curriculum, through assemblies, through visual messages on bulletin boards and posters, through creating a like language that all staff uses

BarbaraMu: Bullying falls under character education efforts, it correlates really well with history and bullies over time that you can point to (antithetical to our studying heroes)

ShannanM: how long has this character education movement been around?

BarbaraMu: Counselors run lessons on conflict resolution, enlist peer mediators, run small groups on anger management, teach harassment prevention and enlist law enforcement in team taught lessons

KathyFo: sounds like an interesting connection to history. hadn't thought of it like that.
BJ . o O (Barbara did a discussion on character ed. The transcript is in the archives at www.tappedin.org/transcripts)

BarbaraMu: Character Education, has been reconstituted with different names over time. In the past two presidential administrations, it has been a national ed priority

ShannanM: it's a great idea but I don't see it being used like it could be

BarbaraMu: We have 10 minutes left...are there any specific questions on safe schools or bullying that you want to talk about? Anything you may have seen on the web sites?

BarbaraMu: There is a wonderful author- Jane Bluestein- who has great handouts on emotional safety including a great checklist that a campus could look at in assessing its climate http://www.janebluestein.com/counselors/coun_frameset.html

BarbaraMu: I didn't give the url to the specific checklist on emotional safety because Jane has a lot of articles about discipline and boundaries that are valuable as well.

KathyFo: any stats on bullying in elementary aside from 6th grade which is often middle school age?

BarbaraMu: click specifically on handouts

BarbaraMu: In NJ, the department of bias crimes took on bullying. They looked at stats in the state and decided that the major group causing the reported cases were 10-18 year old males

BarbaraMu: that's why they have tightened the reporting from the schools

KathyFo: did they look at stats on relational aggression which is harder to detect?

BarbaraMu: the ones who have a chance to impact on this group are the schools- so they are upping the ante on what we do with bully prevention

ShannanM: what affect has this education program had on gangs?

BarbaraMu: I don't know that they do but counselors certainly do- especially among the 5/6 grade females!

BarbaraMu: whole other groups!

BarbaraMu: If you want to read more on that, Rachel Simmons Odd Girl Out and Odd Girl Speaks Out, and Queen Bees and Wannabes are incredible for this!

BJ wonders about the stats on males. At a recent conference I attended there was information on the increase in female gang members and their criminal activity which, I assume would include bullying

BJ . o O (the conference was in NJ)

ShannanM: I know a lot of kids are bullied into joining gangs in Houston

ShannanM: And I haven't seen the Gang Prevention programs working

BarbaraMu: I think that if you ask any group of kids or adults about bullying, you would see that almost all hands go up...

BarbaraMu: that they have been bullied.

ShannanM: I'm sure

KathyFo: kids so want to belong. it's hard to combat that.

BarbaraMu: I guess the reality is that we can say that the programs aren't working...and give up...or find and create more and better programs...which we have to do since we can't give up on the kids.

ShannanM: that's true

BarbaraMu: There are lots of programs schools take on in a half hearted way.

BarbaraMu: Or they are the program of the week

BarbaraMu: til the next one comes in

ShannanM: now that's the real problem

BarbaraMu: You really need to have some serious talks in faculty meetings about whether it's a priority or not, is everyone on board or not, what the standard of conduct is...and what won't be allowed.

KathyFo: Our elementary school does a good job with character ed, but what at higher grades is done? My kids are too young for me to know firsthand. Does character ed. continue?

BarbaraMu: Then it's up to everyone to make it happen...maybe that's unrealistic but what is being allowed to happen right now isn't working and isn't acceptable.

BJ: Thanks so much, Barbara, for taking time out of your busy schedule to lead this discussion tonight.

BJ: And thank you, everyone for being such a great group!

ShannanM: thanks for the info

BarbaraMu: There is a ton of funding for character ed...In NJ, where we have been funded for the past 5 years, we started at the early childhood campus and then brought it into the 1-4 building, then MS, then HS

KathyFo: Absolutely. Thanks very much. Great websites and thoughts.

BarbaraMu: Next month...a week earlier.

BJ: Barbara's next session will be on November 17

BarbaraMu: If anyone has an interest in any particular subject, I would be more than happy to get information together.

ShannanM: o.k. see you later

BarbaraMu: If there is still interest in character ed, we can revisit that

LutherW: Thanks, all.

BarbaraMu: Good night all

BarbaraMu: Thanks BJ

ShannanM: waves bye