



SACS promotes problem-solving model

One of the objectives of the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) project is to encourage adults to use problem-solving strategies rather than punishment when dealing with children's and adolescents' inappropriate behavior. When using a problem-solving approach, the goal is for the young person to learn a better way to behave. With a punishment approach, the goal is to impose a penalty or reward. It is important for adults to remember that making mistakes is part of growing and learning. The focus should be on the child's behavior, not the child.

The chart on page 2, taken from the overview workshop of the ATA's SACS project, contrasts two approaches to dealing with children's misbehavior. Some will argue that the punishment model does modify behavior, and this can be true. It does so by imposing external controls such as rewards and punishments that are dependent on external forces (adult approval or disapproval). Punishment relies on intimidation, exclusion and expulsion. The punishment model fails to teach responsibility, and "good" behavior is dependent on the presence of an adult. If one examines the personal backgrounds of juvenile and adult offenders, a history of punishment and abuse is not uncommon. Obviously, punishment has not worked for them; in fact, many would argue that it caused misbehavior.

Children can learn to behave respectfully and responsibly when the problem-solving model is used. This model teaches responsibility by dealing with misbehavior as it relates to given circumstances. It asks that children consider how

their behavior affects others, how they can make restitution for misbehavior and how they can learn from their mistakes.

Problem-solving • continued on page 2



Betty Dean, principal of Edmonton's McDougall School, puts up a poster to remind students about the school's peer support program. Dean, a firm believer in early intervention, the integration of children's services and violence prevention through language development, was involved in the startup of Edmonton's Success By 6®. Teachers at McDougall School are currently using *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA Resources for Integration: Grades 1 to 6*.

The ATA's Code of Professional Conduct states that "The teacher treats pupils with dignity and respect and is considerate of their circumstances." The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care

of the child." The convention also states that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity."

When we change our thinking about student misbehavior and about conflict, it helps us to implement approaches that teach rather than punish.

Which model reflects your approach to misbehavior?

Punishment model versus problem-solving model

Focused on mistakes	vs	Focused on "making things right"
External control	vs	Intrinsic motivation (values/prosocial character)
Rewards and punishment	vs	Recognition, restitution and logical consequences
Abdication of responsibility	vs	Assumption of responsibility by all
Exclusion/expulsion	vs	Belonging/resocialization
One consequence fits all	vs	Consequences are based on circumstances
Moral condemnation	vs	Preventive education and interagency approach
A fight against delinquents	vs	A fight against delinquency
Intimidation	vs	Respect
Retaliation	vs	Reconciliation
"Discipline is a burden"	vs	"Discipline is learning a better way to behave"
Reactive	vs	Proactive
\$7 spending on the justice and penal systems	vs	\$1 spending on prevention and early intervention



Yes, you do have an influence on youth!

Have you smiled at a teen lately? Your smile conveys a sense of warmth and acceptance, something we all need. In our busy lives, we may forget to smile, particularly at people we don't know well. We forget how much it means to others as well as how good it makes us feel. Your smile helps a teen feel like part of the community.

Source: *Excellence ... News from Red Deer Public Schools*, January 2000.



At its January 25 meeting, the ATA's SACS Steering Committee worked through an exercise demonstrating the importance of working together to create a strong safety net for children and youth. The exercise was part of an informative and interactive presentation given by Michelle Engman on the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets.

Heading off anger before it starts

Anger is a strong emotion. It is a normal, natural response to everyday problems. Keeping anger under control involves recognizing that you are getting angry and doing things to calm down before it gets out of control. Teachers, parents and other important adults in the lives of children and teens can help head off angry episodes before they begin.

Start by brainstorming about situations that cause angry feelings. Then brainstorm about things that can be done in these situations to help alleviate the anger.

After your brainstorming session, compare your results with the following techniques recommended in Topic 4 of the ATA's *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA Resources for Integration: ECS to Grade 6*:

- **Relaxation exercises**, such as deep breathing, tensing and relaxing muscles and/or listening to music.
- **Talking or writing** about what caused the anger. This may include thinking about the situation alone, speaking to others about it, expressing feelings in a diary and/or writing a letter telling the other person(s) what has caused the anger.
- **Taking time out** by walking away, going to a quiet place and/or doing something physical.
- **Getting help**, which may mean talking to adults, talking to friends and/or informing the person in charge.

