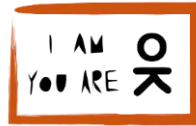




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## Prospectus – workshops for parents

Erasmus+ project „I am OK, you are OK”

**Project goal:** raise awareness among primary and secondary school teachers, students, and parents about bullying and cyberbullying prevention processes

Website: [I am OK, you are OK](#)

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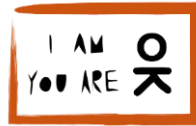
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## **PROGRAM of workshops for parents as part of the project "I'm OK, You're OK"**

Duration: 10 h

<p><b>The main objectives of the workshops</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raising parent's awareness of the symptoms, short and long-term consequences of bullying among children, ways to prevent the phenomenon and ways to intervene</li> <li>• equipping parents with the skills to build a close parent-child relationship based on mutual respect and trust, in accordance with the Positive Discipline method.</li> <li>• expanding parent' awareness in the context of ways to strengthen children' social skills, i.e. assertiveness and empathy, non-violent communication, the high level of which minimizes bullying among teens.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Detailed objectives</b></p>	<p>Acquisition of skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognizing the temperament of their children and the behavior that it causes</li> <li>• constructive communication with elements of assertiveness and empathic reactions</li> <li>• formulating messages in accordance with Non-Violent Communication (NVC)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● building a relationship with the child based on respect, kindness and firmness in accordance with the Positive Discipline method,</li> <li>● raising awareness of the destructive phenomenon of bullying and cyberbullying, taking into account its long-term consequences, which will parents to learn the causes, identify symptoms and effects of such violence.</li> </ul>
<b>Metody</b>	Activating role-plays, brainstorming, case study, mini-lecture, moderated discussions, mini-group work, individual work, coaching questions, psycho-education
<b>Materials</b>	Paper, markers, flipchart, pens, Powerpoint presentation, laptop
<b>Rezultaty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengthening competences in building a close relationship with the child (as one of the important factors minimizing the occurrence of bullying)</li> <li>● The ability to use Positive Discipline tools</li> <li>● Acquisition of competence in non-violent communication (NVC)</li> <li>● The ability to identify the phenomenon of bullying , adequate response when the child bullies or is bullied by someone and prevention of bullying</li> </ul>



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## **THE PROGRAM OF THE WORKSHOP**

### **1. Introduction of the trainer.**

### **2. What will be worked on during the workshop?**

The trainer briefly tells the participants about the workshop objectives.

The project "I am OK, You are OK" aims to raise awareness of students, teachers and parents about the destructive phenomenon of bullying - violence that students experience at school from their peers, its symptoms, ways of reacting to it, its effects in adult life and now. The study shows that at school, students encounter various forms of violence (physical and psychological), malicious comments, critical evaluation, challenging, exclusion from the group, ridicule. The ability to recognize and respond to violent behavior is an essential skill for parents which protects mental health (and thus self-esteem, educational achievement) of their sons/daughters now and in the future. If we know the types of such violence and the appropriate ways to react, we will be able to effectively intervene and prevent the phenomenon at the same time.

The trainer asks parents to complete an anonymous initial survey examining their level of knowledge in the area of peer violence (bullying) and ways to build a close relationship with a child based on mutual respect, cooperation and trust.

### **3. Group rules**

The trainer distributes stickers and asks participants to write their names on them and stick them in a visible place on their clothes.

The trainer distributes 2 sticky notes to the participants and asks the participants to write down what we have and what we don't have permission to do during the workshop, in order to ensure an open, safe and friendly



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atmosphere for each other. Examples of rules that may appear in the contract: we do not interrupt each other, when one person speaks, the others listen, we speak for ourselves, we do not judge or criticize other people / we talk about behavior, not about the person, we switch off mobile phones, we are active and engaged.

The trainer collects the cards, reads them aloud, asks if everyone agrees to the presented rules. He sticks them in a visible place or asks one of the participants to do so.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE METHOD**

### **Positive Discipline - Mini lecture**

The analysis of data from effective anti-bullying programs in the world shows that it is important to implement solutions aimed at creating a *favorable, child-friendly climate at home and in the classroom*, which will affect, among others, on the development of positive features of social coexistence, preventing the formation of excluded groups and provide young people with a sense of security at home and in the classroom.

A tool supporting teachers and parents in building such a climate in the classroom and at home is the international method of Positive Discipline (*according to the results of the UNESCO report from 2019*) which strengthens the mutual ties between adults and young people. It also builds a relationship based on trust and mutual respect, which is crucial in preventing bullying thus reducing the occurrence of negative phenomena, including bullying, and encouraging young people to cooperate with adults.

Positive discipline is a classic educational method that has been developed for 40 years in the world, it is based on relationships and mutual respect. Its roots go back to the individual psychology of the Austrian psychotherapist Alfred Adler, who believed that all people have one basic

desire: they want to feel that they belong and that they are important. It assumes kindness and firmness in communication with children at the same time, assuming that instead of having no choice (which is typical for traditionally understood discipline), the child has a limited choice, taking into account the boundaries of other people. Positive discipline emphasizes and builds children's vital competences (independence, cooperation responsibility, assertiveness, problem solving). It stands in opposition to the approach according to which, in order for children to start behaving better, they must first feel worse (through punishments, bans, blackmail). It encourages the creation of rules of conduct, agreements together with adults, which can bring the desired effect - children are more likely to follow these rules if they participate in the process of creating them and at the same time find out why it is so important to follow them.

