

respect. campaign

- Campaign Inception June 2006
- Campaign Authorized by Senior Team July 2006
- Endorsed by CPC, SSALT, and Academic Council August 2006
- Campaign Rolled out to Faculty August 31
- The **respect.** Learning Guide (the 11 by 17 pamphlet) has been provided to all faculty, administration and anyone else who wanted it, it has also been sent electronically to the Regional campuses
- Campaign introduced to Resident Advisor Team September 1
- Classroom Presentations Begin, (2500 students spoken to in small presentations during Semester 1) September 5, 2006
- 1000 lanyards given out to Students
- 2500 Buttons distributed to the College Community and Region
- Packages distributed to the Board of Governors and Foundation Board.
- Committee Formed to provide continuing Leadership to the Campaign - October 2006
- Captain Respect makes an appearance at Confederation College on Halloween spawning a Comic Strip in the OPUS Newspaper.
- Campaign Officially Launched to the Media during College Week.
- Article Published in LEADERSHIP - A Journal For Post Secondary Leaders - November 2006
- The Respect Campaign is asked to speak at or advise approximately 20 external organizations, including Fanshawe College, Conestoga College, Lakehead University, Diversity Thunder Bay, several high schools both local and province wide, and Thunder Bay City Hall.
- The Respect Campaign is integral in launching Confederation College's first annual Diversity Days promotion. This 12 day long awareness raising, educational and fun event focused on bringing attention to GLTBQ issues, racism, multiculturalism, student debt, spiritual diversity, aboriginal issues, and accessibility amongst other things
- SUCCI (our student union) creates an internship position to continue the work of the Respect Campaign and forward SUCCI and Confederation College's Diversity Agenda.
- Evaluations are conducted to determine the effectiveness of the campaign.
- The Respect Campaign goes on the road, to OCC, CCSS, and CACUSS.

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it's about respect.

AT CONFEDERATION COLLEGE

Welcome Back! We have had an exciting and challenging first semester with our Respect. Campaign. We hope you have had a chance to experience it and assimilate the campaign ideas and into your working and teaching environment.

As we begin a second semester with the project we would like to encourage you to put your button back on! (and thank those of you who wear yours everyday!). It is such a simple idea but wearing the button demonstrates an active commitment to the ideals of the Respect. Campaign.

We have a panel of students who are anxiously awaiting the chance to come into your classroom to talk about Respect, to lead a panel discussion on diversity, to discuss racism and its effects, all of which can be arranged by contacting Thomas.

Staff development sessions on Respect have been arranged through Jeannine Nagy and the Human Resources Department. These 2 hour sessions will cover the basics of the Respect Campaign, proactivity, as well as focus on an Intervention Workshop (how do I intervene in issues of disrespect?). Keep an eye out for these sessions happening in February.

The Respect Campaign will be leading focus groups on Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination, and Consequences for Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination at Confederation College, over the coming weeks.

Need a classroom presentation on Bullying? Jim has prepared one for you! It was designed with High School students in mind (but the principles are the same) See the article located in the following pages of this brochure. visit J:Public/RESPECT/Bullying presentation.ppt.

The Respect Campaign steering committee meets on Wednesday January 17th, at 2pm in the Shuniah Board Room, this committee is comprised of dedicated volunteers who help guide the direction of the campaign. We are always looking for new ideas, feel free to join us.

We hope this semester to partner with our CAMP folks to produce a documentary and some PSA/Commercials on Respect. Look for these exciting projects over the next semester.

As well we hope to have our website www.itsaboutrespect.com up and running by the end of January. This site will be a "go to" resource on Respect issues, Diversity, Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination at Confederation College.

Thank you for your time and support during the first months of this campaign, and we look forward to your continued support as we grow and develop the campaign into a lasting change for the staff, faculty and students within our learning community.

