

LISTENING TO FAMILIES > BULLYING

Bullying

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1. What is bullying?

Hi, I'm Erin Kate, and I'm going to be asking questions on behalf of parents. Hi, I'm Uri Guy, I'm a child psychiatrist and care for services. Kia ora, I'm Katie Hoek, and I'm a child and family psychologist. Kia ora Koutou, ko Greg Tapa Moa. I'm Greg, I work for, I'm a father, I'm a husband, father, and I work for Restorative Schools. I work across the motu around using restorative practices, particularly around bullying, and wider than that as well. Awesome thanks guys. So today we're going to have a chat about bullying. So what is bullying? So the most accepted definition of bullying is intentional use of power and balance in order to hurt someone.

Usually, repeatedly, not always. Usually there's a goal behind it, which we can probably talk about. We'll talk about it a bit later, but that's the basic definition. And it's important in the future as well to see what's considered bullying and what is not. So, definitely. And so, what are the different types of bullying? We could, just if we go into that one, another way of looking at bullying, I agree with Uri's comment, is separating between bullying and unkind and mean. And I think we get mixed up with those words sometimes. And my son says, "my brother bullied me because he broke his lego". No, no, he didn't bully him.

He was unkind. You know, and so really helping young people and parents understand what is the difference between bullying and unkind behavior and mean behavior is really important, you know. And for me, working in schools, what we find, I found it at a school actually in Palmerston North, they said, doing something to someone and you didn't mean to, that's unkind. Right. Doing something intentionally, repeatedly, when you've been asked not to, that's bullying. So, sometimes having really clear definitions around what we say it is and isn't, because bullying is one of those emotionally charged words that when it's thrown out, we often react.

And so, working out whether it's mean, unkind, or bullying is a fine line, fine balance, and I agree with what Uri said. Sometimes, more often than not, it's repeated when you've been asked not to. However, occasionally, I agree, it is when it's not repeated, it's incidentally bad, those situations. Yes. Really, thank you for that comment, because I thought that it will come into the next questions, but it's a really, really important point. And there's an example I thought about that just corresponds with that, because if the group of friends are going somewhere and excludes another friend, it's not bullying if they just, they don't want him with them.

Mm-hmm. Fine, but if they make sure that this kid knows that they are going somewhere without him, then that's intentional hurt, and this is bullying. Another, and again, if we use the same definition in a short, simple, clear manner, it can help us kind of, and it's relevant, I think, repeatedly in different examples. Another example I thought about is, if a neurodivergent kid is being hustled by a group of other kids that kind of circle around him, around them, and start calling them names, and they are so wound up that they even, I don't know, throw a punch or something, the kid in the middle is not a bully because it's just reactive.

Please. The other ones are intentionally trying to use power in balance, which is group, that'll be, so I think this is a very good point that you're making. Deep. Yeah, awesome. And can someone be both a bully and a victim? I mean. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. 100% yes. Bullying is usually happening in an environment where you are rewarded. Not if you are kind. And contributing. But rather if you are kind of intimidating. And once this kind of community culture or community could be a class or a school or whatever, once this culture is formed that you are rewarded for being intimidating, then someone could be intimidated by a kid or a group.

And so a victim. But they know that if they intimidate someone else, then they would be rewarded. So they could be a victim from this direction, but found bullying other people. So, yeah. I think at times too, in social situations, kids have a really strong desire to fit in as well. And when they're in those communities where that bullying behavior is occurring and they desperately want to fit in, they themselves may have been the victim of bullying, but they may also pick up on that behavior and start to use that themselves towards others in order to fit in with their social group. Yeah, which can be, yeah, pretty tricky.

But yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I would agree. I see that particularly often if you've experienced it, there's a level of dysregulation and often you'll then lash out in the same sort of way that was done to me. So I do to others. Yeah. And that can be patterns of behavior that happens, you know, internationally. It happens to young people. It happens to adults. Yeah. In those spaces. I think there's a challenge to narrate our language around a bully and a victim, we try to really reduce the use of both those words because they're totalizing language. They name you as that, but you're a person who's been bullying somebody else, or you're a person who's been impacted or bullied by someone.

