

Local Data Collection and Analysis

Interrupting Bullying & Harassment in Schools – Toolkit

By Gretchen Brion-Meisels, Ed.D., Eliza O’Neil, Ed.M., & Sarah Bishop, M.A., for the IDRA EAC-South

Rationale for Collecting Local Data

Before developing a school- and community-wide work plan around preventing bullying and harassment, school administrators should employ data collection tools to determine their specific areas of focus.

Effective school climate policies must all include similar social norms and codes of conduct that, for example, promote and reward upstander behavior. However, beyond this, every school’s policy must be catered to its own unique needs. Each school exists within a larger system of values that impact the school climate itself. Furthermore, student and teacher perceptions around where bullying occurs differs significantly (Bradshaw, Sawyer & O’Brennan, 2007; Ferlazzo, 2019). This is why successful prevention efforts must be driven by local data and rooted in research on effective practices. These policies must undergo frequent evaluation and revision efforts to ensure they are having their intended effect.

Who Should Be Involved?

An important first step in local data collection is considering which voices to include. This is important in part because interpretations of bullying behaviors differ across context, student developmental stage and individual perceptions. These voices should include teachers, administrators, families, school staff and anyone else who may witness behaviors that other contributing members may not (Learning for Justice, 2017). Start brainstorming these voices by considering contexts where bullying behaviors might be most common (school bus, hallways, locker rooms, bathrooms or the cafeteria). Who is witness to behaviors in those contexts? Whose voice is being left out that could offer a useful perspective?

Guidelines for Data Collection

After assembling a school climate team (see Community-Level Strategies chapter), team leaders should consider collecting the following types of data. The more types of data you choose to collect, the more nuanced your findings will be. Furthermore, mixed-methods data enables you to see patterns and trends, while also generating detailed and in-depth personal accounts.

Methods for Collecting a Variety of Data

Monitoring: When stakeholder groups describe their own experiences surrounding bullying behaviors. This allows for individual variation, specificity relating to types of bullying behaviors, frequency of those behaviors, and interpretations across groups. Example: “Consider this statement: There is no bullying at this school. Agree/Disagree?” Additionally, when states, districts and schools implement anti-bullying policies, stakeholders, such as educators and administrators, should provide formal feedback on the effectiveness of these policies as they engage in prevention efforts and resolve bullying incidents (Ansary, et al., 2015; Stopbullying.gov, 2017).

Survey Data allows for the greatest breadth of perspectives and observations. Example: “Have you been bullied or harassed in the past month? Yes/No.”

Interview Data provides nuanced narratives of student experiences. Be sure to avoid questions that might put students in danger, ask students to avoid using specific names, and use “you or your friends” to allow students the opportunity for confidentiality. Using scenarios can be a helpful questioning tool. Example: “We’re looking to understand how bullying behaviors might happen in this school. Thinking about your friends, walk me through a time you or a friend was harassed or bullied because of the way you look. Why else would bullying or harassment happen?”

Focus Group Data: Focus groups are another way to gather student narratives in a safe space. Groups must be selected carefully to maximize student comfort in sharing. Confidentiality rules should be clearly established (including mandatory reporting rules).

Visual Data offers students another way to explain the instances of bullying behaviors at the school to adults. It might include illustrations, diagrams, photographs of places around the school, sketches or maps.

Mapping Data contextualizes specific bullying behaviors. This allows the team to determine where to focus their intervention/prevention efforts. Example: “*Where* do you think bullying behaviors occur most at this school? Cafeteria; Classrooms; Hallways; Bathrooms; Playground; Library.”

Administrative Data includes documentation of current school policies and practices.

Youth-Generated Data: Data about youth-generated questions and/or data collected and analyzed by youth.

Sample Questions

The following questions can be edited depending on the data collection method, school's greatest area of concern, and interviewee.

