Introduction

This guide has been developed from client led research carried out in St Mungo’s projects in 2007.

The research confirmed that….

‘There is a problem with bullying within St Mungo’s first stage hostels. Not in all of them, but generally speaking it is an issue’
‘There is significant evidence that bullying occurs in some St Mungo’s hostels at a level which could be reduced with consequent positive effects for clients’

….and identified approaches to reduce bullying.

Our approach to preventing bullying involves addressing three main areas:

Building better communities: improving client-client and client-staff relationships, and build strong, healthy communities less susceptible to bullying. Clients and staff must agree what is unacceptable behavior within the project.

Staff knowledge and expertise: This covers aspects of training, staffing procedures and staff awareness.

Reporting mechanisms: It is crucial to have effective, appropriate and confidential means of reporting bullying. It helps to work with your clients to understand barriers and challenge the stigma of grassing attached to reporting bullying.

Definitions

Definitions of harassment and bullying vary and there is much overlap. The key differences are in the motivation (knowing or unwittingly). Harassment is motivated by discrimination and bullying is motivated by power, or fear of losing power.

Bullying is persistent unwelcome behaviour, mostly using unwarranted or invalid criticism, nit picking, fault finding, also exclusion, isolation, being singled out and treated differently, being shouted at, humiliated and excessive monitoring.

Harassment is driven by social identity, i.e. gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion, age, class, etc. It can be physical, verbal or non-verbal, directed at a specific individual(s) or to everyone. It may consist of a single incident or it can be cumulative and often appears disguised or excused.

St Mungo’s definition of Harassment is - unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of (a) violating that other person’s dignity or (b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

For the purpose of this guide, we will use the word bullying to denote harassment and bullying.
For the sessions and the resulting plan to be successful it is crucial that a whole project approach is taken. This includes clients, staff and management.

Clients have highlighted that bullying is more likely to happen at night, make sure night staff are included in your planning sessions.

**Anti Bullying Workshops**

**Workshop 1 – anti bullying**
The session covers:
- Why it’s difficult to complain
- What is bullying
- The impact of bullying
- Reporting bullying - challenging the stigma of reporting (grassing).

**Workshop 2 – anti bullying**
The session covers:
- Creating a Staff and Clients Rights Charter
- Agreeing an action plan that:
  1. promotes a safe, caring, respectful and supportive culture that aids recovery
  2. proactively deals with bullying

**Workshop 3 - Assertiveness Workshop (for clients and staff)**
The session uses simple techniques that enable clients to behave more assertively and gives staff simple tools to use in keyworking. Assertive people are less likely to be targeted by bullies.

The session covers:
- Defining assertiveness
- Understanding non-assertive behaviour
- Understanding assertive behaviour
- Practicing being assertive

Workshops can be adapted to your projects specific circumstances. Contact the Client Involvement Manager for more information and support.

[awilliams@mungos.org](mailto:awilliams@mungos.org)
Client Involvement and how it can reduce bullying

Our research showed that projects with effective client involvement created an environment less conducive to bullying.

Client involvement, quality interactions between staff and clients, and confidentiality are some of the vital ingredients in creating a project that is a safe, respectful and supportive place for clients and staff.

How good is the relationship between staff and clients in your project? The better the relationship, the more likely clients are to report bullying and the less it is seen as ‘grassing’. Friendliness, positive messages and respect discourage bullying.

Client Involvement to do list:

- Discuss how the relationships between staff and clients be improved. Consider: more informal joint activities, clients feeling they have a real say in how the project is run, clients feeling listened to.
- Appoint a Client Involvement Lead Worker
- Use the Client Involvement Toolkit (found on public folders) to increase client involvement and promote an ethos of partnership between clients and staff.

*Contact Andy Williams, Client Involvement Manager for more information and support.*

Confidentiality

Refresh staff knowledge of confidentiality and make sure clients know the procedures. Clients want to see staff as trusted holders of their information. Clients have consistently said that confidentiality (no-one finding out they reported bullying) is the most important thing.

Consider asking staff and clients the following:

- Why is confidentiality important and how might being careless with clients’ confidential information cause bullying?
- Clients have reported that bullying about money is the most common form of bullying. What more can be done to keep clients’ financial information confidential?
- Is there anything your project needs to change to keep clients’ personal information confidential? Consider:
  - Notice boards
  - Not reminding people out loud that it’s payday
Staff and clients need to agree on what the project is attempting to achieve and their definition of acceptable behaviour.

