



Bullying Prevention Strategies

To address concerns and reinforce positive behavior standards and expectations in any given situation, leaders should take proactive measures based on careful analysis of risk and protective factors. These measures should focus on achievable goals derived from thorough assessments and consultations, with the goal of reducing or preventing future inappropriate or unacceptable conduct. Prevention programs must be pragmatic and grounded in realistic expectations to ensure the greatest possible effectiveness.

Bullying prevention strategies include policies and programs divided into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

- **Primary** prevention strategies can mitigate behaviors before they become problematic bullying behaviors.
- **Secondary** prevention strategies respond immediately after the occurrence, holding perpetrators responsible for bullying behaviors to set the expectation that such behavior is unacceptable.
- **Tertiary** prevention strategies are to mitigate the lasting effects of bullying behaviors, aimed at preventing future occurrences.

Examples of Primary Prevention Strategies

- Bullying prevention training (tailored and facilitated for the targeted audience) should include the following:
 - training individuals for awareness of bullying behaviors and their rights to report
 - bystander training to empower individuals to be socially responsible for the climate and uphold the standard that bullying is unacceptable conduct
- Training should focus on the following:
 - clearly defining what is and what is not bullying (by providing real-life examples)
 - identifying members with a greater chance of being bullied
 - educating members on developing life skills (with prevention techniques)
 - knowing reporting procedures, policies, and regulations
- Monitor trends (e.g., monthly, quarterly) to identify patterns and establish a plan of action to prevent bullying behaviors. Plans may include the following:
 - reporting procedures
 - data tracking of reports
- Conduct unit activities that build group inclusion, cohesion, trust, and respect. These activities should be the following:
 - oriented toward a unified goal
 - inclusive for all unit members
- Conduct required climate assessments (per Service requirements); develop and implement proactive measures. These measures may include the following:
 - data tracking for climate assessment results to track and communicate trends
 - focus groups to uncover risk and protective factors within the climate





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- Clearly define differences between bullying, extracurricular activities, physical training, and team building.
- Clearly define differences between bullying and hazing, taking steps to emphasize that both are harassment.

Examples of Secondary Prevention Strategies:

- Take all allegations/reports of bullying seriously and take appropriate actions to resolve allegations. Taking allegations/reports seriously encompasses the following:
 - responding to reports in a timely manner, per timelines outlined in policy
 - responding with empathy and sincerity when taking reports
 - taking measures to prevent further offenses, such as mitigating opportunities for further bullying behaviors between the suspected perpetrator and complainant
 - resolving complaints using unbiased processes
- Inform leadership of all bullying complaints through the following:
 - direct communication
 - shared data tracking systems
 - other means that relay information without compromising the safety or integrity of the complainant and suspected perpetrator
- Remain neutral and professional; ensure all members are treated with dignity and respect throughout the investigative process.
- Identify why bullying occurred, such as the following:
 - a lack of clear understanding of policy
 - a lack of education or training for bullying awareness
 - failure of enforcement of the rules by leaders and other supervisory positions
- Provide resources and support to all involved members (e.g., spiritual, medical, legal).
- Separate nonconforming members from military service as needed/required.

Examples of Tertiary Prevention Strategies:

- Develop and reinforce strong service ethos and values per the standards of the organization.
- Conduct follow-up assessments (on formal and informal complaints) within 45–60 days after complaint resolution to ensure that the complaint is resolved, and no retaliation has occurred.
- Use information from confirmed bullying cases to inform the development of improved training to prevent any possible future bullying occurrences.
- Review current policies and revise as needed, using information from previous confirmed cases to adapt in areas of blindness or weakness in policies and procedures.





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- Ensure required climate assessments are completed (based on Service requirements or as directed).
- Work with community members to leverage resources available for Service members and their families, especially for newcomers.