- What is the prevalence of bullying or discriminatory behaviors at this school?
- Tell me about how witnessing bullying behaviors makes you feel. Why?
- How would you classify bullying behaviors at this school?
- Where would you go to seek support if you were suffering as a result of bullying behaviors?
- What would you do if you saw a friend make fun of another student because of the way they look?
- If you decided to tell an adult about having witnessed bullying behaviors at school, who would you tell? Where would you go?
- How does this school deal with bullying reports? How does this school deal with bullying behaviors? How does this school deal with aggressors and victims? Do you think this school deals with bullying behaviors differently, depending on the student? How?
- When you see a student who exhibits upstander behavior, how do you respond (as a teacher, administrator or staff member)? How do upstanders get rewarded for their behavior at this school?

Data Analysis Processes

Having collected a variety of data using mixed methods, administrators and teachers should collaborate with various stakeholders (including district personnel, students and family members) to analyze that data.

Analyzing Qualitative Data: Determine themes, or codes, across all narratives and note them down throughout analysis. Another option is to use grounded coding methods, which allows those themes to rise from the data.

Analyzing Quantitative Data: Use Microsoft Excel to calculate basic cross-tabulations. For more complicated statistical analyses, a statistical software package may be necessary.

Share Data with the Community: Once you have completed the first round of your analysis process, share your results with community members, students, faculty and other stakeholders. Solicit their feedback for accuracy. Involving stakeholders in this process will also foster buy-in, increasing the likelihood of investment in the subsequent prevention/intervention implementation phase. As always, consider confidentiality when sharing your findings.

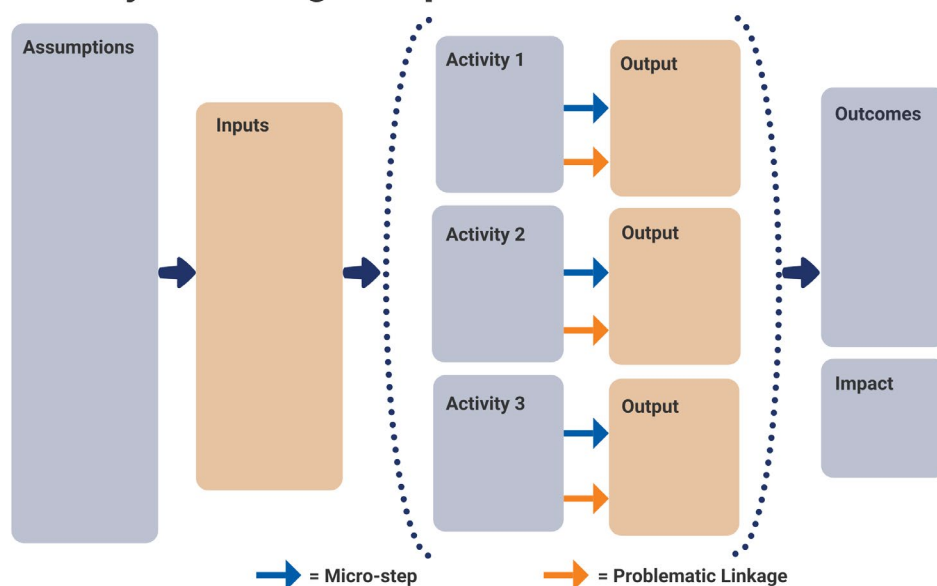
Youth-Led Research: Consider involving students in the process of data collection, analysis and evaluation. Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) aims to empower youth by giving them the structure and agency to be a part of improving their own schools and communities. Incorporating youth in the research process also fosters student buy-in and grows their concern for the overall well-being of their school community, often resulting in school climate improvements (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2010, p.82). For more information on YPAR, see Appendix.

Theory of Change Based on Data Analysis

As you collect data and get a sense of what your school-specific intervention program will look like, create a *Theory of Change* or *Logic Model* (Weiss, 1995; or W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). These are ways to visually map out the components of your program so that they are intentional, thorough, and outcomes-driven. The Theory of Change operates under the assumption that “If we do ____, then ____ will happen.” Theory of Change components include:

- **Assumptions:** A list of pre-existing assumptions from research or local knowledge upon which you will build your intervention.
- **Mechanisms:** Why do you think the program will work?
- **Activities:** A list of the actual parts of the intervention, and what resources/planning they will require.
- **Outcomes** that are:
 - Related to your theory of change
 - Measurable
 - Represent ideas about short- and long-term changes
 - Tied to mechanisms
 - Working at multiple ecological levels

Theory of Change Map *If... then...*



For an in-depth guide on how to create a theory of change in the form of a logic model, see W.K. Kellogg Foundation's *Logic Model Development Guide* (2004).

