**Introduction**

Based on a variety of circumstances and observations in the Middle School, an Anti-Bully Committee was established. The goal was to:

- reduce bullying
- educate the students on the specifics of bullying (true definition, various forms, and signs)
- shift the student mindset from a reactive to a proactive one
- increase positive social relationships (now referred to as 'guyship').

Unfortunately, the term ‘bullying’ has become overly and misused to describe any form of negative behaviour. The lack of education surrounding the topic has caused communities to label students as bullies and victims, when in reality they are in the process of defining their social relationships.

“I thought that it was cool being a protector of Middle School”. The Guyship Committee is seen as a desirable leadership opportunity. Currently, there are 20 students on the committee representing each advisory group. They are responsible for meeting weekly and for organizing various activities such as Bullying Awareness Week.

**The Research Question**

*How can participation in an anti-bullying program create empathy in Middle School boys?*

**Research Context and Participants**

St. Andrew’s College is in its 115th year as an all boys’ independent day and boarding school.

The Middle School students, grades 5-8 and total 167 were the participants in this action research project. The Guyship Committee is comprised of 22 students that represent each grade level.

**The Research Action**

The Middle School students participated in an anonymous online survey created by the Guyship Committee and administered during Bullying Awareness Week. Students then participated in a post-survey to determine if the Inclusion of Bullying Awareness Week and the activities offered and discussion ensued, resulted in a community of empathetic boys who demonstrate the ability to make good choices in bullying situations.

**Data Collection**

Two forms of data collection were used to gather qualitative and quantitative data:

- Electronic questionnaire using Survey Monkey as a platform
- Verbal feedback from Guyship Committee members

**Data Analysis**

The data collected from the student surveys and from the commentary from Guyship Committee members were analysed and themed. The thematic analysis of the data compared the results from the pre-and post-questionnaire, and the Guyship Committee meeting discussions supported the results produced in these surveys. In reviewing the responses, it seemed only natural to group certain questions in the survey to support the emerging themes; therefore interpretation of the data was handled thematically. The focus was on categorizing the boys’ perception of ‘guyship’ at St. Andrew’s College during Bullying Awareness Week and following Bullying Awareness Week.

**Conclusions**

It is clear, via the pre-and post-survey results, and the feedback provided by the Guyship Committee members, that participation in an anti-bullying program can, and in the case of St. Andrew’s College, did create empathy in Middle School boys. The initiatives put forth by the Guyship Committee, the ongoing education provided by various constituent groups in our local community, and the empowerment garnered by Middle School boys as active participants in building a happy and healthy space, have proven beneficial to the overall Middle School experience at St. Andrew’s College.

**Further Information**

The full report of this project and an online copy of this poster are available at http://www.theibsc.org/.

Researcher’s Email: sabrina.dangelo@sac.on.ca

**Key Readings**


