

Aletta junior researcher meetup 2023

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Title (max 20 words)

Working together across institutions: Insights from research on anti-bullying collaboration between home and school.

Abstract (max 300 words)

Background: School bullying has detrimental impact on the health of those involved. Previously, bullying was perceived as an issue of 'victims' and 'bullies', while later, interventions targeted whole groups and schools. Nowadays, it is considered a societal issue: bullying is enabled by norms and context. These new understandings underline the need for collaboration across institutions, such as home and school. However, in practice, collaboration can be challenging. Parents and teachers have their personal strengths and weaknesses, and their interactions, characteristics of the school, and several societal factors impact their opportunities for productive family-school partnerships. Guidance regarding what works in anti-bullying collaboration is therefore urgently needed.

Aim: The applied research project 'together against bullying' addressed the need for practical insights regarding cross-institutional collaboration. Together with stakeholders, we aimed to discover the barriers and facilitators to anti-bullying collaboration. Our main research question was: What factors aid family-school partnership to tackle bullying?

Methods: We were interested in people's experiences of collaboration against bullying. Narrative interviewing, self-report surveys, and semi structured interviewing were the methods employed throughout our participatory action research project.

Findings:

Parents and teachers collaborate during discovering, interpreting, planning, acting, and evaluating of bullying situations. Our preliminary findings suggest they face multiple obstacles along the way. However, there are facilitators as well. When parents and teachers for example communicate frequently and openly, construct a shared understanding, trust, and respect each other, and acknowledge their shared responsibility, they can indeed successfully collaborate to effectively tackle bullying.

Conclusions:

Our project shows that parents and teachers can overcome obstacles inherent to collaboration to tackle bullying. Through participatory action, teachers and parents became aware of the context in which they collaborate, discovered factors that impact collaboration, and were able to utilize these insights to advance their understanding and practice of family-school partnership to tackle bullying.

Keywords (max 3)

Qualitative research; healthy aging; youth in context