

CITY OF BURNABY

FAMILY COURT AND YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: SYMPOSIUM ON BULLYING PREVENTION SUMMARY REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council receive this report for information purposes.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to Burnaby School Board, 5325 Kincaid Street, Burnaby, B.C. and all symposium participants as well as those who attended the 2000 October 19 community forum held at Michael J. Fox Theatre.
3. **THAT** Council authorize the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee to plan meetings in the four quadrants of Burnaby to obtain further public input in the development of bullying prevention strategies.

R E P O R T

The Family Court and Youth Justice Committee, at its meeting held on 2001 July 25, received and endorsed the *attached* summary report regarding the 2001 March 10 Symposium on Bullying held at Burnaby Lake Pavilion. Arising from discussion, the Committee requested that a copy of the report be forwarded to Burnaby School Board for information purposes as well as all symposium participants and those who attended the 2000 October 19 community forum held at Michael J. Fox Theatre. In addition, the Committee requested Council authorization to plan meetings in the four quadrants of Burnaby to obtain further public input in the development of bullying prevention strategies. Once approval to prepare a meeting plan is received, it is the intention of the Committee to prepare a further report outlining the format, participation and funding requirements for these events.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Alison Joe
Chair

Dr. Stanley Jung
Vice Chair

: COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIR. PLNG. & BLDG.

Councillor N. Harris
Member

SYMPOSIUM ON BULLYING PREVENTION

SUMMARY REPORT

March 10, 2001

The first Preamble statement (of Bill C-7: The Youth Criminal Justice Act as of February 2001) holds that the community shares a responsibility to deal with the developmental needs of young persons and to guide them to adulthood.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Symposium on Bullying Prevention held March 10, 2001 could not have taken place without the enthusiastic support of volunteers from the Burnaby School District, Burnaby RCMP, Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services and the people who composed the panel who initiated discussion: Julia Li, Student Representative, North Burnaby Senior Secondary; Cst. Lorin Lopetinsky, Burnaby RCMP; Bonnie Mason, Burnaby Youth Services; Lola Chapman, Ridge Meadows Youth Justice Advocacy Program; Hersimer Johl, Teacher Representative, North Burnaby Senior Secondary; Shaheen Shariff, SFU Centre of Education Law & Society. Most importantly, the 80 people who gave up a Saturday and brought their sincere wish to shape a community that would keep all children safe from bullying must be acknowledged for their patience, participation and faith that their involvement in the process will make a difference.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Family Court and Youth Justice Committee of Burnaby City Council sought from the City Council permission to organize a second stage event to share information, gather the perspective of the community, and seek opinions from the community that might inform the political and bureaucratic process in plans to address issues of bullying. For a definition of bullying, please refer to Addendum 1.

This document results from the second stage event and contains a brief history of the first stage of the community consultation process, a description of the organization of the day, information regarding the sources of public input and the process for formatting the responses and the discussion groups responses to questions posed. The role of youth justice committees as described by the Young Offenders Act (section 69) can be part of further community discussion once a clearer understanding of that act can be made.

HISTORY

The brief history of this community process involves the first stage taking the shape of a Community Forum on Bullying. This was an evening event held Thursday, October 19, 2000 at the Michael J. Fox Theatre and was a joint effort between the Burnaby School District and the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee of Council. Close to 200 people attended to hear keynote speakers, Dr. Debra Pepler, professor of psychology at York University, and Drs. David Moore and John McDonald, Transformative Justice Australia, who emphasized that old line methods of dealing with bullying by focusing on only the bully and victim are just not enough.

The speakers outlined a technique for dealing with bullying called community conferencing (similar to a Transformative Justice Process). A community conference brings together the offender, victim and their respective support groups along with a trained facilitator. The facilitator ensures that each participant is given an opportunity to say how they feel about what happened. At this point, the person who caused the harm is more likely to accept responsibility for their behaviour because they have a fuller understanding of the consequences of the behaviour.

Evaluation forms turned in at the end of the evening raised a number of issues primarily asking for clarification of the community consultation process/transformative justice process and, secondly, there were questions regarding when and how such a process could be implemented in Burnaby. Subsequently, the Committee forwarded a report to Council on 20th of November 2000 summarizing results of the community forum. Arising from the discussion, Council authorized the Committee to make plans for a one day public symposium to discuss options and strategies available to the community to address this issue.