The Positive Discipline Method is a perfect balance between the traditional authoritarian (strict) upbringing and the permissive (indulgent) upbringing.

### **Positive Discipline - Brainstorming session**

The trainer asks parents what they associate with strict upbringing and writes down the answers on the flipchart. Then, she/he asks what kind of adults are brought up using this upbringing method? She/he then displays a Powerpoint slide on the consequences of this parenting method. The consequences of permissive parenting are discussed in the same way.

### **Positive Discipline - Group exercises**

The trainer asks parents to stand in a semi-circle in front of her and imagine that they are children of their own children's age. She/he plays the role of the parent and tells them a dozen or so different messages from the previously discussed educational methods. She/he asks them to take a step forward if the given message encourages to cooperate with such an adult (parent), a step back if the message is discouraging. They stand still if the message is neutral in their perception.





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She/he then asks what those messages have to do with making you take a step forward?

It is important to elicit such responses as: tone of voice, respectful message, choice, question instead of command.

This way, the participants of the workshop will begin to exchange the first tools of Positive Discipline (tone of voice, limited choice, a firm and kind message at the same time, agreements, questions instead of instructions ... etc.), which the trainer will present on the presentation slide.

Then she/he will present what kind of adults we raise using the Positive Discipline method.

### **Positive Discipline - Brainstorming**

She/he then asks parents what annoys them most about children's behavior? The answers are written down on a flipchart under the heading CHALLENGES.

Then he will tell them to imagine their children in 30 years, who, as adults, come to their family home for dinner and talk about their lives, how they are doing at work, in relations with people, and after this conversation the parents have reflections: "What a great an adult man has grown out of this child of mine" – So what are his life characteristics and competences that such a reflection came to them?

The trainer writes down the answers on a flipchart under the heading COMPETENCES.

The host summarizes that the PD method allows you to build these competences in children and deal with challenges using the Positive Discipline tools that we will be learned during the workshop.



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## **Positive Discipline - Exercise in mini groups**

The flagship tool of Positive Discipline is a firm and kind message. The leader divides the participants into groups of 3 and distributes a dozen or so cards with various messages from adults to children, the task of each group is to choose only kind and firm messages at the same time. Then, in the forum of the group, individual choices are discussed and possibly corrected by the trainer.

## **Positive Discipline - Role-play**

With the help of the following scene, the trainer introduces/allows you to experience the second important PD tool - Questions instead of commands.

The trainer asks 6 volunteers to act as parents and 1 volunteer to act as a child. Then, she/he distributes 2 messages to 6 parents, one containing a COMMAND, the other a REQUEST IN THE FORM OF A QUESTION. She/he then asks them to read their instructions one by one to the child (played by one of the parents), who after this round gets questions from the trainer: What did you feel, what did you think, what did you decide after hearing this message?

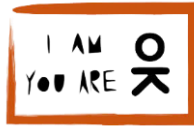
In the second round, she/he asks the parents to read their message in the form of a question to the child, and then again the trainer asks the child questions: What did you feel, what did you think, what did you decide after hearing this message?

It is important to elicit that he felt treated with respect, thought that the parent respects him, takes his opinion into account and decides to cooperate with him.

Summary of the exercise asking parents if they see the difference between messages in the form of commands and questions.



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## Mini- lecture

The instructor discusses other PD tools that parents can use to create a positive atmosphere at home and take care of their relationship with children, i.e. limited choice, concluding contracts, creating plans, special time (quality time).

### **Why do children behave in ways that adults do not approve of?**

The trainer draws an iceberg on the flipchart and explains that the child's behavior is just the tip of the iceberg, the rest (the reasons for this behavior is under the surface of the water and it is invisible to us). It is important not to focus on the behavior, but on what cannot be seen, i.e. the emotional need that is behind the unwanted behavior, i.e. THE NEED FOR BELONGING and MEANING, a basic human need.

If children do not feel that it is satisfied, they begin to exhibit undesirable behaviors, believing that in this way they will satisfy it. What is needed here is conscious adults who will not only react to what is visible, i.e. undesirable behavior (by applying punishments they additionally worsen the child's emotional deficit) but will only look under the surface of the water and notice the unsatisfied need for belonging and meaning - and respond to it, then the inappropriate behavior is eliminated.

## Exercise

The facilitator asks 4 parents to volunteer (who will play the role of parents) and 2 parents who will play the role of children. She/he asks 4 parents to stand on chairs arranged in a circle and raise their voices to the children to say messages from strict upbringing (e.g. how many times do I have to tell you that you mustn't eat with your hands! What you don't understand!),



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who will approach them one by one and look at them (played by 2 parents). Then he asks the 2 parents playing the role of the children to look the adults in the chairs in the eye after each communication they hear and say "I am a child and I just want to belong" and thus make 2 laps repeating the same phrase.

Then the trainer asks the parents on chairs:

- how they felt in this role, especially when they heard this phrase from the children?
- would they be able to treat a child so harshly if they approached and instead of undesirable behavior said the phrase - "I am a child and I just want to belong"?

