

# Rising Above Bullying: From Despair to Recovery

R. Hayes and C.M. Herbert, 2011

## Project Prevent and Address Bullying (PPAB)

for students with disabilities

BOOK  
REVIEW

Northern Illinois University | School Psychology Program

**COST:** \$10.09 on Amazon

**PUBLISHER:** Kingsley, London, 2011

### Description of Content:

Unlike many informational books concerning bullying, part of "Rising Above Bullying: From Despair to Recovery" is written by actual children who have experienced severe bullying. Each of the eight children tell their personal stories about the bullying they faced from peers and even teachers, each time ultimately resulting in the decision to leave formal education all together. The book has a focus on how each of these children recovered at a Red Balloon Learner Centre and the strategies that are used at these centers to help them recover. Red Balloon is a charity that runs schools for severely bullied and traumatized secondary school children. After each of the students' story is told, authors provide a "discussion points" section with advice for parents and teachers about what they can do to address children experiencing similar challenges.

Throughout the book, the authors take the perspective that until readers understand the pain and misery bullying causes, we will not be able to deal with it effectively. Which provides rationale for using each child's story to convey the importance of understanding the detrimental effects bullying can have. In part II of the book, Understanding Bullying Behaviors and How to Prevent It, the authors explain what they constitute as bullying, provide tips for how to spot children who are being bullied, what students typically engage in bullying behaviors, and provide strategies for parents, teachers, and children to respond to bullying. This section takes a practiced, preventative approach to combat bullying while additionally providing strategies for how to respond to specific instances of bullying.

### Strengths:

- Suggestions provided for dealing with students who engage in bullying behavior (authors discourage punitive punishment and promote teaching empathy).
- Authors stress the importance that teachers and parents should not normalize bullying and victimization experiences.
- Specific suggestions are provided for how parents can talk to their children's school when they find out their children are experiencing victimization (what information to have, what questions to ask, what to expect, how to behave, etc.).
- Many recommendations provided take a preventative and whole classroomwide or schoolwide approach to address bullying which is consistent with what experts in bullying suggest.

### Limitations:

- Overall, authors used experiences of a very limited group of children who have experienced very severe bullying resulting in extreme outcomes and used these to generalize to all bullying.
- Authors never address that these extreme outcomes and experiences are not what is typically experienced by children experiencing bullying per the current bullying literature.
- The definition of bullying the authors use is not what is typically used in the bullying literature and is missing components, so throughout the book authors reference a wide-range of behaviors as bullying.
- Throughout the book, authors rely on emotion to engage and persuade readers rather than providing literature and empirical support for their recommendations and characterizations.
- The only "data" provided are other very extreme cases with similar outcomes
- The recommendations for addressing problem behaviors were not based on FBA or empirically supported strategies.
- There were times that authors took a very individualized approach when recommending strategies for teachers without much consideration of feasibility of recommendations within the school system and implications for academic growth and long-term outcomes.

### Audience:

- Parents and teachers.



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