Important Data Collection Considerations Specific to Bullying Behaviors

Remember to stick to vocabulary that avoids identifying students as “bullies” or “victims,” and focus on specific behaviors. Interview or survey questions should also use as many specifics as possible when describing harassment or bullying behaviors, such as “identity-based exclusion” rather than “hazing.”

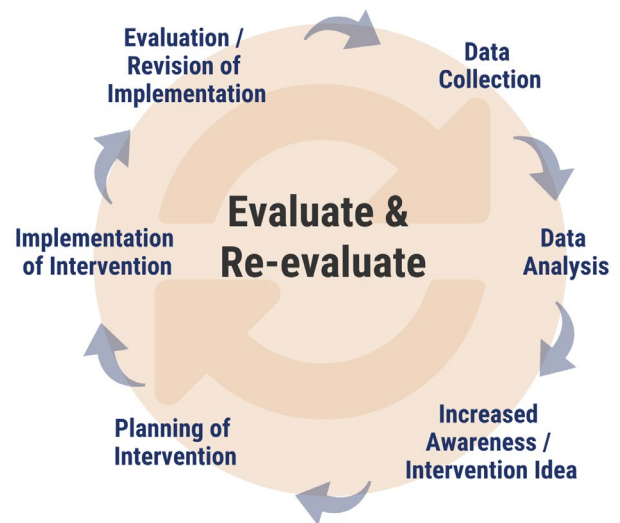
Define terms whenever possible, as individuals likely have different interpretations of terms like “bully,” “bullying behaviors,” “discrimination,” and “harassment.”

Numeric reports of bullying may make it seem that instances of bullying behaviors at your school are increasing. However, this might just be due to an increase in awareness of bullying behaviors at your school. Be careful not to make this assumption at the beginning of program implementation and evaluation.

Evaluate and Re-evaluate Often

The evaluation process is never complete. Once anti-bullying and harassment programming is implemented, school administrators should collect both formative and summative data. Formative data helps you to improve your program as you go, and summative data helps you evaluate the outcomes of your intervention once it is complete. Some questions to ask as you evaluate and reevaluate:

- If your program is working well, try to determine *why*. What mechanisms are at play that might have caused that success?
- If your program is not achieving the outcomes you hoped for, try to determine *why*. What assumptions have you made that turned out to be false? What might be getting in the way of achieving certain outputs? How can your school improve the effectiveness of each activity or programmatic element?
- How could the program be enhanced? Are we overlooking potential resources that could improve programmatic outcomes?
- What phenomena are we currently seeing that we did not anticipate? Why might those be happening?
- Which components of the program can be left out?
- Are the outcomes we're seeing directly linked to the activities? What else might account for those outcomes?



The process of reevaluation and renewal are usually best done at the beginning and end of every school semester or year.

School Data Collection Resources

Another helpful way schools can gauge their bullying and harassment programming needs is through a variety of online resources designed to measure school climate and other local factors. Refer to the following links to get started.

- Youth Risk Behavior Survey: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyYouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>
- Indicators of School Crime and Safety: <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/>
- GLSEN's National School Climate Survey: <https://www.glsen.org/article/2015-national-school-climate-survey>
- School climate surveys: <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/school-climate-measurement/school-climate-survey-compendium>
- A compendium of assessment tools from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullycompendium-a.pdf>
- A free school climate measurement tool from the U.S. Department of Education: <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls>
- Short school climate questionnaire by Learning for Justice (the former Teaching Tolerance): <https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/TT-School-Climate-Questionnaire-2019.pdf>
- Social Boundaries Activity: Map it Out by Learning for Justice (the former Teaching Tolerance): <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/social-boundaries-activity-map-it-out>

Appendix: Youth Participatory Action Research

Involving youth in your data collection and analysis is a powerful way to boost school climate. There are many levels of student involvement that schools can choose during their program development and evaluation.