The trainer summarizes that behind every undesirable behavior of children there is a deep need request to satisfy their need for belonging and importance.

### **Brainstorming**

The trainer asks the parents a question: How can you meet your children's need of belonging and being significant? She/he then writes the answers on a flipchart.

It is important for the following answers to appear: giving them limited choice, showing understanding for their feelings and emotions, not using punishment, asking questions instead of giving orders, spending special time with them once a week.

The trainer shows a slide of a Powerpoint presentation, which shows what 4 wrong strategies (behaviors) children fall into to satisfy their need for belonging and importance.



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- 1) **Attracting excessive attention** - this is the belief that you are important when you are the center of attention
- 2) **Gaining power** - the belief that only those who are strong deserve recognition
- 3) **Revenge**, the criteria of belonging to a group is to repay the same way for the wrongs suffered, I am hurt so I can hurt others
- 4) **Lack of self-confidence** - it's proving to others that you're not worth much, the child doesn't even try, claiming that he can't and will never learn it

Then the trainer shows slides of the presentation, on which it is explained how a particular wrong strategy manifests itself and how to react to it in an optimal way.

### **Punishments and logical consequences**

#### **Punishments and logical consequences – moderated discussion**

The trainer asks parents what children learn through punishment?

She/he writes the answers on a flipchart.

#### **Logical Consequences – Mini lecture**

She/he then presents the real effects of punishment according to the method of Positive Discipline, i.e.:

- it show that adults can't be trusted,
- parents are against me
- I won't get caught next time
- the world is unfair



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- nobody understands me
- there's something wrong with me

The use of punishment weakens the adult-child relationship and does not encourage the child to cooperate. On the contrary, it encourages resistance, scheming, or excessive obedience out of fear of punishment, not out of an genuine need to behave in a socially acceptable way.

The trainer then displays using a Powerpoint presentation the first alternative to punishment in accordance with the Positive Discipline method, i.e. logical consequences. She/he also shows the difference between punishment and consequence.

Emphasizing the 4 criteria, the so-called 4Ps of logical consequences are:

- 1) Connection - means that there must be a direct relationship between the child's behavior and its consequences (e.g. the parent takes away the phone that the child used during studying)
- 2) Respectful (not humiliating, guilt-ridden or embarrassing for the child)
- 3) Proportional (reasonable from the adult's and the child's point of view)
- 4) Presented in advance (the child is warned about what the consequence will be if he/she does not change his behavior)

Another alternative to punishment is natural consequence

Natural consequences occur automatically without adult intervention. If you go out in the rain without an umbrella, you'll get wet. If you don't bring your gym clothes, you won't be able to exercise. People learn responsibility best by bearing the natural consequences of their actions, so let children bear it. It is then important to refrain from "I told you so" comments - it is disrespectful to the child. Natural consistency is a very

helpful tool and a learning experience. It should be remembered, however, that it is not possible to adjust the natural consequence to every situation (when a child runs out into the street at a red light).

The final alternative to punishment is a tool called *Solution Focus Through Questions full of curiosity*.

However, it must be remembered that if we are looking for solutions together, everyone must first establish a connection with the rational part of their brain. This takes place when the first emotions associated with undesirable behavior subside and we do it when the level of emotions of all people involved allows for a rational search solutions. Finding solutions is not about focusing on the problem and wondering why the child did what they did. Questions starting with WHY make the child feel accused, start to justify, often confabulate to explain their behavior at all costs. It is important that the most important thing for adults is to find a solution to difficult situations together, not to investigate why children behaved so badly. When looking for solutions, it is worth getting acquainted with questions full of curiosity.

**Sample questions:** How do you feel about it now? How does it look from your perspective? How do you think your friend is feeling now? (e.g. in a conflict situation) What does this situation teach you? What are the possible solutions to this situation? What could help you feel better now? What do you need to do differently next time?

In this way, children learn to look for solutions on their own in difficult situations, develop empathy by putting themselves in the shoes of another person, draw conclusions, i.e. learn from mistakes and thus it does not happen at the expense of their self-esteem because there is no element of shaming, punishment or humiliation.



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**Encouragement instead of praise** - another Positive Discipline tool that builds a lasting sense of self-esteem in children

### **Encouragement instead of praise – Mini lecture**

Well-intentioned parents often discourage children and make them feel helpless. They don't think about the long-term effects of their messages. Parents do not take into account what their children may think about themselves, hearing those messages a hundred times. They may think: "I'm unimportant", "I'm useless", "I can't handle it", "Better let others do it." It is very important to remember that we (as adults) may not feel comfortable with encouraging phrases until we realize their long-term results.

Instead of focusing on:

1. what is wrong,
2. why it happened,
3. what the child should feel about what they did
4. and what they should do to fix it,

it is worth encouraging them by asking the question:

1. what made you react like that?
2. what did the child think was the cause?
3. what does the child feel?
4. what did they learn?
5. what solutions were offered to him/her? and how the child can use what he has learned in the future?





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## **Encouragement instead of praise - Exercise**

The trainer asks 2 volunteers to play the role of sisters.

The task of the sisters is to listen to the messages they receive from the trainer who plays the role of their mother and to say whether they like these messages and if YES / NO, why.

