

# PREFACE

It's a very strange feeling writing a preface for the third edition of my school bullying book. Our world has changed so much since I wrote the previous editions: *Bully Busting* (1999) and *Bully Blocking* (2007). There's greater awareness of the toxic, traumatic nature of school bullying and cyberbullying, and many excellent school programs. My professional experience with workplace bullying has provided me with a unique perspective, looking at school bullying through the lens of the workplace and the evidence available in that field. Sadly, more children are now being bullied, while most school programs reduce bullying by less than one fifth (Rigby 2022), and more than half of students may be bullied later on at work (Eden Brown 2023).

Clearly, bullying is harmful. It represents humiliation and ostracism and threatens our social survival instinct. There's clear evidence that bullying interferes with normal child and adolescent development. It may be traumatising, and the lived experience of it can be worse than child sexual abuse and domestic violence (Lereya et al. 2015). Brain scans are gradually demonstrating the impact of bullying on the brain (Muetzel 2019). The neurobiological and genetic impact of bullying disadvantages some children for life. Many are later injured by workplace bullying, and some relay their vulnerability to their children. Sadly, the current fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) doesn't actually identify school bullying. It's no wonder that so few health professionals, schools and parents take school bullying seriously!

Despite having access to Google and the world of academia, it has been extremely challenging for me to locate other school bullying therapists and find their evidence-based treatments. Fortunately, my own treatment method for the average student is usually quick and effective. It's based upon how animals react to threat using their survival instinct; however, humans must also use their prefrontal cortex (smart brain) to respond wisely by acting calm and neutral, without threatening the bully. This approach may embarrass the bully but earns the target respect and possibly friendship.

This is a new world; we've seen schools change in the blink of an eye to the Covid-19 pandemic. Let's hope the same occurs for managing bullying!

Every child has a right to a life where they're respected for who they are and have friends who value them.

This insightful and practical guide delves deep into the complex issue of school bullying. Completely revised and updated, this edition of Field's best-selling resource explains what bullying is, the injuries and trauma it inflicts, the underlying reasons behind it and the need for more effective interventions.

Field presents valuable tools and tactics that busy teachers, parents and counsellors can use to empower students to effectively manage bullying. These skills and strategies can be applied in various contexts, whether by mental health professionals, educators, parents, or even peers who want to support bullied students.

Despite the seemingly daunting nature of school bullying, **BULLY BLOCKING** offers hope and a path forward. Field's evidence-based approach and practical solutions make this book an essential resource for anyone looking to help students navigate the challenging terrain of bullying, equipping them with the social survival skills they need to thrive in today's complex social landscapes.

**Evelyn M. Field OAM** is a psychologist, professional speaker, best-selling author and regular media commentator. She has spent more than four decades helping students and adults develop social survival skills to manage bullying in schools and the workplace. She was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her initiatives in school and workplace bullying.

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