

## The 4-dimensional approach to anti-bullying work by peer mentors

### Ben McGrath, Project manager of MBF's National Peer Mentoring Anti-Bullying Pilot speaks to Sherife Tayfun at Hornsey School For Girls

#### Ben McGrath (BM): 'What is the 4-dimensional approach to anti-bullying work by Peer Mentors in your School?'

Sherife Tayrun (ST): The 4-dimensional approach to anti-bullying is our own interpretation of anti-bullying work provided by Peer Mentors in our School.

Work around the issue of bullying is often seen as a 2-dimensional situation; the interface being between the 'perpetrator' and the 'bullied'.

At Hornsey we are working in a different way. We feel it is more powerful to work with *associates* of the bullies and *associates* of the bullied in addition to the 'bully' and the 'bullied'. This gives our strategies for anti bullying work its 4 dimensions.

#### BM Why do you feel this is the way forward?

ST: I feel this is the best way forward on several levels:

By working with associates of the bullies you disempower the bully; you have the potential to create a 'zero tolerance' of bullying behaviour. This provides the opportunity to use associates of the bully as a lever to prevent further bullying episodes. It takes away the power base for the bully – no audience, no applause, no kudos.

By working with the associates of the bullied you start building a support system for them. You develop the potential for raised self esteem, self confidence and self worth through peer support.

#### BM What was your inspiration for this new model of practice?

ST: The recent media attention given to gang violence and gang culture has caused 2 polarised responses in me.

On the one hand I feel like everybody else 'this is terrible!', 'is no one safe anymore?', 'has the world gone mad?'

On the other hand I feel that the majority of young people are getting bad press. Most young people I know feel very unsettled by these events. In our school most students actively condemn behaviour that is unpleasant or distressing to others. This gave me the idea that I could utilise this 'student voice' in our approach to anti bullying work.

### **BM How could this influence the dynamic of a gang?**

ST: Perhaps on a macro level Youth and Community leaders could use this approach to tackle the formation and momentum of gang membership for the purpose of negative / criminal activity. The purpose for gang membership could be redirected towards altruistic goals, public service, voluntary work and good causes.

This might sound like I'm a bit of a dreamer but I believe hope for tomorrow thrives in our dreams!!

### **BM How do you plan to implement this in school?**

ST: During lunchtime sessions through the use of Peer Mentors and Post 16 Peer Leaders.

We have already started trialling this in our school and monitoring the impact.

### **BM: Will you be producing any resources?**

ST: In due course – watch this space!!

### **Background**

Primary, secondary and special schools have been selected to be part of a two-year pilot that will look at how **peer mentoring can contribute to tackling bullying in schools**.

On 25<sup>th</sup> September, The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation who are managing the DCSF funded pilot, will launch the programme with the first of four regional training events for the participating schools.

Following the training day, **more than 6,000 Peer Mentors** will be recruited to work with fellow students, helping them to understand the impact of their actions and words on others and encouraging them to become active citizens in the school community.

To find out more about the pilot and MBF please visit [www.mandbf.org.uk](http://www.mandbf.org.uk)