(Some messages are typical praise, others are encouragement)

**PRAISE** Good job! Bravo!, I'm proud of you! I like your drawing, great!  
You did exactly as I told you, You are very smart, Awesome!

**ENCOURAGEMENT(GIVING SUPPORT)** You worked hard, you deserve this grade, You can be proud of yourself, How do you like your drawing?  
I trust you'll make the right decision, I can see you're getting better at these math calculations.

The trainer then shows on the slide the difference between praise and encouragement. By emphasizing that praise develops a child's need to gain the approval of others at all costs, it strengthens perfectionism (which is not good for mental health), competition with others and teaches that only the end result counts, not commitment and contribution.

## **Temperament**

### **What is temperament and what is it responsible for?**

#### **Temperament - Exercise**

The trainer asks parents which animal turtle, lion, chameleon or eagle they would like to turn into for 24 hours.



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Then people who have chosen the same animal form a group and write down all the positive character traits that they associate with this animal and that made them choose it. Then they list the faults of the other 3 unselected animals.

Then all groups discuss their chosen animals in the forum.

The trainer asks at the end: WHAT DOES THIS EXERCISE PROVE?

It would be good if there were conclusions that we are all different, that what is an advantage for someone is a disadvantage for another, that it is impossible to say who is the best because everyone has pros and cons. If everyone was the same it would be boring. Everyone has different resources and that's the value.

### **Temperament - Mini lecture**

As the previous exercise showed, we are very different from each other. Some of us are capable of long-term work on something, others get tired quickly, impatiently, discouraged. Some are calm, others easily explode, want to dominate, do not miss the opportunity to retaliate. There are high energy people and there are low energy people. There are those who easily make contact with others, but there are also those who prefer their own company. Some people find it easy to be the center of attention, while for others it is a huge step out of their comfort zone. Temperament is a relatively constant element of our personality, it is not susceptible to change.

Hippocrates back in the 5th century B.C. noticed that people are characterized by different types of personality and his descriptions are still the basis for classifying different types of temperaments.

Therefore, we distinguish: melancholic, choleric, sanguine, and phlegmatic



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The trainer presents a description of individual temperaments on the Powerpoint presentation and asks the parents after each of them if they have a son/daughter with such a temperament at home and what his/her behavior results strictly from the temperament.

### **Soft skills**

Soft skills that minimize violent behavior (including BULLYING) in children

#### **Soft skills – Mini lecture**

The trainer lists 4 skills that reduce the tendency to use violence against peers, i.e. assertiveness, empathy, non-violent communication and the ability to resolve conflicts while emphasizing non-violent communication (NVC)

## **NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION**

The trainer presents NVC (mini-lecture)

The main assumption of NVC is to use language that does not hurt, and thus promotes a better understanding of yourself and the other person.

The creator of this agreement, M. Rosenberg, called it the language of the giraffe, while the evaluative, hurtful way of speaking called it the language of the jackal.

NVC is a life attitude that allows creating situations in which each participant gains something, it is a way of communication that consists in respecting own and others' feelings and needs and striving to respect and satisfy them in a non-aggressive way (without physical violence, but also psychological, without exerting pressure, emotional blackmail, forcing certain behaviors by means of threats and punishments. NVC is a path of empathy, a path to a life based on good relationship with other people.



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Rosenberg described the language of the giraffe as the language of empathy and respect, used from the perspective of "I". The Jackal, on the other hand, uses language that cuts us off from contact - uses evaluation, judgment and blame, he speaks from the perspective of "YOU". Why a giraffe? The giraffe is a mammal that has the largest heart in relation to its body weight. Thanks to his long neck, he looks at the world from a wide perspective - he has a very wide view of the situation and can cover the whole of what is happening.

In the world of Nonviolent Communication, the giraffe uses the "language of the heart" - feelings and needs. Speaks in the singular, talks about himself, uses the message I. During a conversation, she/he wants to hear the other person and wants to be heard herself. He wants to reach his own and other people's needs, both satisfied and unsatisfied. He wants to be in touch with his feelings and with the feelings of others - even when it's difficult. The giraffe is above all honest and talks about what is going on in her heart. Says "no" when he means "no" (assertive attitude) Treats everyone with respect and empathy. When a conflict arises, he looks for a solution that will satisfy all parties.

The Jackal, on the other hand, uses the language of assessments, judgment, often blames, speaks from the perspective of "YOU". The jackal will be happy to tell you what's wrong with you, the child, unasked will assess your personality, your abilities - will give a lot of unwanted advice, embarrass and humiliate. The jackal simply knows best and is always right! It is easy to recognize him - he uses labels during the conversation - he tells you how you are (e.g. lazy, irresponsible ...) and he likes to use stereotypes (e.g. boys are childish, lazy, and girls are too hysterical ...). The jackal wants to dominate and be right.

## **NVC - Group exercises**

The trainer displays a PowerPoint presentation on which there are various giraffe and jackal messages and the task of parents is to identify them.

On following slides there are examples of YOU messages - the language of the jackal and the trainer asks the parents to try to modify them to sound like the language of the giraffe (NVC)

The trainer summarizes the exercise.

It is important to be aware that in our communication there is a choice of the language of this communication with others. What's more, children hearing this language from us adults will most likely model it.

