



For Immediate Release
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Are Canadian Children as Safe as You Think?
PREVNet Stands Up to Bullying

Canada is one of the developed world's worst offenders when it comes to bullying, according to the latest World Health Organization (WHO) survey on *Health Behaviours of School-Aged Children*. The survey, which is based on children's reports of bullying and victimization, places Canada near the bottom of the 40 developed nations studied.

During **Bullying Awareness Week (November 16-21, 2009)**, PREVNet (Promoting Relationships Eliminating Violence Network), a world leader in research about bullying, and an authority on healthy relationships, will continue to bring awareness to this important issue. A unique collaboration led by Scientific Co-Directors Drs. Debra Pepler and Wendy Craig, PREVNet brings together an unparalleled network of resources from Canada and abroad: more than 60 researchers, 70 graduate students, 20 universities and 50 national partner organizations.

In Canadian schools bullying happens every 7.5 minutes in the playground and every 25 minutes in the classroom (Craig and Pepler, 1997). "The human impact of bullying and interpersonal violence is heartbreaking. Children who are victimized can be emotionally scarred for life," says Wendy Craig, Psychology Professor at Queen's University.

Research also shows that the personal, economic, and societal costs of interpersonal violence and mental health problems including bullying are long lasting and far reaching, extending well beyond childhood into the workplace. The WHO estimates the economic costs of interpersonal violence for Canada at \$9 billion annually.

"The long term consequences for children who bully are also troubling. Canadian research shows a strong link between bullying and relationship problems such as dating aggression and sexual harassment," says Dr. Debra Pepler, Distinguished Professor of Psychology at York University.

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PREVNet's vision is to ensure that one day every Canadian will live, learn, play and work in safe and healthy relationships. It is urging Canadians to stand up to bullying.

Bullying Awareness Week News and Activities in Canada include:

- **UNICEF** – November 20th marks the 20th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is National Child Day. UNICEF Canada commemorates this milestone throughout the year with a range of national and regional activities. Please visit www.unicef.ca/crcat20 for more details.
- **The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (SACSC)** – Newly developed comic books designed to engage youth in activities and discussions about bullying are available free of charge during Bullying Awareness Week (November 16-20) at www.sacsc.ca.
- **Family Channel** – Tens of thousands of students in over 300 schools from coast to coast will Stand UP! together when Family Channel leads a massive wave across Canada on Friday, November 20. The Stand UP! Wave will happen immediately following a special presentation of a bullying-prevention themed episode of hit series The Latest Buzz, which airs at noon ET (9:00 a.m. PT).
- **Zap Dramatic:** Launches new bullying prevention video game at www.zap.ca. Sir Basel Pike Public School is an interactive narrative role playing game that explores the dynamics of bullying among boys and girls aged 10-14 (grades 5-9), and different strategies for conflict resolution.
- **Girl Guides of Canada**-Guides du Canada (GGC) will launch its innovative anti-bullying e-learning training of Girls United to Guide leaders, teaching adult leaders how to identify bullying and take critical steps to create a sense of caring, belonging and mutual responsibility between all girls. The course supports the I Believe in We! Challenge, which helps girls support each other in building strong, rewarding friendships with other girls. PREVNet has assisted GGC to develop this important program.

Tip sheets for adults, children, and youth, with great tools and strategies, are available for download at www.prevnet.ca.

What We Know About Bullying Today

It is not a right of passage. It is a relationship problem that needs to be addressed with relationship solutions. Bullying is defined as repeated aggression in which there is an imbalance of power between the child who bullies and the child who is victimized. Children who bully learn to use power and aggression to control and distress others. Children who are victimized become increasingly powerless and find themselves trapped in relationships in which they are abused.

It does not end at childhood. Bullying is a form of abuse at the hands of peers that can take different forms at different ages – physical, emotional, sexual or social. Research now shows that as individual's age, bullying often continues in the form of dating aggression, crime, aggression in sport, sexual harassment or workplace harassment.

Current interventions are not working. Just over half of the evaluated school based program interventions report positive outcomes in reducing bullying, and 15% of them report negative results – they actually make the problem worse. We need to come together with common understanding and informed strategies to address bullying in ALL the places where children live, learn, play and work.

Adults and Peers are children's best chance for change and help. When peers intervene, a bullying episode can end within 10 seconds. The most effective strategy for children is to tell an adult.

About PREVNet

PREVNet (The Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network) is a leading global network of researchers and organizations that work together to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying. Founded by leading Canadian researchers Dr. Wendy Craig, Professor Department of Psychology, Queen's University, and Dr. Debra Pepler, Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology, York University, PREVNet is a New Initiative of the Networks of Centres of Excellence, and comprises researchers and graduate students from over 20 universities in 11 disciplines working in collaboration with over 50 youth-serving organizations in the fields of education, health, community, recreation, arts, media, and technology. PREVNet's vision is that one day everyone will live, learn, play and work in safe and healthy relationships. Contact us at www.prevnet.ca

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