They should first consider referring to the **Ladder of Youth Voice** to determine how they might begin. This resource illustrates a range of student involvement, from low involvement (“decoration” and “manipulation”) to high involvement (“youth/adult equity” and “completely youth-driven”).

Consider the challenges and rewards of the various levels of youth involvement before determining what might be the best fit for your school. If you implement youth research at a particular level, consider evaluating success after one or two semesters, and then ascending one “rung” of the ladder (Fletcher, 2016).

The Freechild Project Youth Voice Rubric				
		The Ways Young People are Engaged	Challenge	Reward
Engagement	8	Youth & Adult Equity. All youth, young adults and older adults are recognized for their impact and ownership of the outcomes.	This is an exceptional relationship in communities that requires conscious commitment by all participants Deliberately addresses barriers and constantly ensures shared outcomes.	Creates structures that establish and support safe, supportive, effective and sustainable environments for engagement, and ultimately recreates the climate and culture of organizations and communities.
	7	Completely Youth-Driven Action. These activities do not include adults in positions of authority; rather adults are there in secondary roles to support young people.	Young people may operate in a vacuum, often without the recognition of their impact on the larger community. Activities driven by youth and young adults may not be seen by older adults with deserved validity.	Developing complete ownership in communities allows young people to effectively drive community engagement. Young people experience the outcomes of their direct actions on themselves, their peers and the larger community.
	6	Youth and Adult Equality. This is a 50/50 split of responsibilities, authority, obligation and commitment.	There isn't recognition of r the specific developmental needs of representation opportunities for young people. Without receiving that recognition, young people may lose interest and become disengaged.	Young people can substantially transform adults' opinions, ideas and actions.
Partia	5	Youth-Consulted. Adults actively consult young people while they're	Young people have only the authority that older adults grant them, and their engagement is	Young people can substantially transform adults' opinions, ideas and

Appendix: Youth Participatory Action Research

		involved.	subject to external approval.	actions.
	4	Youth-Informed. Young people inform adults.	Adults do not have to let young people impact their decisions.	Young people may influence adult-driven decisions or activities.
Non-engagement	3	Tokenism. Adults assign young people only token roles.	Youth and young adults are used inconsequentially by adults to reinforce the perception that young people are engaged.	Validates youth and young adults attending events without requirement effort beyond that.
	2	Decoration. Adults use young people to decorate their activities.	The presence of young people is treated as all that is necessary without reinforcing active engagement.	Attendance by youth and young adults is a tangible outcome that may demonstrate consideration for engaging young people.
	1	Manipulation. Adults manipulate young people.	Young people are forced to attend without regard to their interest.	Adults experience involving young people and gain rationale for continuing activities.

Source: Adam Fletcher, freechild.org

Another helpful framework for determining where youth fall on the spectrum of research and program development involvement is below (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003, p. 25).

Evaluation Research Roles of Young People				
	Youth as Subjects	Youth as Consultants	Youth as Partners	Youth as Directors
Goals of youth involvement	Develop knowledge about young people	Create youth-friendlier process	Develop skills of young people and include youth voice	Empower young people and create community change
Defining the questions	Adults define questions	Adults define questions	Adults often define questions with or without youth input	Youth define questions with or without adult input
Creating the instruments	Adults create instruments	Adults ask young people for feedback on their instruments	Adults and youth may jointly create instruments	Young people create instruments with or without youth input
Collecting information	Adults collect information	Adults collect information	Youth may help adults collect information	Youth collect information; adults may assist
Analyzing information	Adults analyze information	Adults analyze information	Adults take lead in analysis; young people may assist	Youth take lead in analysis; adults may assist
Disseminating findings	Adults disseminate findings mostly to professional audiences	Adults disseminate findings mostly to professional with or without youth input	Adults take lead in dissemination; young people may assist	Youth take lead in dissemination; adults people may assist. Findings may mobilize other youth or create community change.
Roles of young people	Young people are subjects of study	Young people play limited roles as consultants	Young people assist adults in roles such as information collection and dissemination of findings	Young people initiate and take lead in all states of the process. Adults may or may not assist
Roles of adults	Adults take lead in all stages of the process	Adults play most of the key roles	Adults initiate and implement the process but enlist youth to assist them	Adults may or may not play supportive roles, but youth make the decisions