Then the trainer presents a model of 4 steps to formulate a message in accordance with NVC.

### **The 4-step model of NVC:**

1. Expressing your feelings and emotions.

I feel/am (feeling).....

2. Description of the facts which we refer to - observations without evaluation. When I see (description of facts).....

3. Expressing your needs - what unsatisfied need made us feel this way. Because I need.....

4. Communicating your expectations - that is, expecting/requesting specific behavior in the future. I expect in the future.....

### **NVC - Pairwork**

The trainer asks parents in pairs (parent-son/daughter) to try to train communication between themselves according to these 4 steps



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## **Empathy**

The trainer writes the term EMPATHY on the board and asks what it actually means and why do we need EMPATHY at home? (moderated discussion)

### **Empathy – Mini lecture**

Empathy - the ability to emotionally empathize with the feelings of others. The ability to see the needs of other people, the ability to take someone else's perspective, point of view, way of thinking or feeling, helps us to communicate better with other people.

Lack of empathy in a social context is a negative phenomenon because it leads to indifference, difficulties in conflict resolution and violence. Empathy is also mentioned in the context of emotional intelligence. When we think of empathy, it is worth emphasizing that empathy is a choice in approaching another person. Empathy comes from the desire to build a healthy relationship with another person. The opposite of empathy is self-centeredness. An egocentric person cannot understand the feelings or perspectives of other people, he looks at the world only from his own point of view, he believes that everyone should act according to his will. This makes it difficult for him to build healthy relationships with others. It is easy for him to hurt others, use violence.

### **Empathy - Moderated discussion**

The trainer asks the PARENTS a question: *How could children experience empathy from them on a daily basis?* Emphasizing that we build empathy in others when they experience it from us. She/he writes the answers on the board.

## **Assertiveness**

### **Assertiveness - Brainstorming session**

The trainer asks parents: What does the term assertiveness encompass?



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She/he writes the answers on the board.

-having one's own opinion - including the ability to express opposition/disagreement to e.g. the views of other people, their behavior towards us and others

- the ability to say no without intentionally hurting others,

- the ability to respond to criticism and express constructive criticism,

- the ability to express one's emotions and feelings

Assertiveness means defending one's rights and boundaries while respecting the rights of the other person. This attitude is the basis of healthy relationships, including the parent-son/daughter relationship.

The trainer asks another question: Why do children need this skill? Let's list all the possible benefits of assertiveness.

Assertive behavior is usually contrasted with submissive behavior and aggressive behavior. Both in the case of submissive and aggressive behavior, we are not dealing with a healthy attitude.

### **Assertiveness - Moderated discussion**

The trainer asks parents a question.

How do you distinguish between assertive and aggressive children?

How can adults help to train children to be assertive?

### **The ability to solve conflicts**

The trainer explains that the ability to solve conflicts is one of the important soft skills, the development of which in young people (mainly by modeling it by adults) minimizes the tendency to engage in violent behavior towards peers.



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## **Casestudy (groupwork)**

While playing together, 10-year-old Alex strongly pushes his younger brother Tom, who falls to the floor and cries.

### *Context*

*(Tom demolished Alex's tower of blocks earlier because he was jealous that he couldn't build such a high one, so when Tom saw that Alex approaching his tower again, he pushed him away to prevent the situation from happening again).*

Then the trainer asks the group a question.

How can the parent optimally deal with this situation, wanting to enhance children's conflict resolution skills?

The trainer conducts a moderated discussion based on the answers obtained.

Then the trainer displays on the slide the main mistakes made by adults when "accompanying" children during conflicts

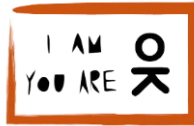
- Investigating, who started it? looking for the culprit
- Taking a stand with a child who is crying
- Generalizing - You always, YOU never
- Judging
- Threats
- Pity
- Giving a ready solution, e.g. "apologise and go to your rooms"

Then the trainer shows the optimal way to accompany children in their conflict, emphasizing that the role of an adult is to help them hear each other ... help to find the needs that are behind children's behavior





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- *Alex, Tom - I see that something happened between you two, both of you are sad and angry, I would like to help you find a solution to this situation because I feel that it is difficult for you.*
- *Alex, you were upset with Tom because he broke your first tower, right? You wanted him to be careful because you worked hard on her, right?*
- *Tomek, and I can see that you are also nervous and you are sad because your brother pushed you hard and you fell down?*

The Trainer discusses and displays the presentation:

**What is worth doing in the case of children's conflict?** The trainer emphasizes once again what Positive Discipline tools are helpful in teaching children to resolve conflicts

- Question: What happened, what made you react like that? – to get to know both perspectives, to determine who suffered
- Curiosity questions: *How do you feel about it now?, how is your friend doing, do you think? What does this situation teach you?*
- Searching for a solution. *What ideas do you have for resolving this conflict/repairing the harm?*

*A lesson for the future. What do you need to do next time in a similar situation so that it doesn't happen again?*

**It's worth remembering about:**

- Impartiality
- Active listening
- Paraphrasing



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- Encouraging solutions
- Being a mediator, not a judge!