Example charter from an anti bullying workshop:

How to use the Rights Charter effectively:
- Use Peer Mentors to explain the Charter to all new residents (see the Client Involvement Toolkit for more information on Peer Mentors).
- All residents and staff to sign up to the Charter
- Review the Charter annually
- Support staff to challenge any behaviour that breaks the Charters rules.
- Ask clients at every keyworking session ‘have you seen anything that breaks the charter?’ This is a safe way to report bullying.
Enabling clients to complain and report bullying is essential and requires a proactive approach by all members of staff. We need to ensure that clients, many of whom are not assertive or believe that it is wrong to ‘grass’ on fellow clients, have confidence in the system.

Make it easier for clients to report bullying

Hold a client led discussion, possibly in a residents meeting, using the following questions to give clients the opportunity to explain the barriers to reporting from their perspective. This is the only way to remove the stigma of grassing from the reporting of bullying.

Consider the following questions:
- Do you make sure reports of bullying are kept confidential in your project? How could this be improved?
- How can trust in the ways bullying is reported be improved?
- Is there a culture, amongst clients, of not reporting bullying ‘grassing’ in your project? How can this be challenged?
- Can staff make themselves more accessible, so it is easier to report bullying?
- Would a manager’s surgery/drop-in be a positive development?
- How can the way bullying is reported be made more user friendly for clients and staff? Are you using the Rights Charter effectively?
- Do all clients know all the routes to report bullying? How can this be improved?
- Do all staff know the ‘Responding to Harassment and Discrimination’ procedures?

How staff can take a proactive approach to bullying

It is essential that all staff have a shared and clear understanding of what is, and what is not, acceptable.

Pro-active ways for staff to tackle bullying in your project:
- **Incident reports** completed in line with relevant procedures. The key procedure is the ‘Responding to Harassment and Discrimination’ procedure.
- **Bullying Watch** – discussed at every handover. Monitor all situations of bullying or potential bullying. Take positive steps to support clients that you think maybe at risk of bullying.
- Consistently challenge **low level bullying**. Projects that do this successfully prevent more serious situations developing.
- Record the actions that are taken to reduce bullying and harassment. Review the folder regularly.
- Ensure bullying is a regular theme at team meetings/supervisions/keywork sessions.
- Our research highlights bullying occurs most frequently at night. It is vital that night staff are proactively involved in tackling bullying, and that communication between shifts is effective.
Reporting bullying – a checklist

Staff see client harassing or bullying another client
- Take action to keep victim safe
- Complete Incident Form (B14 S1)
- Discuss with manager and team – agree proactive intervention strategy
- Make all staff aware of the strategy (handover sheet)
- Update Risk Assessment for bully and victim
- Follow Harassment Procedure (B15)
- Monitor the situation
- Consider putting victim on vulnerable list
- Support victim and bully in accessing appropriate support
- Keep victim informed of developments whilst not breaking confidentiality

Client tells staff they are being harassed or bullied by another client
- Listen non-judgmentally to the allegation
- Take action to keep victim safe
- Complete Complaints Form (A07 S4)
- Discuss with manager and team
- List follow up actions on handover sheet
- Update Risk Assessment
- Follow Complaints procedure (A07) and Harassment Procedure (B15)
- Use time scales from Harassment Procedure (B15)
- Monitor the situation
- Consider putting victim on vulnerable list

Client harassing or bullying staff
- Ensure safety of staff member and alert colleagues
- Discuss with manager immediately
- Complete Incident Form (B14 S1)
- Update Risk Assessment
- Follow Harassment Procedure (B15)

Staff harassing or bullying a client
- Take action to keep victim safe
- Complete Incident Form (B14 S1)
- Discuss with manager immediately
- Follow Whistle blowing Procedure (A04)
- Also follow Safeguarding Adults (B37) and Harassment Procedure (B15)

Staff harassing or bullying staff
This has not been covered in this guide, so for more information see the procedures in public folders, or contact the HR department
- Inform a manager
- Record accurately what happened
- Follow HR Procedures and the Harassment and Bullying Procedure (B15)