Children and teens can learn to take responsibility for managing their anger. If these techniques don't work, you may wish to talk with a counselor or doctor to see if extra help is needed.

Bullying resources on the Net

Anti-Bullying Network
www.antibullying.net

Bullying at School Information
www.scre.ac.uk/bully

Bullyproof Your Classroom
www.knea.org/strengthen/bullyproof.html

Helping Your Child Cope with Teasing
family.go.com/features/family_1997_11/dcpt/dcpt117tease/dcpt117tease.html

Maine Project Against Bullying
lincoln.midcoast.com/~wps/against/bullying.html

No Bully Website
www.nobully.org.nz/default.htm

Stop Bullying and Teasing in K-6 to Prevent Sexual Harassment Now, Later
www.thompson.com/tpg/person/sink/sinkjan.html

Stopping School Violence
www.ncpc.org/2schvio.htm

Suggestions for Handling Teasing and Put-Downs
www.laser-imprints.com/opp/smarts.html#teasing

Teasing
funrsc.fairfield.edu/~jfleitas/teasetips.html

The Teasing Teen
home.istar.ca/~integra/tipserie.htm#teasing

What Makes Kids Care?
www.apa.org/pubinfo/altruism.html

What Should Parents and Teachers Know About Bullying?
www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/bullying.html

www.bullying.org

Niska News is a newsletter produced by the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) project for school and community members. The goal of the SACS project is to encourage practices that model and reinforce socially responsible and respectful behaviors so that learning and teaching can take place in a safe and caring environment. Achieving this goal requires the involvement of not just parents and teachers but also all the important adults in a young person's life. This newsletter is designed to provide timely, up-to-date information about the project. For more information, contact the SACS office by phoning 447-9487 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (from elsewhere in Alberta). Copying and distributing Niska News is permitted as long as the source is credited.

Notice

The **Safe and Caring Schools and Communities Conference** will be held November 23-25, 2000, at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton. This is an excellent school/district Professional Development Day opportunity. Group/district rates are available. Additional information is available from Brenda Sautner at <bsautner@epsb.edmonton.ab.ca>.

Bullets or seeds

You can offer your ideas to others as *bullets* or as *seeds*. You can shoot them, or sow them; hit people in the head with them, or plant them in their hearts.

Ideas used as bullets will kill inspiration and neutralize motivation. Used as seeds, they take root, grow, and become reality in the life in which they are planted.

The only risk in the seed approach: once it grows and becomes part of those in whom it's planted, you probably will get no credit for originating the idea. But if you're willing to do without the credit...you'll reap a rich harvest.

—Dr Richard C Halverson, Former Chaplain of the United States Senate



Attention Secondary School Lead Teachers . . .

The ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project



INSERVICE LEADER TRAINING for *Toward a Safe and Caring Secondary Curriculum—Approaches to Integration* will be offered by the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools project May 1-2, 2000, from 9 am to 4 pm, at the Southern Alberta Regional Office, Room 305, 540 12 Avenue SW, Calgary. The \$95 registration fee includes a training kit. Lunch will be provided at an additional cost of \$10 per day. Please bring your curriculum guides to the workshop.

This two-day training workshop will prepare teachers to deliver the one-day workshop and follow-up sessions to their secondary colleagues. The workshop focuses on integrating violence prevention and character education into the secondary curriculum. It is designed to provide strategies for junior and senior high school teachers to infuse safe and caring principles with Alberta curriculum outcomes. Research indicates that a successful school violence program integrates safe and caring principles throughout the students' entire school experience and promotes the practice of these principles in the students' homes and communities.

Candidates for this facilitator training workshop must be experienced, certificated teachers with exceptional teaching skills, an excellent knowledge of the elementary curriculum and proficiency in facilitating adult workshops and demonstrating leadership with their colleagues. **A letter of reference from each teacher's principal or superintendent is required.**

To register:

Please register by contacting Sue Sheffield at

Tel: (780) 447-9487 or 1-800-232-7208

Fax: (780) 455-6481

E-mail: <sacs@teachers.ab.ca>

Send your \$115 for registration and lunch to

Sue Sheffield
Safe and Caring Schools Project
The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street NW
Edmonton AB
T5N 2R1

Please register by April 15, 2000