

Resource review

Bullying: You can make a difference.

respectme, Glasgow, 2009. 12pp.

Free of charge

The title of the leaflet stands as the bold claim made by *respectme*, Scotland's anti-bullying service, which is designed to be a practical guide for parents and carers. It delivers as it intends to.

The booklet starts off usefully by defining what bullying behaviour is and the effects of this on a child or young person's health and wellbeing. It asserts rightly that bullying affects whole families and communities.

Throughout the booklet, a non-labelling approach is taken so that neither the person being bullied at that point in time, nor the person who is bullying, feels 'stuck' with this label and then has difficulty moving on from it. There is a balanced perspective given when the needs of someone who is bullying are addressed as well as those of the person being bullied.

As promised, practical advice is given throughout, in terms of 'active listening' to those involved, ascertaining types of behaviours and possible reasons for these, what to say to, and do for, the person being bullied and the person bullying, who to approach in a young person's life (for example school staff, youth workers, or neighbours). Advice is given also on what not to do: anything the young person does not wish to be done at a given point in time. This could be agreed with wholeheartedly if it were not for the fact that there are, and will always be, circumstances in which a young person's right to have another's behaviour kept quiet will need to be overridden.

It is right that it has been stressed that being listened to may be all that a young person wishes for. This may be for a number of reasons: the fear of reprisals, being seen as a 'grass,' or a sense that an adult could make things worse. It is therefore useful that this booklet contains such practical advice and cautions.

It also reminds us that as adults involved in the lives of young people, we have the responsibility and the power to tackle issues of bullying by seeking changes in policies and procedures in particular institutions (schools are mentioned, but surely in residential child care also) as well as personally through role modelling by the example we set in our behaviours as parents and carers.

The booklet provides the reader with contact numbers and websites for use by both young people and adults affected by bullying behaviour. It finally reminds us that as adults we can make a difference and we are needed to do so.

SIRCC works in partnership with *respectme* and is represented on the Scottish Government's anti-bullying Steering Group so it is well committed to this cause. *respectme* has given useful direction and advice to SIRCC in the development of anti-bullying initiatives such as specialist training. The publication of such useful material as this guide for parents and carers, and the more recent booklet, *Cyberbullying*, enables SIRCC to keep up-to-date on the best of practice in anti-bullying work.

The leaflet is available free of charge from [www.respectme.org.uk//publications/publications_introduction/publications_introduction.html](http://www.respectme.org.uk/publications/publications_introduction/publications_introduction.html).

Mike Sutherland
Lecturer
SIRCC