School Programs

Each of the programs listed here are suggestions for possible programs to introduce and support at your school that can assist with preventing bullying and sexual harassment at a school. Each offers a change to the school environment, all with the intent of changing the culture of the school to reduce violence. They should be considered as part of a comprehensive response to bullying and sexual harassment at a school, so as to best change the culture: The Whole School Approach. It should be noted that none are promised to work, as the effectiveness is determined by the culture of the school and the needs of your school (this can be determined by the survey of students and staff). But each fits within the parameters of introducing certain ideas into the culture of the school.

Assertiveness training: Make sure it is available and that someone is able to help students through such training. Students need to be informed of the availability of training that can help increase assertiveness for students who may be more likely to be bullied. This will reduce the likelihood of being bullied in the future.

- http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/selfesteem/
- Teacher Aids: http://www.kellybear.com/TeacherArticles/TeacherTip74.html
- Go Fly a Kite: http://www.angermanagementgroups.com/GoFlyAKITE-AssertivenessTrainingForChildren.html
- Kidscape Handout: http://www.kidscape.org.uk/assets/downloads/assertivenessforchildren.pdf

Breaking Down the Wall of Intolerance: A school-wide event (although it can be conducted by specific classrooms, and then share the bricks with the other class) that works to identify how bullying and other acts of aggression have helped to maintain a "Wall of intolerance" (maintain the culture) at school. Can be used in conjunction with other events, such as Mix it Up. Paper bricks (or some connecting types of bricks) should be given to students and staff. Write or draw an act of intolerance or bullying. The wall will be put up in a public venue. On a specified day, students will take down a brick. They will be encouraged to read it. Then discuss it. By the end of the period, it should be taken down. (These are guidelines, so the format can be changed to fit the culture of the school.)

Bully Courts/Student Bully Council: Students make determination if student bullying occurred, and more importantly, the form of punishment that should occur. These are difficult to maintain, as staff need to be actively involved in the process to keep students on task and within the school boundaries and rules, which means being the ruling judge. This, however, is tentative as it impedes on a major component of using bully courts is giving students' voice in the proceedings. It has been shown that using bully courts in conjunction with other anti-bullying programs can help to reduce bullying, especially since both staff and students are likely to believe it helps (again, this is related to working in conjunction with other changes in the school). They offer the ability to share responsibility among a group of students, increase peer devaluation of bullying and the results of consequences to bullying behavior. But concerns over impartiality, bias and power issues raises concerns among staff and parents. What can be used also are

Bully Councils who evaluate each situation and offer suggestions of punishment to the staff bully committee.

http://www.kidscape.org.uk/professionals/studentcouncils.shtml

Group Art Projects: These can be class determined or school-wide, in which students can create their own art project that is displayed on the school grounds (designate an area/place for this). The projects can be one whole project that a group of students work on together, or several individual (or partner) projects. The key is to create an environment that is more appealing to be at, connects students to the school and highlights student achievements.

Mix it Up at Lunch Day: National program (November every year) that encourages students to interact with different people. Simply eat with someone different at lunch. Students become aware of the "invisible line of division" that governs groups (not just during lunch). It encourages students to become of a diversity of groups. Staff and teachers are encouraged to participate in this activity.

Peer Mentoring: While peer mentoring should never be used for addressing bullying and sexual harassment situations, such groups create a venue that allows students to address (and learn how to address) other forms of conflict. It is an excellent program to involve marginalized students who may be victims of bullying, as it connects them to a group (a social network is a major factor in reducing victimization) who is taught to accept others, connects them to the school and ultimately can teach them social skills that may assist them, including raising their self esteem. Finally, it gives students voice. District has access to specific groups to include such programs at a school.

Restorative Justice: The emphasis in restorative justice is holding students responsible for their actions by offering a venue for them to correct (restore) the wrong they have enacted through their behavior, without focusing on blame or punitive responses. There are multiple means of accomplishing this (mentoring, conferencing, circles), but all work to empower the victim to meet their needs, while not demeaning the offender so that they feel a need to retaliate. Empathy programs are best used in conjunction with restorative justice to assist bully in grasping the impact they have had and the need to restore a balance in the school, and the victim specifically. Possibly ideas and/or options need to be established by the bully committee (along with a counselor who would establish and run the program) prior to running the program.