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## **BULLYING**

### **Bullying - Mini lecture** – introduction

Research clearly shows that the problem of peer violence is an emotionally destructive phenomenon common in schools. Over the years from 1993/1994 to 2005/2006, there was no change in Poland in terms of reducing this phenomenon, and the scale of the problem in other countries, e.g. in Italy decreased by 15 percentage points. What has worked in other countries that have lowered these statistics? What strategy has proven successful? How do you know if a children is experiencing bullying? How is it different from ordinary children's conflicts? How to react to effectively stop it? How to talk to the perpetrator of bullying and how to talk to his victim? How to prevent the phenomenon? That's what this part of the workshop will be about.

The prevalence of the phenomenon in schools does not mean that we can ignore it. Violent behavior between students is too often treated in a lenient way, recognized as a natural element of growing up and manifesting one's own "self" by young people. But what if the abuser's actions lead to a nervous breakdown/depression or suicide of the victim? Is it then still possible to treat acts of violence as a natural part of the growing up process?

From the student's perspective, experiencing or witnessing bullying significantly increases the risk of serious mental health problems now and in the future.

The analysis of data from effective anti-bullying programs shows that it is important to implement solutions aimed at creating a trust-friendly, child-friendly atmosphere at home and in the classroom, which will affect the development of positive features of social coexistence, rise the self-esteem of the child and provide the feeling of safety and acceptance.



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A tool supporting teachers and parents in building such a climate is the international method of Positive Discipline in the classroom and at home, we already know that.

When reporting a problem, a victim of violence or a witness expects some form of help from an adult: from listening, through assurance of intervention, to actual actions aimed at dealing with the problem. The lack of reaction from people who should be protecting children is a clear signal for the perpetrator and his followers that such actions are not prohibited in any way and will go unpunished as for the victim that no one is able to help him.

The phenomenon of violence among students is exceptionally destructive both for the victim, the perpetrator, but also on witnesses of violent behavior. Being aware of the above, one should realize that peer violence, experienced in various forms, affects about 35% of students in Polish educational institutions. Teenagers who fall victim to peer violence are three times more likely to self-mutilate and seven times more likely to attempt suicide - Włodarczyk J., Wójcik S., Scale and determinants of peer violence. The results of the nationwide diagnosis of child abuse in Poland [in:] Child Abused. Theory, research, practice, 2019. The study was conducted on a representative sample of 1,005 teenagers aged 11-16. The study shows that 59% of teenagers experienced peer violence, 41% of the respondents experienced it in the form of physical violence, and 28% in the form of psychological violence.

Włodarczyk J., Peer violence. Results of the National Diagnosis of the Problem of Violence Against Children,

<https://dzieckokrzywiane.fdds.pl/index.php/DK/article/view/55>

## **Bullying - Brainstorming**

The definition of **Bullying**



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The trainer asks parents when simple, innocent "teasing" a classmate has the traits of peer violence or bullying?

She/he writes the answers on the board.

He/she then completes the parents' answers with presentation slides where the 3 defining characteristics of bullying are described (intentionality, repetition and power imbalance)

### **Features of bullying**

In order for the response to abuse to be effective and to reduce the likelihood of similar incidents in the future, it is crucial to distinguish whether the aggressive behavior occurred in the context of conflict or violence.

We talk about a conflict when two people or groups of people have conflicting interests and aspirations, e.g. two students argue over one specific place in the desk. Both parties involved in the dispute can be considered as equal partners with similar chances of "winning". Unlike conflict, violence always implies an imbalance of power. The perpetrator uses his advantage to harm the victim. This advantage can be of various nature:

- numerical: when a group of students bullies or excludes one
- physical: when the stronger/taller/elder beats the weaker/shorter/younger
- psychological: when a student with greater intellectual abilities manipulates a student with less potential
- formal: when the abuser has some kind of formal authority over the victim, eg is their parent, teacher or boss.

Reacting to a conflict as if it were violence and vice versa are mistakes often made in upbringing practice, which in turn can contribute to the escalation of aggression.



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## **Types of Bullying**

### **Types of bullying - Working in mini groups**

The trainer divides the PARENTS into 4 groups and asks them to elaborate (list examples) particular types of peer violence. One group is developing verbal abuse, another is physical, a third is relational, and the fourth cyberbullying.

Then, in front of the whole group, the mini-groups present their picks.

The trainer supplements the above statements with a presentation slide with the types

### **Effects of bullying (short and long term)**

The host displays the short and long-term effects of peer violence in the presentation. At the end, she/he asks the adults a question?

What surprises you?

What is most troubling?

### **Groupwork**

#### **Symptoms indicating that a child is experiencing violence**

The trainer divides parents into 3 groups and asks them to list all the symptoms that may indicate that a child is experiencing bullying in the classroom.

She/he then asks the representatives of each group to read out their proposals, and then displays a slide listing the most common symptoms of experiencing violence and checking which group was closest.

### **Working in 2 groups**

#### **Psychological portrait of the victim and perpetrator of bullying.**



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The trainerer divides the parents into 2 groups and gives each group a sheet of paper and felt-tip pens and asks them to write down the characteristics of group 1 - the victim and group 2 - the perpetrator of peer violence.