The Family Court and Youth Justice Committee planned a day long symposium available to anyone who wished to attend (those involved in the lives of young people and interested in working toward a safer community for children) but particularly inviting parents, teachers, childcare workers, parks and recreation youth program coordinators and parent education instructors.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DAY

A panel consisting of a High School teacher, a student, a member of SFU Faculty of Education, an RCMP school liaison officer, Maple Ridge Restorative Justice Co-ordinator and the Burnaby Youth Services Coordinator initiated discussion by expressing their role in the dynamic lives of our communities' young people.

Approximately 80 attendants, being seated in working groups of 8, were then posed three discussion questions:

1. What needs to change, for whom?
2. What must be done to enable these changes?
3. How can we make these happen? (Who must do what)...identify the key success factors of beneficial change.

The working groups selected a scribe to document the groups' responses and a spokesperson to articulate those responses to the group at large.

PROCESS FOR COLLATING INFORMATION

Information for this report was sourced from flip chart notes responding to the questions posed to the working groups, verbal reports made by spokespeople at the end of the day, comments made by participants throughout the day and comments made on returned evaluation sheets. Responses varied from social directives to the community as a whole, for example, the need for "more role modelling" to responses that were more specific and directed to a sector of public service, for example, the need for "parenting programs to be available for everyone".

Responses to the questions posed were grouped to address areas of services and social structures the comments were designed to inform. Attention was paid in the composition of this document to coordinate these comments in a manner which will facilitate ongoing discussion. The comments addressed school, community services and agencies, policing, justice, family dynamics and broad community culture issues. While bullying is a complex issue, so is community discussion. In part, the difficulty of discussion is the same difficulty in documenting. For example, when working groups discussed what they were looking for in the school system the conversation was seldom isolated to the school system but often strayed into discussion of family dynamics or policing. This can be attributed to the finding that in many cases discussion involved the quality of the relationship between the school, the family, the police and the justice system rather than the school in isolation. In creating this document the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee hopes to capture the exact nature of the more clearly articulated comments and the essence of the more abstract aspects of the discussion.

The following headings: school, community services and agencies, policing, justice, and family dynamics and broad community culture issues, address attempts to summarize community issues in a manner which will provide a framework for ongoing discussion. While some readers may feel an issue is overstated or there are aspects not touched on in this report, the Committee would like to remind the reader that the March 10th symposium was intended to be the first of a series of ongoing community discussions and that full participation will ensure inclusive development of community culture.

SCHOOLS

There appeared to be instances of little support for a “zero tolerance” policy for bullying as it exists within the Burnaby School system. The current policy may mean that anyone found bullying would be suspended. Perhaps, in some instances, teachers may overlook emotional bullying: verbal, exclusion, rumour and gossip. The idea that every school was able to set its own procedure for managing incidents was made less acceptable by the idea that two incidents in the same school may not be dealt with in the same manner. A number of groups expressed real concern not only with the idea that some incidents may be overlooked completely but, further, that a teacher might give tacit consent to a bully or may even be the bully. Most working groups looked for a policy that was Burnaby wide where everyone would be aware of the process and that process would be designed to “restore” the community, support children and families.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND AGENCIES

Most groups supported the idea of Parenting Programs as embedded in culture as prenatal classes. It was broadly discussed that parents need to have good parenting skills in order to develop the tools children need to enable them to handle various social encounters. Those who anticipate taking on a parenting role should be provided the opportunity to access a parenting program.

Without including a directory of services available through Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, various Ministries or the wide variety of agencies, this report should mention the participants’ desire to see better access to health services, programs designed to develop conflict resolution skills, problem solving skills and better education and public understanding as to causes of the bullying dynamic.

Also appropriate to this category were concerns regarding home-alone or latch key children although these concerns would best be directed to the Ministry of Children and Families.

POLICING

Comments ranged from police and justice processes for dealing with incidents of bullying to directives to the RCMP as to what the participants would like to see in policing policy. The latter involved a desire for a higher pedestrian policing presence. In 1995 the Burnaby RCMP, with the support of Council, moved to a service delivery model that was community based and focussed on problem solving. The City of Burnaby was divided into four distinct policing districts. Each now has community based officers and school liaison officers working from Community Police offices in the following areas: District 1 - Northwest District (Hastings/Brentwood), District 2 - Northeast District (Lougheed/Kensington), District 3 - Southeast District (Edmonds/Kingsway), and District 4 - Southwest District (Willingdon/Kingsway). As well, a bike patrol is shared among the four districts. It is likely that the school liaison officers offer the most hope in addressing the wishes of

the symposium participants for more involved and integrated policing. The desired “process” for dealing with bullying was expressed by one group as a community wide understanding that bullying with criminal intent was criminal whether the incident occurred in a school yard, public place or on private property. It was further noted that incidents of bullying with a criminal element should be dealt with by the police rather than schools. Because the criminality of bullying would be recognized the venue for the community conferencing/restorative justice process should be removed from schools but should remain within the community. Community Police Stations were suggested as a venue to impress upon all involved both the elevation of the process and the community commitment to “restore” justice.

