National Association of School Nurses

NASN School Nurse Chat – Cut the Bull

Transcript

Elizabeth B.L.: It's a great, quick three words -- respect, reach out, and respond -- and it might have the student just take a minute and reflect and think, and offer, even maybe the student that we don't know is being bullied, as a message to ask for help.

Speaker 2: This NASN School Nurse Chat podcast comes to us with support from Shriners Hospitals for Children, a global leader in pediatric specialty care, world class research, and outstanding medical education. Many techniques and treatments that are common in hospitals today were pioneered at Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Donna Mazyck: Welcome to the NASN School Nurse Chat podcast. This is Donna Mazyck, Executive Director for the National Association of School Nurses. The focus of today's podcast is about bullying, and steps that are being taken to prevent bullying in schools, empowering all of us to become anti-bullying ambassadors. One campaign is Cut The Bull, through Shriners Hospitals for Children. This program encourages the public to be advocates in their communities to help put an end to bullying, and see the ability in everyone.

 Joining us for the podcast today are Marjorie McEttrick-Maloney, Chief Nursing Officer at Shriners Hospitals for Children, and Elizabeth Beth Light, a school nurse from Delaware. Welcome.

Marjorie M-M.: Thank you.

Elizabeth B.L.: Thank you.

Donna Mazyck: Bullying is an issue that impacts students year round. It's the position of the National Association of School Nurses that the registered professional school nurse is a crucial member of the team participating in the prevention of bullying in schools. School nurses are the experts in pediatric health in schools, and therefore, can have an impact on the health and safety of all students, including students who bully, students who are bullied, or students who both bully and are bullied by others.

 Okay, first, let's start off with, what is Cut The Bull? Marjorie?

Marjorie M-M.: Cut The Bull is an annual campaign that has been designed by Shriners Hospitals for Children several years ago and refreshed annually. The program spokesperson is RJ Mitte. He's an actor who had mild cerebral palsy as a young child and went on to be an actor, so he's our spokesperson. But the program has been designed, as you mentioned earlier, Donna, to raise awareness of the challenges experienced by the children we see every day here at Shriners Hospitals for Children.

 As you know, many children are resilient. Others have additional challenges. When we would see the children in our hospitals, whether for a long-term admission, such as a burn admission, and when they would come back for a clinic appointment, we would see the challenges that they would need to overcome, or how their schoolwork was going, or just life in general. This campaign was developed to really support and raise awareness of these children and bullying.

Donna Mazyck: Tell us some of the ways in which kids are bullied.

Marjorie M-M.: What we would see here at Shriners Hospitals for Children would be either children were ignored, children would be made fun of their braces, or made fun of having to wear what we refer to as pressure garments. Children would be asked why did they look funny, why do they have scars, or stay away for them, or just, "They're different. Don't include them," or they can't participate in sports.

 So, it'd be subtle bullying, overt bullying, covert bullying, or parents not wanting a child with an observable disability exposed to their own children in the school setting.

Donna Mazyck: So, we can see how the kids are being bullied, but how do you know that a student is a victim of bullying?

Marjorie M-M.: Well, it's usually very subtle signs. We want to see children play and go to school. That is their life work. Either they're very quiet, or perhaps they just start crying, and say, "I don't want to go back to school. I don't want to go out. I can't go out."

 The families are trying to do everything they can, or they support, "Well, no, I'm going to home school my child," or "I'll wait till the next appointment and see what we can do. Maybe they can correct that scar. Maybe we can reduce that brace. Maybe we don't have to wear it." We would see, again, either very subtle symptoms from the child, or the family, or get calls from the school, saying, "We can't get this child to school. Help us."

Donna Mazyck: That brings up the school nurses. Beth, how can school nurses help students that have been bullied, and how can they help them to become anti-bullying advocates?

Elizabeth B.L.: I think we, as school nurses, can help to make them feel safe, and become proud of accomplishments to get through that stage. They can become a voice, and active in, if there is an anti-bullying campaign in the school, they can become peer leaders when you're having specific activities through the school. Sometimes, in the past, we have used those students that were identified as being bullied as those who then can ... you could call on them to help someone else who is not feeling as comfortable in the school.

Donna Mazyck: Marjorie, did you want to add to that?

Marjorie M-M.: I think having the resources, the school nurses, is very important. The tool kit that we do provide with the Cut The Bull campaign gives the school nurse those tools already, to provide those hints that then can be shared with their building principals, and their parent school associations as well. The nurse's office is always the safe place for anyone in the school, children and staff included, and how to guide and help, and recognize that someone's being bullied, is huge.

Donna Mazyck: Yes, it is. Marjorie, can you drill down a little bit in that tool kit and tell us what the three Rs are that you encourage students to practice?

Marjorie M-M.: The three Rs, respect, reach out, and respond. Very simple.

 The respect, obviously, it's what we all expect and what we hope others do for ourself, but we want them to look beyond the difference and overcome the fears, more or less, see the abilities in everyone.

 Reach out. As we talked a little bit about earlier, talk to them, include, get to know someone who's being treated differently. That reaching out, and that safe friend, or that caring eye, or that concern, that's reach out, however that happens.

 Respond. If you see someone being put down or teased, do not participate. Instead, show their support, or go tell someone.

 So again, respect, reach out, and respond. Those are our three Rs, a very easy mnemonic.

