THRESHOLD PROBLEM: RELUCTANCE OF PUPILS TO REPORT SCHOOL BULLYING INCIDENTS

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Bullying incidents exist in the school. The strong conviction of school anti-bullying program implementation does not guarantee that these cases will not happen in the school vicinity. However, it hinders alibi or an excuse for school administrators and teachers not seriously following the directives of the Department of Education on its policy about school-related bullying incidents. Diaz (2015) recounted that there were 5,236 cases of bullying in 2013 in both public and private schools in basic education in the Philippines. Continuous manifestation and existence of bullying cannot just be blamed for school implementation of bullying-related policy but on lack of cooperation between victims through reporting the cases. The main concern what drives pupils to be reluctant in reporting their bullying experiences in the school?

Although school administrators and teachers have the primary responsibility for creating positive school climates that encourage students to report bullying cases, pupils still deter form reporting those cases to school authorities despite their sincerest desire to help and to intervene. According to Cortes and Kochenderfer-lad (2014), pupils’ hesitation in reporting bullying incidents directs to the perception of the pupils towards their teachers and school personnel’s action towards bullying cases. These are ignoring the incident, advice of assertion, and the treat of involving parents. These factors influence the reluctance of pupils in reporting bullying experiences in the school vicinity.

Ignoring the Incident. The advice of just ignoring the perpetrators’ bullying is a passive reaction to the incident. The typical reaction psychologically instills frustration and a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel. Pupils entrust themselves to
the care of their teachers while they are in school. On this premise lies the responsibility of teachers to see that all pupils under his or her supervision need to be in a safe environment free from any form of harm (Stop Bullying Now, 2005). They need to secure that at all times, the situation is beneficial to learning and fitted to intellectual and emotional development. Therefore, it times of bullying incidents, teachers have to have firm, bureaucratic but humane actions towards bullying incidents. Victims have to feel the teachers’ concern through an active but diplomatic action wherein the wellbeing of both victims and perpetrators will be safeguarded.

**Advice of Assertion.** Advice to just assert himself or herself in this kind of situation will not solve the problem of bullying. It is the responsibility of the adult to intervene to try to stop the bullying incidents in the school vicinity (Volpe, Permenter, Kreiger, Burgdorf, & Lewis, 2004). Teachers who ignore bullying risk having their pupils the feeling abandoned by them. It is important that teachers to let their pupils know that it is not okay to be bullied, harassed or terrorized by anybody. This stresses that it is equally important is for the pupils to know that teachers are there to help, to support and to be always available as a source of support. Asking the victim to just to assert himself or herself is an indirect blamed for what is happening to them. Encouragement to handle the situation for his or her own may is not helpful especially when the pupil does not know what to do.

**Threat of Involving the Parents.** It is the right of the parent to be informed about their children’s involvement in bullying incidents. However, this needs to be done constructively and professionally preventing to lead in any scandalous effect. In the Filipino context, to be summoned in the school because of misbehavior is a form of humiliation. Psychologically, this may lead to continuous victimization and bullying incidents for both victims and bullies (McCleary, 2011). For the victim, dialogue for the parents needs to be focused to provide direct supportive and assertive care. On the other hand, for the bullies, it needs to be a constructive approach giving them a chance to
amend their actions. Telling the pupils that their parents to be called in the school for the occurrence of bullying will not help and solve the problem. But teachers are duty-bound to inform them about the situation.

It is not good to be bullied. The occurrence of these incidents in the school needs for active and responsive actions of the teachers and other school authorities. Teachers and school authorities are mandated to prevent and intervene in these school-related problems (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2016). It is because bullying has a detrimental effect on both victim and perpetrators’ health, social, psychological well-being and learning. Thus, school as safe abode and haven giving no room for loneliness, unhappy and frightened experiences. The efforts will convince pupils to freely report bullying that leads to immediate intervention and prevention.

References:
Stop Bullying Now. (2005). What to do if your child is is being bullied. HRSA, 9–16. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-09001-3_2