So the person's more important than what they've done. Both have to be dealt with, supported, but it's the person who can be both doing the bullying behavior, and a recipient of bullying. Does that make sense? Because that allows you to step outside and you're not just a bully. And that becomes... So you call me a bully, I'll be a bully. So they've always become what they are because we named them those things. So I always encourage parents to go, yep, it's really hard for your young person, but they're not a victim. They're a young person who's been really nastily impacted, but we can work through this and what do we need to do to look at that.

Or on the flip side, your son's not a bully. He's a fine young man who's made some really bad choices, which has bullied and hurt some other people. And we need to deal with that. So the person is more important than the behavior they're doing. It doesn't negate the behavior, but we need to. So I really encourage language shifts on that. And I think it becomes quite important to take that out. Again, I totally agree. I think that if we name the behavior and not name the kid, then that also signals that we can change things. That it's not a set role. If you are the bully or the victim, that could definitely be more dynamic.

Yep. Exactly. That's very, very important to deal with. Yeah. And also really important to not lose the child in the center of this, because there's one or two or more kids involved in this situation. And like you said, taking away from that totality of that name and go back to the behavior. It's what I do every day. Take it back to the behavior that's underneath the center and not lose that child in the middle who is very precious and obviously needs help. On both sides. Yes. Absolutely. Yeah, definitely. I suppose I absolutely agree. Yeah. Thanks. Okay. You asked a question before about what types of bullying.

All sorts of types. It can be physical, it can be emotional, as Uri talked about before. It can be the exclusion. Intentional. A little bit intentional. It can be particularly the online stuff has become massive and huge. And there's, yeah. So it can be all sorts of different levels. And it can hit from a huge wide range that we're seeing. Probably that's exploded over the last couple of years. Yeah. Particularly with the online world, to the AI world now coming through. There's definitely a different world growing up than when I grew up. Yeah. The uptick in the sexual harassment at schools has been around for a long time.

But the uptick in the online aspect and the AI and the deep fakes and things like that is also considerably concerning as well. Yeah. With young women being considerable targets with that kind of behavior. Yeah. Definitely the online is a major concern, makes it sometimes anonymous, and you can hide behind the keyboard, and you can spread things so much faster and wider that sometimes the impact is even higher. And the kids can't escape it too. You know, it's at home. It's all of the time. It's late at night when they're in their bedrooms and they're alone and they don't have that support, too.

So it'd be. The online and the social media aspect of that is certainly a concern. Yup.

2. Why do people bully others?

So why do people bully others? So the character that's really took going on with the monarchy and mental health and well-being support in Canterbury. Why do people bully? I mean, it's, you know, how long's a piece of string? There's lots and lots and lots of reasons, but some of the main ones that we come across are that children are trying to fit in. They see others, and as mentioned just before, you know, that there's status, which, of course, some see it that way. For others, it's some power that they can have in their lives when there's a lot of chaos going on in other parts of their lives.

And then the third area that we see so often is, especially in primary school, it's just a misunderstanding. You know, they see a difference or their environment has a prejudice, and they say and do things that are not their own. That's without fully understanding to see it being appropriate and hurtful. Yeah, but there are the goals and the reasons. The goal is exactly like you said, to get something where it is status or, I don't know, someone to do the hard work for you because they are intimidated if they don't do it, etc. And the reason understanding the one who is bullying someone else empathically's reasons also very important.

It is, of course, important to emphasize that understanding the reasons for being or behaving as a bully does not justify and does not make it legit. But, yeah. If I cannot get my way with communication, with being contributing and nice to others, and I learned that I can get it by intimidation and hurt, then I would do it. And sometimes someone who is really scared in other areas, and they feel really powerful by making other people scared, that's very... very rewarding. And sometimes they just cannot understand fully the emotions of the person that they are bullying. And so, yeah, it's hard to stop. I think one of the things that sometimes gets forgotten is that kids, I like Ross Green's words, if kids can do well, they will do well. And when we look a little bit beyond why they might not be doing so well and engaging in some bullying behavior, maybe because actually there's a skill issue there, that there's some aspect of their development, social, emotional, that they're really struggling with. And like you said, around that fitting in, I want to fit in, I want to have friends, I want to be cool, I want to be liked. And engaging in that bullying behavior is a way to get that for them and meet their needs.