Donna Mazyck: Support for this podcast comes to us from Shriners Hospitals for Children, a global leader in pediatric specialty care, world class research, and outstanding medical education. To learn more about bullying, and to download resources, visit ShrinersHospitalsForChildren.org/NASN.

 Getting back to the three Rs, Beth, what are some specific things that you've been doing to encourage students not to bully at your school?

Elizabeth B.L.: I think, as many school nurses, you lead by example, and then in the office, I'm observant of conversation that's happening within the office. It kind of gives you an idea of what's happening in the school. I encourage students to talk respectfully to each other.

 Also, in my vigilance over the office, and within the school community, I try to report as quickly as possible to our administration, and the team in guidance, any concerns that I have and suggestions for change in situations that are maybe happening in the building.

 One of the visual effects that we do is to use our bulletin board so that our students, while they're waiting to be seen, have a space to see an advertisement, so to speak. The new one that's going to go up is this mnemonic, because as I was thinking earlier, it's a great, quick three words -- respect, reach out, and respond -- and it might have the student just take a minute and reflect and think, and offer, even maybe the student that we don't know is being bullied, as a message to ask for help.

Donna Mazyck: Beth, do you have a success story that you can share about how you've seen a child who's been bullied recover from that and become an advocate for anti-bullying, or if you've had a story of a student who was a bully and learned to respect, reach out, and respond?

Elizabeth B.L.: Actually, I recall a young lady who was being bullied by a group of young ladies. Of course, lunchtime is a difficult time, a big high school, and when you're new, as a freshman, it's difficult to fit in if you're coming from a school that you didn't come with a lot of your friends. We started to see her at lunchtime in our office, "Oh, I just don't feel well. I can't eat today," and as you start assessing, because it's becoming an everyday thing, and you realize she's not going into that cafeteria because it's too big. Then the story unfolds.

 So, working with the people who oversee supervision in that cafeteria, we were able to figure out what was going on. We had a mediation team who met with the group of girls, and out of that, there was at least two young ladies who then did befriend this young girl, so she was able to eventually have a safe place to eat in our office, or guidance office, until she felt comfortable actually going back into the cafeteria and sitting someplace new.

 It was really good to see her grow. I think that was the biggest thing is to see that she felt comfortable every day, and she didn't have to depend on us. But that took several weeks to accomplish that.

Donna Mazyck: That's a great story. Thanks for sharing that.

Elizabeth B.L.: It really is.

Donna Mazyck: Marjorie, what resources are available to school nurses, and how can school nurses access those resources?

Marjorie M-M.: Well, in addition to the usual literature searches, Shriners Hospitals for Children has dedicated a webpage to the National Association of School Nurses to make it easier, and we do have several nice tool kits. We have a tool kit that really gives you all the ideas you could possibly need, Beth, as you say, to bring to put the 3 Rs on your board. There would be tools in there to help you think of opportunities of how to express the three Rs, and it really is a great conversation starter.

 There's also a kit card that certainly helps the kids that are being bullied, as well as caring adults, that focus on the respect, reach out, and respond. In particular, there's a wonderful article that was written by Shriners Hospitals for Children. I believe our Philadelphia team supported this very much. It really presented the facts of bullying, the subtle symptoms of bullying, the emotional, the physical, and also cyber bullying is a very big problem, because that's very silent, but it's very threatening, and it's very difficult to unearth. So, there are ideas on how to work with cyber bullying.

 It also speaks about the bullying facts, and the statistics, so that again, that you could provide some nice statistical data, use that as an opportunity for those children that are going to be those resilient leaders. Also, how to do simulation. You can use these in after school programs. You can use these as peer programs. That paper, I believe, is really excellent. I think the school nurses and school staff will find that very important, and again, there's resources attached to that as well, but there's plenty of opportunity there.

 Also of note is, if you want to order these, Shriners will send them to you. We can send you materials from our website so that you're not recreating, cutting and pasting, printing out. Just request and we will send them to you.

Donna Mazyck: How do you get the entire community involved in this Cut The Bull initiative? Do you use social media for the campaign?

Marjorie M-M.: We do a lot of work with Twitter, with Facebook, but I think having been in a school community, whether it be your school health advisory committee, or your committees within town, using your school committee as a voice for this information, it's really engaging those community partners. We all know it's not just the school's responsibility. You do have the parent associations, you have local hospitals, you know, the more you can create that tipping point and focus on the bullying. Certainly, our police departments are very interested in the cyber bullying. There's a lot that's going on with that.

 With anything in life, particularly with school nurses, you're very resilient in finding those partners, creating those partnerships. Using those current avenues is very important. It's all of our responsibility, and I like what Beth said. It's role modeling. It's by those caring adults that are role modeling, taking those actions, and celebrating the moments of success, such as that young lady who now can go back into the cafeteria and have friends.

Donna Mazyck: And for those who are on social media, there are some hashtags that'll be helpful to find one another: #CutTheBull, and #SeeTheAbility. That's all part of the Cut The Bull campaign, and can be used.

 I want to thank you, Marjorie and Beth, for being our guests for this NASN School Nurse Chat podcast.

Marjorie M-M.: Thank you, Donna, very much.

Elizabeth B.L.: Thanks.

Donna Mazyck: For more information, visit ShrinersHospitalsForChildren.org/NASN. You can get public service announcements, a social media challenge, tip cards, an anti-bullying ambassador tool kit. All of those are available to help students and adults see the ability in everyone.

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