BULLYING...College Style

One of the most common questions asked at the beginning of the Respect Campaign was whether the campaign was really necessary... "is this really an issue at our College?" Short answer... a lot of people thought so, and one of the most common problems articulated was the presence of bullying. The word conjures up the agony of a tortured elementary school existence, with stolen lunches, threats of reprisal, feigning illness to stay home, not wanting teachers or parents to know for fear of humiliation, shame or things getting worse. The high school hazing, the fear of physical threats, the claustrophobic experience of the inside of a locker: these are not-so-subtle examples of bullying.

Lately, the media has given attention to bullying in the workplace as a legitimate social issue requiring attention (go to <http://www.bullyonline.org/workbully/canada.htm>). The "bully boss" is described in both the popular media (The Devil Wears Prada!) and academic literature. Lately, progressive institutions and companies have turned its' eyes to bullying as a health and safety issue, eroding the confidence and ultimately the productivity of its employees. In institutions of higher learning, bullying is not only seen as counter to human growth, development and dignity, it is seen as polluting the learning environment and having profound direct and indirect consequences both inside and outside of the classroom.

How much bullying is there at post secondary institutions? Hard to say really because so much of it goes unreported. (Research has revealed how pervasive bullying is on the elementary school playground. An often quoted Canadian study by Craig and Peplar found there were bullying incidents perpetrated every seven minutes on elementary school playgrounds in the Greater Toronto Area! <http://www.tvdsb.on.ca/safeschools/information.shtml>) One of the reasons that bullying is such a persistent sore on the landscape is that it works. Bullies feel powerful and contrary to a lot of what we first thought, often enjoy average to above average levels of self esteem and feelings of social efficacy; they often get what they want. This is power and power feeds on itself. Those bullied often don't report it for fear that it will get worse or a resonant message that they may have heard from their parent "what did you do to bring it on yourself... just ignore it." Victims of bullying often feel that they are at fault and try to grunt it out. That sometimes works, but often it doesn't. Some kind of intervention is usually required.

Brock University in St. Catherines went through an interesting process over the past two years. They decided to improve the quality of the **learning and working** environment on their campus. A group comprised of students, staff, faculty and management wanted to put bullying on the map, along with harassment and discrimination. (Please note that this applies to all students, faculty and staff and anyone else who has business on campus property, as well as in placement, co-op and clinical settings in which students work and learn.)

Most folks understand that harassment like sexual harassment, physical harassment, ethnic or religious harassment is illegal. Likewise, discriminatory actions based on race, religion, age, sexual orientation is contrary to Canadian law. Stalking is illegal, as is making verbal threats... most people understand that.

But most bullying technically doesn't cross the line to being illegal. Making rude, disrespectful comments about someone's weight, their academic acumen, their height, the clothes they wear or making it miserable to sit in a classroom by spreading gossip, making fun of their boyfriend or other aspects of their private life isn't illegal; it just runs counter to everything we want a student to learn in college and pollutes the educational environment for that student and others who have to hear it (this has detrimental effects on spectators too.) Cyber bullying is a particularly pernicious subset. The internet and the ease with which we can anonymously take and transmit images, videos and text raises the potential for bullying to take on extremely destructive impacts with potentially suicidal consequences.

What does bullying look like at a college level? How do I know if I'm being bullied? What is the difference between being assertive or strong willed, and bullying? Granted, people have different learning and leadership styles and some of these may be, for lack of a better term more assertive than others, but that doesn't necessarily mean it deserves the label of bullying.

To answer these and other questions, let's take a look at some examples from the Brock University Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy (and remember, this policy applies to ALL who attend school and work within the educational institution): "Bullying' is the misuse of power or position to persistently criticize and condemn; to openly humiliate and undermine an individual's ability until this person becomes so fearful that their confidence crumbles and they lose belief in themselves.

These attacks on the individual are normally sudden, irrational, unpredictable and usually unfair. Bullying damages individuals' health and lives and also undermines productivity and effective work relationships.

Bullying can occur when professional abrasiveness becomes tainted with personal vindictiveness – when criticism is destructive not constructive, is criticism of the person rather than her/his mistakes, publicly humiliates rather than privately corrects and results in a person feeling threatened or compromised.