Because they do have that lack of understanding that you talked about, like I just don't know how to do this. And this is one way that I can get what I need in this instance. Absolutely. Yeah. All behaviors can be. Absolutely. Certainly. Yeah. And so actually what I wanted to say, that a functional community is based on communication and respectful communication. If someone is lacking the skills to do that, then they have to start in manipulation. Definitely. So what do you think around the role of neurodiversity and race, gender, potential disability, things like that? So around that one, what kind of role does that play in bullying?

I think kids who are in minority groups are overwhelmingly victims of bullying behavior. And yeah, experience that on a regular basis, because I think a lot of kids struggle to understand difference. It hasn't been something explicitly taught, in their environments. And not understanding something can sometimes lead to some challenging behavior and difficulties and communicating with others who communicate differently. Sorry Uri, I cut you off. No, no, no, no, no. No, no, no, no, no. It's sweet. Firstly, the same lines on top of that addition. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Someone who bullies someone else usually targets kids that are different, because different is perceived as usually vulnerable. And being neurodiverse makes you usually different, hence, unfortunately, an automatic target. It could also play a part in bullying for kids. From the other direction, because if someone who's neurodiverse is struggling to communicate in some ways that will make things smoother, and they are big and strong, they might use their power imbalance with others. So usually, I mean, most often, they are becoming the victims of bullying. And the difference can make them sometimes bully other people, if that's their path they find.

Yeah. The antidote that we see in schools that have a school-wide, inclusive, top-down, out process that's talked about, celebrated, certainly best sounds like that. Yeah. Yeah. Definitely, it's these also, you know, some people asking, what's the role of empathy and inclusion within them as well? It's a sure document. The more it is understood, the less misunderstanding. Yeah. Absolutely. But I think empathy has to be taught. It's not something that only occurs in children.

I think there should be that inclusive, top-down process where you've got all of the adults around our kids teaching them about what is difference, what is different racial, races, and ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ+, and understanding neurodiversity and what that means, and different neuro types, how do we all learn, like, all of that difference as it is just that, the difference, rather than anything else that is less than or wrong, I think is, yeah, a way to get kids understanding, rather than really, yeah, struggling to deal with, different, difference, yeah. Yeah, definitely. And so, what about when people, sometimes, you know, you've heard in the end, or, you know, whatever times that bullying builds resilience, or that, you know, kids should toughen up.

So is that, is that true? Is there a truth to that? No, no. And all the research would suggest, you know, it's really not the case. And, you know, it's strong, connected relationships that build resilience. Yeah. Yeah. And again, there's the difference between bullying behaviour, and being mean, or unkind, and we're not going to like everyone, and not everyone is going to be great mates, and that is okay. And I think kids knowing that, and knowing that there is actually a difference, so we don't have to like each and every one who we come across in a day. We don't have to be friends with everyone.

And knowing that very clear difference between unkind and mean behaviour, and bullying as well, I think is really important in that aspect, yeah. Awesome. Thank you.

3. What are the short and long term impacts of bullying?

So what are the short-term and long-term effects of bullying on a person? Thank you. That's a very good question. So for a long time, it was considered that, yeah, toughen up and that will be fine. But very clear research evidence in the last 10 decades shows that significant bullying is equivalent to post-traumatic experiences, which can lead to post-traumatic syndrome. It would lead to severe anxiety, depression, self-harm, and sometimes suicide. And it has a long-lasting effect that could impair a person's quality of life and level of function for years and years and years. Yeah. Yeah. That's right. Kia ora.

I'm Dee Smith, and I am a youth aid officer for the Christchurch Police. I'm just going to add to what Uri said for more of a community effect of bullying is I find some youth or children don't want to attend school to avoid the bullying behavior. And as a result of that, they're out in our communities. They run a high risk of getting in with other youth who are in similar situations and offending, which is a very good thing. Which is a huge concern for us in the community. With regards to the community, once the dynamic in the group is that you are rewarded if you are intimidating and not rewarded if you are kind and contributing, then many people, young and more older, would be scared to kind of be more kind.