Resources to Support Collaboration with Youth

Additional resources and strategies for teachers and administrators as they include students in their data collection and analysis process are below.

- Youth Action Guide from Adam Fletcher: <https://adamfletcher.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/TFPYAG.pdf>
- Understanding Youth-led Participatory Action Research and generating lesson plans: <http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/>
- A timeline for Participatory Action Research projects, along with example activities and tools: <http://www.researchfororganizing.org/>
- An approach that fosters critical thinking in students while empowering them to collect and analyze local data: <http://systemexchange.msu.edu/services/participatory-methods/react>
- Youth on Board guides for the field: <http://www.youthonboard.org/shop>
- National Youth Rights Association and the conversation on adult power over youth lives: <http://www.youthrights.org/research/library/adultism-and-cultural-competence/>

Works Cited

- Ansary, N.S., Elias, M.J., Greene, M.B., & Green, S. (2015). Guidance for Schools Selecting Antibullying Approaches: Translating Evidence-Based Strategies to Contemporary Implementation Realities. *Educational Researcher*, 44(1), 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X14567534>
- Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., & Meyer, H.A. (2004). Monitoring and Mapping Student Victimization in Schools. *Theory into Practice*, 43(1), 39-49. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4301_6
- Bradshaw, C.P., Sawyer, A.L., & O'Brennan, L.M. (2007). Bullying and Peer Victimization at School. *School Psychology Review*, 36(3), 361-382.
- Checkoway, B., & Richards-Schuster, K. (2003). Youth Participation in Community Evaluation Research. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 24(1), 21-33. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F109821400302400103>
- Ferlazzo, L. (February 2019). Response: Going After 'The Roots of Bullying.' *Education Week*. http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_lary_ferlazzo/2019/02/response_going_after_the_roots_of_bullying.html
- Fletcher, A. (2016). Ladder of Youth Voice. The Freechild Project. <https://freechild.org/ladder-of-youth-participation/>
- Foster-Fishman, P.G., Law, K.M., Lichty, L.F., & Aoun, C. (2010). Youth ReACT for Social Change: A Method for Youth Participatory Action Research. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 46(1-2), 67-83. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-010-9316-y>
- Learning for Justice. (2017). *Responding to Hate and Bias at School*. Montgomery, Ala.: Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/responding-to-hate-and-bias-at-school>
- Stopbullying.gov. (2017). Anti-Bullying Laws and Policies: Research Summary, webpage. Stopbullying.gov. <https://www.stopbullying.gov/sites/default/files/2017-10/anti-bullying-laws-and-policies-research-summary.pdf>
- Weiss, C. (1995). Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-Based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families. *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*. Aspen Institute.
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2004). *Logic Model Development Guide*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.K. Kellogg Foundation. <https://www.wkcf.org/resource-directory/resources/2004/01/logic-model-development-guide>

Serving 11 states and D.C., the IDRA EAC-South is one of four federally-funded centers that provide technical assistance and training to build capacity to confront educational problems occasioned by discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, sex and gender, and religion.

Intercultural Development Research Association

IDRA EAC-South, Dr. Paula Johnson, Director
5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101 • San Antonio, Texas 78228 • 210-444-1710 • eacsouth@idra.org • www.idra.org/eac-south

Authors

Gretchen Brion-Meisels, Ed.D., Harvard Graduate School of Education lecturer;
Eliza O'Neil, Ed.M., Essential Partners associate and Seeds of Peace co-director of U.S. programs; &
Sarah Bishop, M.A., technical writer and IDRA VisionCoders advisory team member.

The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.