Then, individual groups in the forum present their topic and the leader completes the parents' statements about the characteristics of a victim of violence (potentially, victims may be physically weaker than their peers, they are afraid of physical injuries and therefore avoid dangerous games, some sports disciplines, fights, they have poor motor coordination, are cautious, sensitive, quiet, withdrawn from life, not very active, shy, cry often, are insecure, fearful, unhappy, have low self-esteem, subconsciously indirectly show others that they are of little value, show their helplessness - you can see that they are an easy target) and its perpetrator (they are easily irritated, mock others, deliberately say things that may hurt someone, threaten, make fun of, push others, poke, beat, bully, destroy other people's things, have a need to dominate and bully others, willingly resort to violence and threats, they pursue their will at all costs, they boast about their actual or imagined They are quick-tempered, impulsive, have a low threshold for frustration, have difficulty adapting to the prevailing norms and rules, are generally rebellious, disobedient and aggressive.

## **Witnesses**

### **Witnesses – Mini lecture**

However, it should be remembered that the phenomenon of bullying is not only an interaction between the perpetrator(s) and the victim. Equally important are the bystanders who witness the situation and play an important role in the nature and dynamics of the phenomenon. Four roles can be distinguished that bullying witnesses assume:

- 1) the perpetrator's assistants who join the aggressor;



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- 2) the perpetrator's reinforcers who reward the perpetrator with their behavior (doping),
- 3) outsiders who do not react, and
- 4) the victim's defenders who take the side of the bullied student.

Bullying is therefore a group phenomenon. It is up to the witnesses to a large extent whether the phenomenon of bullying will develop or not. At the same time, one can observe a slow process of "desensitization" to violence among neutral (witness) children. Initially, they feel sympathy for the child experiencing bullying, regret, sometimes they feel guilty for the lack of their reaction, but not seeing an effective reaction of adults, they slowly become indifferent to the harm of the other person and even start to believe that children experiencing violence, bullying "are worse and deserve such treatment. The indifference of witnesses to violence and bullying is an additional consent for people who use it. Therefore, it is very important to sensitize the witnesses to the harm of another child in the class by: emphasizing that the fact that we differ in appearance, temperament, strengths is a value, not a reason for discrimination, presenting children with the phenomenon of bullying and its destructive effects, and finally making them aware how crucial is their role as witnesses of the phenomenon in its reduction through a firm NO!

## **Intervention**

### **Intervention – Mini lecture**

What to do if we notice that our child is experiencing bullying in the classroom or at school?

- 1) Reassure your child that it is not his fault and that you will work through this together.
- 2) Ask about needs. Ask your child how he feels under these circumstances and what he needs most from you right now.





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- 3) Inform the school. The child may be afraid to tell the teachers about the problems, so together decide who is best to report to. Concentrate on making the bullying stop.
- 4) Take care of security. If your child has been hurt, don't let it happen again. The school has a legal duty to keep your child safe and must work with you to do so.
- 5) Think with your child about who else can help. Your child needs support in this difficult situation, so suggest that they consider who is on their side at school and will be able to help when the need arises. It could be other children or teachers she/he can trust.
- 7) Don't be afraid to talk to a specialist. If your child is anxious or very scared and you feel that bullying has seriously affected their emotional health, see a psychologist.
- 8) The better your child thinks of himself, the less likely his self-esteem will be affected by bullying. Encourage extracurricular activities and social situations that bring out the best in your child. Tell your child about the unique qualities you see in him.
- 9) Research shows that most bullies stop their behavior within 10 seconds when someone (either victim or bystander) tells them to stop/stop – in a firm and decisive tone of voice. As a parent, you can train/act out assertive response with your child. Demonstrate the differences between aggressive and assertive and submissive messages (tone of voice), as well as the body language that accompanies them.
- 10) Provide opportunities for your child to socialize with peers outside of school to help build and maintain a strong support system. Try to reach out to parents in the neighborhood, the local community, places with



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extracurricular activities. The more time your child practices social skills in a safe environment, the better.

11) Help your child see what the outcome of his words and actions can be. Help them see that this is a problem they can try to solve on their own terms.

*"What do you think you can say the next time someone does this to you?  
What do you think could work?"*

For example, your child may get the idea to tell the abuser, "Leave me alone, moron." Then, instead of telling your child, "That's a bad idea," say:

*"What do you think will happen if you do?" How will it help?"*

Let them understand that bullying may intensify if they resort to attacking/name-calling.

Your child may then say, "I could walk away from that person, ignore them." You can suggest that he go away the first time and say what he has to say next time. We must honestly admit that it is difficult to face a bully and it is understandable that he is afraid and out of ideas. It is also important to ask your child the following question:

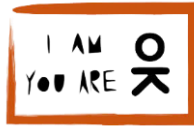
*"What will make you feel better about this situation?"* But make sure you're not the one inventing the solution. It is important that your child feels that he is solving the problem on his own terms and in agreement with himself. It's a skill that you can teach him and that will accompany him throughout his life.

### **What to do when your child is the bully?**

The trainer then asks the parents to imagine a situation that their child bullies a classmate and asks them to write down in points what their conversation with the child should look like in this situation.



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Then the groups present their proposals. The trainer explains how a parent should optimally behave in a situation where his child is the perpetrator of violence.