Because they're scared, unfortunately, of bullying. And then the whole community loses this energetic, creative. Yeah. And how does bullying affect families and caregivers? Oh, it's huge. And I think just the word bullying, it's such an emotionally charged, as we mentioned previously. You know, families, it's terribly upsetting. And both, if they find out that one of their children has been the bully or has been, you know, the victim of, and also the other thing that we see so often is its terribly triggering for perhaps a similar experience for those parents when they were at school. Oh yeah. So, in terms of their reaction, one of the first things that, you know, we advise is that, you know, it's going to be that calm approach.

Yeah. You know, you're going in with a heightened response to your child saying they've been bullied. It's really not going to help the situation at all. So, calmness helps, and getting in touch with the school as soon as possible. And, you know, following through with what is going to take you, what the cheer processes that schools have for dealing with that.

4. Why don't kids tell?

something I thought of you know why don't kids always you know tell when they are being bullied or if they're being bullied. I think it's a really vulnerable place to be in to say there's something wrong, or this is happening to me and there might be some children who don't have a safe adult to tell, or they might feel like it maybe could get them into a bit of trouble at school if they tell, and it might get worse before it gets better and so I think that could definitely stop them from sharing with somebody. I think the age and stage has a lot to do with it. There's a lot of shame around being bullied and there's also that desire especially in that sort of pre-teen and teen to be accepted.

Well if you're the whistleblower well the chances of being accepted and they weigh that up. Yeah because also that opportunity of maybe I caused it maybe it's my fault you know it's that self-loathing of us often you know of going probably it was me actually probably I deserved it you know in particular my cis-teens know anyway all myself says no anyway it's I'm doing what I'm deserved of potentially in their space yeah.

I think if we haven't got a culture of stepping up you know yeah and there'll be no upstanders in there making it okay too yeah um because I think that's um it's way easier for the upstander or the person who's not directly impacted they could speak and even building communities with like what Uri was saying before it's uh building opposite communities where it's okay to step up and say something and if you see it, say it, you know? and to notice us, to see what's around them, um and that's about a counter culture, shifting our culture of why it's in our schools and communities.

Yeah.

and so how can adults tell if it might be someone that, like you know, is telling tales as opposed to um you know reporting real harm that's happening? Good I think um we should always be on the side of believing children. yeah. I think all too often a lot of what they talk about is dismissed and not believed and heard, and while their perspective might be different from someone else's perspective, I think listening to everyone that's involved in the situation is really important, first and foremost believe the child. Yeah. I think one of the things adults can look at is when a child comes about an incident, are they just telling tales to get someone else into trouble, or is there a safety well-being emotional harm being done here.

Now they can decide. I think it's really important as parents, caregivers, and whanau that um when you're listening to your child, that you are listening to the child. It's your child's story, not your story and to not transpose your lived experience good or bad, um into that and almost outwork your own stuff and it's about being aware of us to notice it, um so that you can support your young person which is give them voice and then to start to unpack what's really going on for them. But id agree with what you said, being on the side of believing is always going to be the better way to start, you know?

And like we've talked about before all behavior is communication, so when we do have a child who might be exaggerating what happened or making some false claims, or what have you, and i think thats just telling us something you know, right off the bat there as well. So first and foremost hearing and listening and really accepting what they're saying um not accepting it for truth but it's just like being there to hear them out I think is really important because there's probably something else underneath, why they might be making that up and they're still going to need some support in that instance.

Absolutely. What if parents are sort of worried that you know, bringing it up might somehow make it worse for their child or um they want to be able to support them safely? that's a really valid and real concern that they feel um but i guess you know putting their child at the center um it needs to be brought to, and you know schools are highly experienced, if it's happening at school, you're highly highly experienced with this. They deal with it all the time and you know I would, you know, go earlier rather than later.

And maybe have a conversation with a trusted staff member at school first rather than at the school and going in and like having a big emotional reaction about it your child's gonna take your cues from you and how you deal with the situation too, so think I going in having that confident conversation with somebody that they trust at school to help them through that journey um and go what's my next step, i want to keep my kids safe i don't want this to be worse for them, however, this isn't okay, and this needs to stop.

So, yeah. I've been finding out about that process. There's so many parents, you know, they want to ring the other parent, they want to go around and bang on the door. Who is this child? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And, you know, in the end, you know, it's a very natural reaction. Yeah, yeah. You want to protect your kids, right, but it's not helpful. No. Well, so it's a process of things. Yeah. I think it's important to, when you've heard your own child's view, it's true for them, and it was truth, right? Yeah.

