



'Creating A Domino Effect of Kindness'

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Bullying is 'Beyond A Joke' Ltd.

We invest a lot of time and money into mental health yet fail to address the conditions that are leading to long term mental health conditions and suicide. Bullying in our workplaces and schools is prevalent and damaging and has long term impacts on people. The number of young people ending their own lives by suicide continues to grow, and the community has been left shattered by the death of numerous talented and beautiful teenagers, including Dolly Everett[1], Cassidy Trevan[2, 3]; Libby Bell[4]; Tyrone Unsworth [5]; Breannah Piva [6], to name just a few of the tragic young lives lost to bullycide.

Numerous reports highlight the significant problem of bullying within our Australian schools. Sadly efforts to address the problem have lagged behind the incidences of bullying; the reports and the numerous young lives lost to bullycide. In a study of over 20,000 students in Australian schools, it was found that 1 in 3 to 1 in 4 young people are bullied, with the highest incidences of bullying found amongst grade 5 and 8 [7]. A survey of schools in about 40 countries found that Australian primary schools were among those with the highest reported incidence of bullying in the world [8]. Disabled students reported being victimised more often than able-bodied students [9]. The highest incidence of bullying occurs at school [52%], followed by the online space [25%] and then workplace [25%] [10]. A survey of a 1000 young people in Australia, found that approximately half of the young people sought no help for the bullying due to stigma, embarrassment and fear of being seen as weak[10]. Seeking help from an adult was not always effective, with more students indicating the bullying situation stayed the same or got worse (45%) instead of improving. Students reported they would not tell an adult if they were being or had been cyber bullied for fear of having their computer or mobile phone removed [7].

The impacts of school bullying can last a lifetime, leading to ingrained serious mental illness, with significant impacts on economic loss and quality of life. Many people tormented by bullying, feel suicide is the only way to escape the trauma and ongoing torment of bullying. It is because of this that Beyond a Joke was founded. People who are bullied do not want to die; but they see this as the only way to escape the ongoing trauma of bullying to find peace. Traumatized young minds do not have the resilience and emotional maturity to cope with persistent bullying. Traumatized minds cannot see beyond the pain and torment, to realise that life can get better.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION OF MENTAL ILLNESS AND BULLYCID

- a. Numerous studies show a link between childhood bullying and the development of long term serious and persistent mental illness. Children involved in bullying at the age of 8 or 12 years - in particular those who were the victim of bully were reported to have more psychiatric symptoms and a greater chance of displaying deviant



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behaviour when they reached 15 years [11]. Some studies indicate that anxiety and depression are equally common among bullies and victims [12].

- b. In the aftermath of being bullied, victims may develop a variety of psychological as well as somatic symptoms, some of which may persist into adulthood. Psychological symptoms include social difficulties, internalizing symptoms, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and eating disorders. Somatic symptoms may include poor appetite, headaches, sleep disturbances, abdominal pain, and fatigue [13].
- c. Bullying has been found to predict eating disorders in both bullies and victims [14]. In a large Finnish study, Kaltiala-Heino and colleagues found a statistical association between being bullied and development of eating pathology, both in males and females [12]. Childhood bullying is common in males, who may react to this trauma by conscious or unconscious manipulation of body shape. [15]

2. PREVENTION OF FUTURE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR IN BULLIES

- a. There is strong evidence for a substantial link between children who bully and later offend. Bullying others at school is a highly significant predictor of a child growing up to be a criminal offender, on average six years later in life. Farrington, Lösel, Ttofi and Theodorakis (2012) [16] have provided the most comprehensive and up-to-date scientific evidence on this. Using meta-analyses, the authors specifically looked at the strength of the relationship of school bullying with later offending and depression, using the findings reported from longitudinal studies, including Australian studies. Their research suggests that bullying peers at school increases by more than half the risk of later becoming an offender. Bullying peers at school was also significantly related to later depression - increasing the risk by 30%.
- b. Research has isolated bullying as a unique risk marker of later offending. A longitudinal study spanning 30 years, provided evidence for direct linkages between childhood bullying and violent offending and arrest/conviction in adulthood, independent of the effects of childhood conduct and attention problems [17].
- c. In an Australian longitudinal study of 650 adolescents, students who bullied at age 16-17 years had over four times the odds of engaging in non-violent antisocial behaviour and two times the odds of violent antisocial behaviour in young adulthood (age 19-20 years) [18]. Another study of 4,300 young people, found that those who engaged in persistent bullying in their early teens were at increased risk of being violent in later adolescence [19].
- d. Research demonstrates an inter-generational continuity, with those who had been bullies at age 14 being more likely at age 32 to have children who also bullied their peers [20].

We urgently need investment into preventing bullying in schools, community and workplaces. We need targeted programs and support for victims of bullying to prevent the spiral into long term mental illness and suicide.



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Beyond a Joke, Ltd. has developed programs that specifically addresses prevention of bullying from a young age, offers supports to victims of bullying and their families and aims to create 'a domino effect of kindness' while building a culture of respect and tolerance.

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Sponsorship Budget Options:

Option 1:

Printing of Books to Kick Start the Youth Program on the Northern Beaches	
Amelia and Camelia Make A Great Team (Book 1) @ 150 books	\$1,675
Don't Stare at My Underwear – It's Rude (Book 2) @ 150 books	\$1,585
Bullies Need Friends Too (Book 3) @ 150 books	\$1,585
Please Don't Tease (Book 4) @ 150 books	\$1,540
TOTAL SPONSORSHIP COST FOR PRINTING	<u>\$6385</u>

Option 2: Mix and Match

Sponsorship BAJ Youth Program on the Northern Beaches	
Plays – The Australian Bush School per unit cost, involving community, schools and family. Preparation, Costumes and Event.	\$3000
Leadership Program: The Empowering Warriors [self-sustaining]	\$10,000
The Community Spirit Lifters Program [self-sustaining]	\$10,000
Seed Funding – Barry Empowerment Program for people with disabilities	

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