JUSTICE

Response was favourable in support of a process that combined the existing Burnaby Youth Services and the Ridge Meadows Youth Justice Advocacy Program. The challenge of funding such a program was addressed with the instruction to the civic officials to lobby the Attorney General’s office provincially and the Ministry of Justice federally for funding this important community initiative.

FAMILY DYNAMICS AND BROAD COMMUNITY CULTURE ISSUES

It was expressed that children who are likely targets of bullies might feel excluded from something difficult to articulate. With respect, the committee begs to suggest that this might be about varying degrees of citizenship; that some children have more “status” (and this requires that others have “less” status) in the school environment or in the community as a whole. While this status equity is extremely subtle, young people are very sensitive to the dynamic and some will find ways to ensure they fall on the plus side of the scale while others become less assured as they realize there are no “rules” in this contest. In fact, that there is a contest, that cannot even be discussed.

Many of the suggestions coming out of this symposium for community based programs and workshops etc. could be interpreted as a need to understand more about how community culture is developed and what the understanding of families within communities might be when schools use terms such as “child centered” and we have Ministries that present as child advocates. Families may develop a shell around themselves when it is felt that the family culture does not match the community culture.

Ministries and agencies might be acknowledged as facilitators to the desires of community culture and not as developers of culture. This may be more clearly illustrated when we look at the role of Police and the Justice System where processes come into play after the crime has been committed. The task of creating an environment where all children are kept within a safety net of community culture falls to the community as a whole. Requests of symposium participants for a place for a dialogue concerning community culture could be interpreted as an understanding that the weaving of that safety net should begin on the framework of the community.

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Responses to the questions posed to the participants illustrated the concern of the community regarding bullying. Discussion throughout the day of the symposium led us to believe that much of the concern exists not just in what is done in our schools, police force, justice process, agencies etc. but in the relationship between children, families and these public services. It was broadly felt that there were some children and families that needed more support or services but were seldom identified. Many agency programs are designed for clients referred by the Ministry of Children and Families but these programs are not necessarily well known or accessed by the broad community.

Following the symposium the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee noted that the role of police and justice is to intervene once a crime has been committed and to restore justice. What many of us heard at the symposium was the desire to see a process that would guide children away from behaviour detrimental to themselves and the community. This Committee would like to follow the suggestion that we continue to meet with the community and develop community based solutions. Issues for discussion would include:

- more community based representation from parents in discussion sessions and policy development;
- the effect that Bill C-7: The Youth Criminal Justice Act, once passed, will have on our community;
- the possibility of combining the existing Burnaby Youth Services with the Ridge Meadows Youth Justice Advocacy Program involving community volunteers;
- the possibility of recommending that Burnaby School Board implement a Burnaby wide Community Conferencing process (modelled after the Restorative Justice Process).

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Alison Joe
CHAIR

Dr. Stanley Jung
VICE CHAIR

Councillor Nancy Harris
Member

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is a form of aggression in which there is an imbalance of power between the bully and victim. The bully (or bullies) is always more powerful than the victim (or victims).

Bullying can be physical, verbal and/or psychological. It can be direct (face-to-face) or indirect (behind someone's back). Indirect bullying includes exclusion and gossip.

The key elements of bullying are:

- Power imbalance
- Bully's intent to harm
- Victim's distress
- Repeated over time (reputations and power differential become consolidated).

Bullying Behaviours

Forms of Bullying Behaviours		
Behavioural Category	Of Concern	Of Serious Concern
Physical Aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pushing • shoving • spitting • kicking • hitting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • threatening with a weapon • defacing property • stealing
Verbal Aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mocking • name-calling • giving dirty looks • teasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intimidating telephone calls • racist, sexist, or homophobic taunting • daring another to do something dangerous • verbal threats against property • verbal threats of violence or inflicting bodily harm • coercion • extortion
Social Alienation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gossiping • embarrassing • setting up a student to look foolish • spreading rumours • excluding from group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inciting hatred • racist, sexist, or homophobic alienation • setting up someone to take the blame • public humiliation • malicious rumour spreading