But there's also another side to that, and it doesn't take away, doesn't minimize what's been going on, hurt, or whatever, or what has happened, but I think we've got to see that it seems like we're coming after you, and that could be really hurtful and really horrible, but it's almost going in, and one of the things I really encourage us to think around, is how do you go in with the curiosity and an assertive, a direct, respectfully direct, assertive of a way of dealing with it, not the reactive state, and being able to, particularly asking advice from a child, I agree with the trusted adult at the school, who's the person, because the last thing you want is then to take it off them, you know, because when someone has been bullied, their power's been stripped away, and when we take it off them, we actually can sometimes, by trying to help, can re-victimize that and cause more hurt.

And if they're the center they need to be the author of that and help them at the age and stage of course, Yeah. But I think it's, even at schools, sometimes we're so partially minded that they want to solve it, but what does solving look like, and what do they need right now? What does that young person actually need? I want to have my voice heard, I want to have, you know, so going in and asking advice and what should I be doing with this? I don't want you to just pack it up yet, I would like you just to hear, I'd like to hear your perspective on that, you know, because what you're trying to do is gather other perspectives or something in those spaces.

Thank you, and what's something that you wish that parents understood about bullying? I think Gary's definition at the start, yes, bullying is a pattern. Yeah. Unkind behaviour is often, not always, but a one-off or a misunderstanding. And when you hand that, yeah, be very careful with that word you put in. Yeah. What about teachers? What do you wish teachers would understand about bullying? Well, I think children that we deal with often sort of say, you know, they've seen it. They've seen it happening. And a sense of mistrust, whether they have or haven't, I don't know, but that sense that the child feels that it's going on at a low level and no adult.

It's supporting them. Yeah. So I would say to teachers, you know, like, be proactive and talk about it. Talk about, you know, what's OK and what isn't, which they do. I mean, they really do. But, you know, I don't think you can have those conversations enough. Yeah. I think in the wellbeing world, we talk about this idea that burnout is an individual response to a collective problem. The truth of the issue, and I think bullying is the same, that bullying is often an individual, often, not always, an individual's response or impact of a collective thing. So as schools, how do we deal with the incident, support the incident, those people involved, all those parties involved, but actually what are we doing to grow that collective?

And Uri talked about it before the fact that doing right is better than doing the, contributing is better than the power over. And there's a place in here that sort of I took and shared it. But I think there's that sense of collectivism where there's a lot of paradigms and schools to try and shift those cultures. And it's a culture shift as opposed to a whack-a-mole. Yeah, yeah. And sometimes you've got a whack-a-mole, but actually you can't just always go whack-a-mole. You've got to shift the culture and grow a culture where, you know, to support each other, to notice it, to spot it, to grow it.

Care, mentoring. Yeah. So all that's there. All that's there. It happens here. Yeah.

5. How does bullying present in the online world?

So how does bullying present in the online world? That's a pretty big question. I think there's lots of different facets that can happen in terms of bullying online. It's massively grown with the introduction of AI as well. And I think there's a lot more sexual harassment also occurring online for our young people too. I think the hardest part about the online aspect of bullying is that it's all the time. And kids can't escape it. And I think I mentioned it before around it being like at night in their bedroom, still getting bombarded with messages or seeing pictures or seeing posts about themselves or people sharing stories about things that have happened during the day, that kind of thing.

It's something that is just constant and constantly bombarding them. It could be really impactful for our young people when they're using social media because it's become a regular part of their everyday. And unfortunately. That means that they can be exposed to that bullying 24-7. Yeah. In what ways can it present online? So what are the different sorts of bullying that there would be? So just to add a few things to what Katie said. So the fact that it's spreading so quickly and so widely. And as Katie said, it's 24-7. Just does not allow a kid to just put it beside, put it behind them.

Because, you know, if I had an incident in school, then it was a bad incident. But that's it. It's behind me. But if it's spread throughout everyone so quickly and before I am getting back home, it's all over the Internet. I cannot hide. So it's much more intimidating. From that end. And from the bully's end, it is much more rewarding as a bully because I can be anonymous sometimes. And I can, again, target someone so quickly and so widely. So it gives me the power imbalance, which is really, really big. So... It makes... It makes the intensity of the bullying sometimes much stronger. Yeah. I think that you can be like the targeted direct messaging, the sharing of unflattering photos or the sharing of photos without consent, even if it's just been a party or school or something that's flattering and you said, don't do it.