It is recognized that bullying can range from extreme and obvious behaviour to behaviour which is subtle and seemingly innocuous. Bullying is deemed to include, but is not restricted to:

- physically abusive or aggressive behaviour such as pushing, hitting, finger pointing or standing close to an individual in an aggressive manner
- verbally abusive behaviour such as yelling, insults, threats and name calling
- ostracism/exclusion, or conversely, excessive supervision
- undermining of the individual's position by changing work objectives/guidelines without consultation, setting unreasonable, unrealistic or impossible goals/targets, taking credit for the individual's work, deriding the individual's work to managers, or sabotaging the individual's work
- removing areas of responsibility, without justification, and giving people menial or trivial tasks to do instead
- unreasonable refusal to delegate authority and responsibility
- withholding information
- spreading malicious rumours or lies
- picking on people and unreasonably criticizing their performance
- impeding an individual's efforts at promotions or transfers
- messages, including voice mail, electronic mail, online chats, and comments posted on websites, that are threatening, derisive or defamatory

Bullying does not include legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of a faculty member, staff member or student's performance/behaviour or the legitimate (ie. not discriminatory, arbitrary or abusive) exercise of academic freedom, freedom of thought and inquiry, and expression in teaching and research. The University will not condone bullying under the guise of "strong management" but, conversely, regards an assertive management style as acceptable provided that faculty, staff and students are treated with respect and dignity." (taken from Brock University, Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy, see <http://www.brocku.ca/humanrights/policyprocedures.php>)

An important aspect to consider in the College's response to disrespectful behaviour is an acknowledgement that students under the age of 25 (the largest demographic group in our college) are undergoing profound biological change. Very recent research has demonstrated that folks aged 10-25, what many see as the true range of adolescence, have different brains than "mature adults" do. In essence, the pre-frontal cortex of the brain, that part responsible for judgment, impulse control and reasoning is still very much in development. (This is not to insinuate that bullying only happens within this age group, but having so many folks of this age in our community helps us better understand the reality and the challenge!)

Younger folks often react to situations using the so-called "limbic system" of the brain associated with emotion (a.k.a. the medial temporal lobe), which results in more impulsive behaviour which seems to ignore short term consequences; unsafe sexual behaviour, binge drinking, jumping off cliffs into unknown water and reckless driving to name a few. It's not hard to see that this can also result in disrespectful behaviour but it isn't an excuse for people not to work on it. ("Chill man, it's only my limbic system talking!") It is therefore incumbent on us as a community to recognize that students are a "work in progress" and that we have an obligation to hold people accountable **AND** to teach and model what appropriate interpersonal behaviour looks like. (Take a look at the November, 2006 article entitled "The Teenage Brain" by Nora Underwood in a magazine called The Walrus for a fascinating description of recent brain development research.)

The Respect Campaign has as its aim to promote a safe learning environment, but I think it is important to specify what is meant by this. Some people have interpreted this to mean comfortable, and I hesitate to frame it that way. Education often takes us to new places and this change process often involves risk, frustration, failure and hard work, which most often isn't regarded as comfortable... deadlines, mid-term assignment bottle necks, endless quizzes, interpersonal conflict in group work... comfort isn't the first word springing to mind here. But, being able to try, explore, fail, re-try, question, make mistakes and achieve in an emotionally safe environment is what we want to strive for. The biggest fear for most students is being centred out in front of their peers... bullying often has at its core this kind of dynamic. We want to promote the opposite; that however you are, you belong here, and you can risk in safety and grow like anyone else regardless of your skin colour, height, weight, religion, socio economic status, sexual orientation, gender or academic achievement... you deserve to be here and to be treated with respect.

And if I or someone I know is suffering bullying, what should I do? This will be addressed in future articles, but briefly for now...talk to someone you trust; a friend, teacher, parent, counsellor, your rez advisor, significant other... by sharing your experience you won't feel so alone and alternatives will come to light. An interesting website goes into detail about ways to deal with bullying, take a look at <http://www.reachout.com.au/default.asp?ti=1566>.

Usually bullying behaviour requires some level of intervention before it stops. Don't suffer in silence.