

Bullying in MPHS: Summary of Findings.

WHAT BULLYING LOOKS LIKE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT STEPS.

- Bullying in MPHS is recognized as a problem for individuals, groups and the community as a whole. Its presence diminishes the quality of life and contributes to increased anxiety and fear across age, gender and cultural boundaries.
- Bullying manifests in a multitude of ways (verbal, emotional, physical) and is present in a wide range of settings, including homes, workplaces, schools, churches, clubrooms, in public places and online. It is pervasive and the effects can last a very long time.
- It is deeply embedded in the culture of many of those who live in MPHS and not often talked about, at least partly because local 'leaders' use bullying tactics some of the time but also because attempts at getting help are often not successful. This is seen to be linked to the limited world views and constrained aspirations within the local community, which are also associated with a fear of change.
- Local people impacted by bullying often feel very let down by others in the community who 'should' be able to do something about it and therefore tend to focus on developing individual responses to look after themselves. Bullying seems to leave many people feeling impotent with regard to making positive changes.
- At the same time, there are places (such as the MPHS Hub) that are recognized as being free of bullying. There are also programmes (such as those offered by Health West, Neighbourhood team policing unit and Man Alive as well as some schools) that work to reduce bullying, both directly and indirectly. As well, there are a number of people interested in preventing, reducing and ameliorating the experience of bullying in MPHS.
- These people feel strongly that a successful response to bullying needs to be:
 - Strengths based, and building on existing interests and assets;
 - Collaborative, cross-agency and directly involving local people in both decision making and action taking so that responses come from within the local environment and reflect the variety of lifestyles and values in the area;
 - Multi-faceted, with both 'quick wins' and longer term strategies, and not necessarily always directly focused on bullying;
 - Involving of all affected groups, including bullies.
- There is a strong desire to develop creative responses to bullying and to ensure young people are actively involved in planning, development and implementation.
- There is also a strong desire to utilize existing resources differently and to use any extra resource to highlight local stories of bullying and leverage and seed possibilities for change, over both the shorter and longer term.
- Local people feel there are learnings to be gained from other successful campaigns (Smokefree, It's Not OK) and opportunities for piggybacking bullying on various other activities, both local and national.
- Local people also feel that it is time to work together as a community with regard to bullying eg parents being actively involved in alternative activities in schools. MPHS has a number of people in a variety of positions who are ready to be the change!