And then that kind of still happens and it goes around and around. And the other thing that I hear quite often is around being excluded from chats. So you're in one chat and then all of a sudden you're blocked from that chat. And then everyone is chatting behind your back, whether that's Snapchat or Instagram or whatever other, you know, apps they're into, that kind of thing. And so I think that exclusion based stuff still is quite prevalent online and social media as well. And it's like that's quite often the space when kids communicate and they like make plans to go places and things like that.

That can be a really, really awful thing for them to experience that level of exclusion as well. Yeah. Also with AI. I think it's a huge thing for our youth and children, the deepfakes and those photos being shared around is quite impactful for kids as well. Yeah, good to see. Definitely. And so how can we, you know, we keep our children safe online? Oh, that's a big question. I think a good start is those boundaries at home. You know, these platforms, these social media sites, they all have a minimum age. And I think if you stick to that minimum age, it will be a help. For the children. Yeah.

I think education is really key for our kids around online safety and what to do and what not to do. And so I think that's where that community aspect of support comes in that, you know, there's education at school, there's education at home. I think first of all, mostly parents know your stuff, know your apps, know the things that they can hide things in, know the passwords, you know, all of that kind of stuff. That you are on top of what they're doing. That can sometimes be hard when the force is already bolted and there's already sort of unlimited access to social media. But you'll never agree, kind of pulling back and having some of those boundaries put in place to keep your kids safe.

I think it's important for you to know what. Yeah. It's sometimes hard for us when technology moves so quickly. But if parents know what the kids are into and what they're doing and keeping on top of it, it's really important. Yeah. And also to support that, like an open space, you know, if they're using devices or have access to computers or the likes, being in a lounge or so as a parent, when you're walking past, you can see what they're on and just more sure how they're using it. Yeah, I totally agree. We do need to remember, though, that no matter how many boundaries and limits we will put, kids are smart and they will find ways to bypass that.

And the good old basic open communication and trust are always a very good policy because if a kid feels safe to come and talk with us and they know we will not, I don't know, punish them too harshly for that, then they could come and consult us and get advice that is very valuable. Sometimes they're still young. And in that sense, just like Katie said, kind of knowing this world of the Internet, A, in order to be able to put boundaries, but B, in order to share the kids' lives and the kids' world. So the more we share their interest in games and in whatever, Snapchats, et cetera, the more they are likely to share their concerns and issues with us.

And so... So we can provide support. Katie? Yeah. Yeah. And so how would parents, you know, empower their children if they are being bullied online? I think it's really important. I love the speaking out about it, you know, feeling comfortable enough for them to talk to parents or entrusted adult that they feel would support them in navigating that. But I think for a police view, if that bullying is quite

extensive online, evidence is really key for us. So making sure that they... If they are able to take the screenshots or save the messages and then blocking that person. Again, education is key.

Like, what is okay online and what is not okay online? What is okay within a friendship relationship? Like, what's conflict? Being mean, unkind versus that targeted and bullying stuff. Like, how about kids know what to look out for and what is not okay in that space too? Because it might look... It might look quite different. And context too. Like, we all know that, like, text messages and things like emoji and that, they all mean different things to different people too. And sometimes that communication can also be misconstrued. And, yeah, we need to be having an open mind and open discussions about all this stuff.

And having a safe space for our kids to be able to do that is really important. Another point to support the kid, which is, I think, relevant both online and offline, is to try and take away the shame and guilt that sometimes victims feel. That's one thing. And then try to make the environment safe, just like Katie and Dee described. And also following up with monitoring the kid's well-being and symptoms. And if there are issues of anxiety and depression and less attendance in school, et cetera, then referring them to a professional to further assess whether there are some post-traumatic symptoms.