### **Step 1. Manage your reactions and get the facts**

Concentrate on staying calm. Breathe deeply and listen

- Although it may be difficult, try to listen to what others have to say about your child.
- Thank the parent or teacher for letting you know
- Tell the teacher or parent that you are taking this very seriously and that you will do everything in your power to stop this behavior.

### **Take time to process the information.**

- Get as many details as possible. Take contact details.
- Take time to process how you feel so that you remain calm when talking to your child. Try to discuss this with a trusted adult first.

### **Step 2. Talk to your child**

- Try to stay calm. Tell your child that you have been informed by a teacher/another parent and that you need to know what happened. If you stay calm and approachable, you can hear so much more. Avoid using threats or arousing guilt.
- Explain that whatever happens, you will help the child to get through it. Ask your child:
  - Do you know what they are talking about?
  - What is your version/perspective?
  - What happened?

- What of this is true?
- Why do you think your classmate sees it differently?
- How would you feel if he or she/he did this to you?

### **Let your child know that bullying is unacceptable and it must stop.**

Explain that bullying in any form hurts others. Let them know that name-calling, teasing, hitting, shoving, starting or spreading rumors, cyberbullying, and all other forms of bullying are inappropriate and unacceptable behavior.

- Let your child know that this is a serious matter and that you intend to help make sure it doesn't happen again.
- Don't give lectures - a simple message will better express your point of view. "I want you to know that bullying is unacceptable, it hurts, and it must stop."

### **Step 3. Work on resolving the situation**

- Take it seriously. Don't downplay your child's behavior with the "just this one time" excuse - it won't go away. Even if you are not concerned about the long-term effects on your child, another child is being harmed and may be allowed to.
- Support school policy. Find out what their approach to bullying is.
- Talk to the class teacher-advisor. Ask for advice on what you can do at home to help solve the problem. Say you want to be in regular contact and find out how your child is doing.
- Try to understand what led to this. Think about the possible reasons why your child might be behaving this way.



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Ask a teacher or school counselor if your child is having any problems at school

- Is your child sad, angry, lonely or insecure?
- Is she/he stressed about school or grade pressure?
- Is your child struggling with a topic or having difficulty building relationships?

Think about what is going on at home - do a "review" of your family

- Is he worried about a problem at home (pet death, moving house, parental argument or separation)?
- Is someone in your home abusing (mentally or physically) your child (parent, family member or other adult)?
- Is he jealous of his brother or sister?
- Can you set boundaries respecting your child's needs?
- How do you ensure your love and interest in your child's life?

### **Bullying and the law**

In some cases of bullying, parents can be held accountable for the harassment, which may include legal action.

### **Things you can do with your child**

- Help your child identify exactly what he has done and be responsible and responsive by apologizing and finding a way.
- Explain simple, specific rules. Offer encouragement when rules are followed.



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- Keep an eye on your child's activities, whereabouts and friends, including internet and mobile phone use (increasingly becoming one of the key tools in bullying situations).
- Get involved in your child's digital world (do you know all the social media apps your child uses?)
- Show interest and concern. Help your child understand his feelings.
- Spend time with your child every day - talk to him. Talk about your day, it encourages the child to open up.
- Appreciate their commitment and effort - not the end result.
- Teach empathy at home.
- Talk to your child about what it's like to be bullied (let them know the perspective of a friend)

### **Things you can do as a family**

- Create a calm and safe atmosphere at home. Reduce conflicts between family members. Encourage the use of non-violent communication by modeling it.
- Notice and acknowledge when your children are friendly.
- Talk regularly about what is acceptable and what is not.
- Work on collaborative ways of solving problems.
- Use conversation and curious questions instead of coercion and control strategies.
- Observe how you talk to your children and how you react to your own strong emotions. Violence or aggression - physical or verbal - is not a good coping tool.



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- Try to be involved in school and extracurricular activities.
- Ask yourself if someone in your home is abusing your child. Often children who bully are themselves mistreated by a parent, family member or other adult.
- Things to avoid
- Don't look someone to blame. "She/he didn't learn it at home. It must be the school's fault!"
- Don't belittle the behavior by saying, "These are just conflicts between children"
- Don't say, "I know my child and he would never do that!" You don't necessarily know "who" he is among his peers.
- Do not contact the alleged victim's parents directly - this will only make the situation worse.

### **Reach out for help**

If you are worried that the situation is not improving or even getting worse, it is worth seeking professional advice (psychotherapist).

Sit down and talk to your child. Tell him that the school or other parents have reported his abusive behavior, that you love them no matter what, that their behavior needs to change, and that you support the teachers' consequences for such behavior and will not condone such behavior.

### **Remember!**

Your baby needs your love and care to get back on track.

At the end of the workshop, the facilitator asks parents **"What minimizes peer violence among children?"** and asks each of them to answer this



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question, taking into account what they remembered most, what made the greatest impression on them during the workshop.

The trainer asks parents to complete an anonymous final survey examining their level of knowledge in the area of peer violence (another words bullying) and ways to build relationships with children based on mutual respect, cooperation and trust after the workshops.

The trainer then thanks participants for their commitment, time and showed faith in their use of a new approach to the topic of peer violence, due to the awareness of their huge role in modeling a violence-free family atmosphere and relationship with the child who fully accepts the diversity of each person in the family herd.