SAFE Ambassadors: The Safe School Ambassadors® program empowers leaders (not focused on AS school leaders, but group members) from the diverse groups and cliques on campus and equips them with nonviolent communication and intervention skills to stop bullying and violence among their peers. It gives students' a voice in the school, connects different people and groups to the school (those who are often not involved), and establishes positive interaction among a diverse group/people who would not normally be involved. It is not about informing on students to the principal, but as being a body of knowledge to help increase the awareness of the principal about why issues are occurring, as well as the needs of the students. If it is established and maintained as an open environment, students will begin to share more information to help make the school safer. Best to choose students who are not always leaders in the school, but who represent the different groups on the campus. Many districts have

purchased rights to gain access to the materials affiliated with understanding and developing such a program. Check with your school or district.
http://www.community-matters.org/safe-school-ambassadors/

Safe Rooms: 1-2 (or more) rooms should be designated to be open during free times (lunch, before and after school) that students can hang out in during those periods of time. If those rooms are closed, then establish a protocol for another room to be opened (supply a note to inform students: inform others about rooms: security, office, lunchroom, etc). It makes students feel safer, connects them to the school, and gives them a safe environment in which to hang out.

Second Step: The Second Step Program is set up for middle school, and not high school, but the materials can be used to help address key concerns among some kids. The program is an anti-violence, behavior management program that educates students about developing self control, empathy for others and anger management, three primary areas that bullies commonly suffer from. The district owns this program, and the materials associated with it.

Sexual harassment advocates: An advocate, or collection of students who can talk to students who have claimed sexual harassment. They can be affiliated with peer mentoring, but should have an emphasis in such experiences, preferably through training, and should not be mediating any conflict. There role should be about supporting the student, and potential knowing who and how to report to staff.

Spirit Team: A diverse group of students nominated by teachers and staff who meet monthly and have lunch together as they attempt to increase student connectivity through a number of venues. To do these, there are a number of committees that are established to have a positive impact on the culture of the school. Committees can include the following: Welcome: Students not only help to establish student welcoming procedures, but actually this group accompanies the student during the first week of school, Documentation: organizes information about the school and relays it to students, such as creating a video to share experiences, Mix it up: organizes and runs this (or similar program), Student Activities: Organizes activities throughout the year (or on a designated day), often during school hours, to get students interested and interacting with the school, Grant Writing/Fundraisers: Works with other groups to help get money for programs, but even fundraisers can involve other students, Sports Day: similar to activities day, organizes a specific day (or several) for sports/games that all students can engage, and thus interacting with other students; Discipline Review: Help to write discipline policy and educate students about it (can include just being a source of information to teachers/administration to give student viewpoint). This program creates a place for student voice, connects a diverse group of students to the school and one another, gets buy in for policies/procedures from students, creates venues for a diverse group of students to interact, and connects large groups of students to the school.

Stop Hatin' Wall: This is a pledge wall to make a visible statement and commitment by students and staff to stop (and not condone) bullying on campus. A school wide program requires staff and students to sign their name to the pledge, as well as add their hand print (using paint or some other form). This should be in a visible location.

Student Mentoring: A form of peer mentoring, but instead it is when older students mentor younger students, in particular pairing high school students with middle school or elementary school students. It can be good to connect bullies as they learn more positive interaction skills, and gain positive affirmation for their interactions with the kids. It can also be helpful to potential victims for the same reasons identified for peer mentoring. Beyond working with older students, can engage courses at CSU Fresno to help establish mentoring programs.

Tibetan Peace Flags: Based on the Prayer Flags of Tibet, prayers printed on the flags are taken by the wind to spread it throughout. The flags are created by students to display a message of peace, through images, colors and/or words (can rely on traditional symbols for the colors (blue: sky; white: air or clouds; red: fire; green: water; yellow: earth).

Welcoming environment: Not so much a program, as it is a policy that should be enacted at a school. A clean and welcoming environment is important as it helps with changing the culture of a school. Research shows that behavior changes simply by creating and maintaining not only a clean environment, but one in which students and staff want to be at. That can include introducing materials from students into the campus environment, which also helps to connect students to the school more.