Oh, yeah. So take away shame, make the environment as safe as possible, and then try to deal with the post-traumatic symptoms. Truly. And so for parents. What can they do if they do have, you know, pictures or videos that have been shared online of their children? I think Netsafe for us is highly recommended. A great way to. They can get things removed offline quicker than even police can. So that, again, it would be evidence. Try and get as much evidence as possible and then report to Netsafe. And they're also great with a lot of information with relation to our questions earlier for parents,

On how to navigate the online world and how to put those protections in place for their children. Very good. And so what is the role of, you know, the police in preventing and also responding to, you know, online bullying in the community? We have what's called a school community officer in schools, and we love to educate through that way. So there's a great cyber program that we run in high schools. And also, obviously, with the reporting of it, if there is an offense there, we would encourage parents to report it to us so that we have that record there. We want to know about it and obviously try and get reference services around, obviously, the bully and then the person who's been bullied to try and help them. Awesome.

Thanks so much guys.

6. My child has come home and said they are being bullied. What should I do?

So for parents, if a child was to come home and say that they'd been bullied or say that you suspected that your child was being bullied at school, what should a parent do? Yeah, I think the first thing I would say is stay calm. Because as we've mentioned before, our reaction can be here, and listen and really focus in on the emotion that the child is feeling and bringing to that conversation before going into where, how, who, you know, they need reassurance, they've come to you. It's a huge strength on their behalf that they've come and told you. And I would certainly be saying things like that and just listening, listening, listening, listening.

And then finding out from them what they would like to do. Like Greg said before, you know, don't take their power away. They've already had... They've had their power diluted by feeling like that. So don't be the next person to do that. So find out what they want to do. And if they're not sure, you could just suggest that you think it would be a really good idea to put their classroom teacher and talk to the school, someone that they have a close relationship with at school, in school they're aware of it. But softly, softly, really softly, softly, and focus on their feelings at that point. And that would be my advice.

And what if a parent had taken it to the school and they felt like the school had ignored the issue? Yeah, there it is. I'm going to go back to the previous question for a moment, because I'd agree with you there, the calming. I'd also really encourage the adult, and as you say, don't let your stuff get involved. It's their story, so leave it to them. And also validate without adding value to it. So validate the feelings, validate the story, listen to what's going on, paraphrase, check in, thank them, you know, like, mate, coming to you and sharing that, that they've been hurt and it's honourable for you to come to you, really make them grateful, make them feel that you're grateful that they've shared that with you, you know, and that we don't have to talk about it all right now, we can come back to it, you know, we don't have to solve it all right now.

But that's really awesome that you've made that first step. It means a good time for us to chat about this now. Do you want to keep talking about it now? Because sometimes lying in bed when you're putting them to bed at night is the best time to just go to their room, they will come on their way. Other times they'll just say it, but they don't want to go right into it. So that's them driving it, not you driving it. I think it's a really good thing as a parent to think that you don't take over the process for them and ask questions and be bold, but don't. Your young person almost always is the best author of what needs to happen, but we often steal it away.

They still need to be guided, supported and helped, but I think it's important to go with them. I really like your idea. Is this something we need to deal with? Because sometimes they want to share with you, but they don't really deal with it. And other times they don't want to share a little bit, but they need to deal with it. Who wouldn't be someone good at schooling? So curiosity, genuineness and asking good questions as a parent is one of the best things you can be. And responding to the emotions, as you say, yeah. And what if bullying was happening outside of school?

I can probably answer that. A lot of the time the bullying turns physical. It's outside of school and we are brought into it. We really want to support parents to report that to the police. 105, if it's immediately happening, triple one and you'll get the response then and there. If you have found out after the offence or anything physical has happened, then 105 is the way and it will be followed up with my police. And yeah, again, I support parents to do that because physical stuff, it's an offence and it's terrible for people to be hurt. Obviously, going back to the online stuff as well, a lot of the time it is recorded by other students and then filtered out throughout the community, which can be quite harmful for that victim.

So I support parents to report it. Just going back to your question about if you feel the school isn't dealing with the problem in the way that you would like or it's not dealing with it at all,

2020 Education and Training Act where all schools have that duty of care for emotional and physical well-being and without sort of going in with it rattling that under their nose I think you can very calmly but assertively rest a meeting and air your concerns but at the same time keeping that open mind because the school will be seeing all perspectives and they've got a duty of care to everyone. and while you're thinking about your little person and the school is looking at the whole picture and being mindful of that but as I've said before schools are expert at dealing with this and they deal with it all the time so I would encourage you to trust their process.

