

Workshop: “Are you a cyber-bully?”

Date, Time: Thursday, 30.09.2010, 10:00 - 13:00 and 14:30 - 17:15

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Workshop content/theme

Cyber-bullying is a relatively new phenomenon and in many cases is not recognized by adults. Nevertheless the effect can be even more traumatic for the child-victim. And often the perpetrators do not realise they are doing harm. Demonstration of a methodology implemented in dozens of Bulgarian schools named “Real and Virtual Violence: Prevention by Interactive Education in School”

Aims

Pupils: To make them think, discuss and realise the real harm of virtual bullying

Teachers: To raise their awareness of the problem and demonstrate tested and well working methods for prevention by open discussions with the students.

Method(s)/Approach

The methods used are from the methodology designed by ARC Fund and the Association Parents on prevention of real and virtual violence by developing emotional intelligence. As a starting point the specific lesson on cyber-bullying from the 25-lesson methodological guidebook for teachers was used but as the lessons in the guidebook are designed as 40-minute lessons, topics from the lessons “Violence – virtuality and reality”, “Violence – victim and aggressor”, “Bullying as a form of violence” were also employed.

The workshops started with an icebreaker game allowing everybody to introduce and say something brief about him/herself. Then a game – “Knock my hat off my head” was played to introduce the notions of violent behaviour, feelings of the victim and the aggressor and basic emotions leading to violence. A discussion about these was aimed at making the pupils think about what lies behind a violent act in life.

Then the topic was introduced in short and a first brainstorming session was launched: Which forms of violence do you know? Can you think of each form in the virtual world of Internet? Point at similarities and differences.

Depending on the mood of the participants 2 or 3 energizer games were played (3 in the afternoon).

Then a case of not so evident violence in school was presented and a brainstorming about the cause and possible ways out of the situation were discussed.

At the end a general conclusion was drawn that bullying online is as real and as dangerous as physical bullying and sometimes even more so because of the larger number of witnesses of the humiliation of the victim.

Further tips, sources, resource material or links

The English translation of the methodological guidebook is available for download at:

http://saferinternet.org/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=10527&folderId=22179&name=DLFE-2246.pdf&version=1.3

Questions for workshop reflection

Students: Is it possible that online aggression leads to worse consequences than the physical one?

Teachers: Can a victim of cyber-bullying be identified among the students. How to react?

Impressions, outcomes of the workshop

The interactive methods worked well with the pupils and with some of the teachers. Most of the teachers were not aware of the usual online activities of the young people – that was helpful in the morning workshop as the students started actively explaining to the teachers what a young person usually uses the internet for.

As a whole, I had the impression that the notion of equality between acts of aggression in physical life and on the internet was new to the students, but with the progress of the workshop they grasped the idea which was proven by their ability to point at virtual equivalents of physical acts of violence. They started to share cases they witnessed or knew about thus showing good understanding of the problem.