Try to say trust and respect for your question so I'm going to go not against that but I really encourage parents to always use the school New Zealand way to set your values.

that's something we have within our charters by rights everything that happens in the school from an adult point of view they should be modeling the values all right that means the way they engage with students where they engage with you and they should be trying to grow those values by the way they deal with because that's about their pro-social culture and contributing that Uri was talking about before so what I encourage parents to do is, this is what I'm hearing I'm really curious how that lines up with what you say you do as a school community so because that challenges them against their practice and but it uses their values to challenge not me challenging them I'd like to sometimes challenge them but that means your values what the school is standing on is just so if they say manaakitanga or whanaungatanga or ranatiratanga as well as some of their values, I'm really curious how you're not involving me in the process and supporting that I'd like to hear about that so curiosity genuineness asking questions with a young person number one same with schools as well and then reflect it back off the school values is an absolutely um genius way of going into schools particularly if you feel they're not engaging with the process.

and um and I'd also encourage you think at the lowest going at the lowest denominator what I mean by that is um talk to the adults in the school that you've had a trusted relationship with where you've got it may be a previous teacher that you go and say I don't want to get a deal with this but I'd like to know what you suggest I should do so that's usually talked about for but more so um if you go straight to the principal or you go straight to the board and drop a bomb, there's not many other places to go so sometimes it's about going to the trusted one and then go is it a syndicate leader or is it a um dp or is it a principal or is it the board so if we go straight to the highest um there's not many other places it escalates it and sometimes we've caused more I like it am I walking in with a flamethrower or a fire extinguisher and sometimes in schools I've been working with parents who've brought in flamethrowers and they're upset and hurt and I understand that, but that doesn't help us resolve it just gives more of a fire so come in with a fire extinguisher try to minimize it but also not minimize acknowledge but keep it at the level we need to deal with it and allow the schools to agree most often schools have got good processes um but sometimes it's good to kind of challenge them on those in a respectful way.

Absolutely. And what if parents are contacted by other parents um you know with accusations of your children bullying and their children? What do you suggest they do? that's high octane that one. And my advice is always where possible um to bring it back to the school if it's happening at school involve them. calm it down I certainly wouldn't be suggesting parents meet and to nut it out um yeah yeah would be obviously trying to not have that happen. If we've been thinking about the young people in the middle the center as soon as adults get amongst it it often they stop being the center and sometimes you need a third party somebody else that can referee if you like you know because almost always parents will back their child.

Yeah. Yeah. it's just someone to hold space for them to be able to have that calm conversation and to really hear it and to hear what the person is saying not what you hear them say you know that's really important. and the school is good for that um but there's a lot of people out there that are really good you should put those spaces as well. Should both sets of parents or however many parents be called into school to sort of discuss the issues between each other? Or within a setting with staff? Well if the school was dealing with that they'll have their process for that.

yeah there's a number of systems in schools but again as soon as you go high, you get parents involved, it gets bigger, right, so wherever we can, we deal with it, where we can, and inform parents, sometimes it's affected and impacted parents, so we bring them in, so it's a case by case, and I'm working with schools and encouraging them to look at how big do we need to make this, at what points do parents get involved in the process, you know, like the more serious end, once the bullying has got to an assault level, it might be a FTC, then you can conference where all the parents will be involved, right, but that's been an incredibly effective process done well, but we can detune that in a school situation as well and then inform parents of the outcome, or it could be rewritten, but it's always going to be a case by case, I mean, it's a situation simple.

So if a child is being accused of bullying and they're not, then how do parents deal with that? I think the first thing is, you know, the child needs to be you know, in that conversation that you are having with him or her, that, you know, you believe them, you know, show that trust, that belief, that's what I've mentioned many times, you know, validate what they're saying and then, you know, and then obviously, you know, there's some there could well be, sounds like some misunderstanding, and again, I'm going to be involving the school in finding out because I'm sure they'll have some extra light to shine on it.

Yeah. But, it's so important that your child feels believed and not dismissed. Yeah, and if it was physical, you know, bullying, then, you know, people say, I'll teach their child to fight back, and what's the consensus on that? I wouldn't recommend that. Obviously, physical stuff, it's assault, and it's unlawful, so I would not be suggesting that. I'd be looking for that supportive adult they can talk to and try and hash things out.