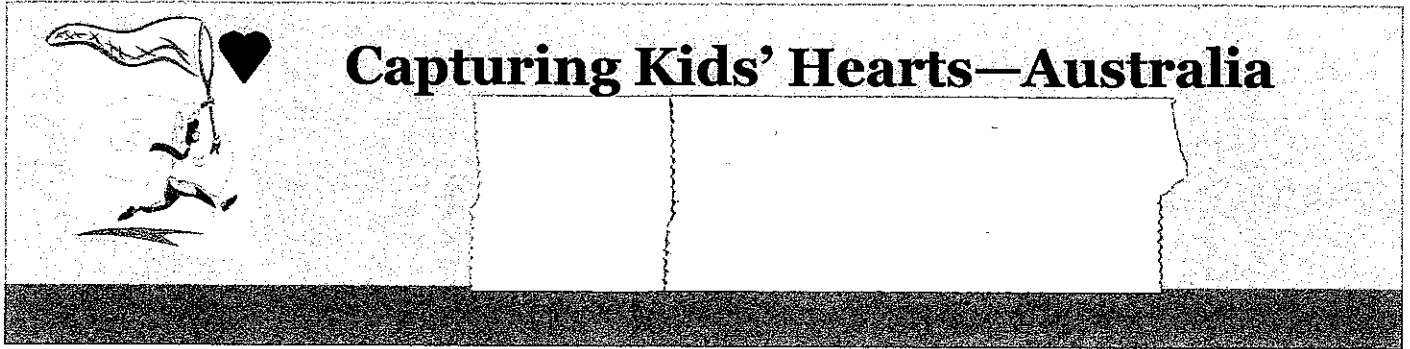# INQUIRY INTO BULLYING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Organisation: Capturing Kids' Hearts - Australia

Name: Mr Mark Sullivan

Position: Director of Training

Date received: 16/03/2009

10th March, 2009

The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

RE: Inquiry into bullying of children and young people

In response to the "Inquiry into bullying of children and young people" and the subsequent request for submissions for best practice approaches to reduce this behavior, Capturing Kids Hearts—Australia wish to submit the following proposal covering the Terms Of Reference.

Capturing Kids' Hearts—Australia, is the Australian arm of a company based in College Station, Texas USA. The company was founded in 1985 with a charter to bring out the best in young people, specifically dealing with challenging issues. After their initial outstanding success, they were invited to modify their process for schools. This process is now used in approximately 44 US states as well as the UK, France and of course Australia. By equipping teachers and leaders with a specific process, bullying issues are significantly reduced. Broadly speaking the Capturing Kids Hearts process equips teachers and leaders with the tools to:

> decrease discipline/bullying issues
> increase performance levels
> increase attendance levels

The end result is an environment where teachers want to teach and kids want to come to school.

It is out of the belief that Capturing Kids' Hearts—Australia, offers a specific process with proven, documented results, that we enclose its submission to the G.P. Standing Committee No. 2 for determination of the effective implementation of these processes.

Your Sincerely

Mark Sullivan
Director of Training
Capturing Kids' Hearts—Australia

Submission

Prepared for:

The General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2

Inquiry into bullying of children & young people

March, 2009

Prepared by: Mark Sullivan
Capturing Kids' Hearts - Australia

Email: c

Submission from Capturing Kids' Hearts - Australia

for

The General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2

<u>Inquiry into bullying of children & young people</u>

<u>Summary</u>

The General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 has called for submissions for an inquiry into bullying and provided Terms of Reference as a guideline to focus the submission. Our submission looks at and explores, the factors contributing to bullying and the impact bullying may have on the positive development of children.

Our submission also explores an approach that has already had a positive impact on the levels of bullying in some schools. **Capturing Kids' Hearts** is a values based, relationship process that has, as its focus, <u>how to connect with children</u>, the fundamental step in the process of addressing bullying issues.

It is our belief that real learning can only take place with the establishment of positive relationships and safe environments, free from the trauma of bullying related incidents. We also believe that **Capturing Kids' Hearts** will provide significant enhancement to the professional development of teachers by focussing on classroom management and interpersonal skills that do not seem to be specifically addressed in current bullying programs.

Our purpose in responding to this call for submissions to the Inquiry into bullying of children and young people is to:

- o Highlight the areas of the current bullying climate that we believe could be significantly enhanced or addressed through inclusion of the **Capturing Kids' Hearts** process.

- o Identify the discrepancy between the current bullying programmes that focus on actions and remedies for when and if you are being bullied as opposed to our solution of addressing the bullying before it starts.

- o Provide evidence that **Capturing Kids Hearts** is the ideal program to equip teachers with classroom management skills that focus on self-managing classrooms, prevention of inappropriate behaviour, incorporating the entire school culture.

Contact Details

The author of this submission can be contacted as follows:
Mark Sullivan
Director Of Training
Capturing Kids' Hearts
Australia
capkidshearts@iprimus.com.au
(02) 4913 5973 or 0412602956

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Term of Reference 1:

The nature, level and impact of bullying among school age children and young people under the age of 18, including apprentices and trainees

Bullying is a common problem that affects an increasing number of children in our schools

So what is bullying? There are significant identifying characteristics for bullies as rated by experts and by practicing educators. They are:-

- Control others through verbal threats and physical actions
- Quicker to anger and sooner to use force than others
- Tend to have little empathy for the problems of the other person in the victim/bully relationship
- Have often been exposed to models of aggressive behaviours
- Chronically repeat aggressive behaviours
- Inappropriately perceive hostile intent in the actions of others
- Are angry, revengeful
- Parents are poor role models for getting along with others
- Are likely to have contact with aggressive groups
- Parents are poor role models for constructively solving problems
- See only aggression as the way to preserve their self-image
- Inconsistent discipline procedures at home
- Perceived physical image is important for maintaining a feeling of power and control
- Focus on angry thoughts
- Have many more family problems than usual
- Parents often do not know the child's whereabouts
- Suffer physical and emotional abuse at home
- Create resentment and frustration in peer group

Its true description is "deliberate psychological, emotional and/or physical harassment of somebody

by another or a group, occurring at school or the workplace or between the school or workplace and

home. It includes exclusion from peer group, intimidation, extortion and violence."

A recent survey of around 4000 school children in NSW found that:

- Nearly 1 in 2 children are bullies

- Approximately 1 in 3 children are bullied

- Approximately 1 in 5 children both bully and are victims of bullying

The survey also revealed that child bullies and their victims are at increased risk of mental health. Bullies tend to be unhappy at school and the bullied tend to feel alone, while those who bullied and were bullied by others, both disliked school and felt alone.

Conclusion: Teenagers victimised at school are more likely to suffer serious depression and depression is the single biggest and most important risk factor in suicide in youngsters in Australia

Now with the advances made in technology a new threat has taken hold – Cyber bullying. Cyber bullying describes bullying using mobile phones and the internet. Most previous studies have focused on the prevalence of text message and email bullying.

Studies found cyber bullying less frequent than traditional bullying, but appreciable, and reported more outside of school than inside. Phone call and text message bullying were most prevalent, with instant messaging bullying over the internet; their impact was perceived as comparable to traditional bullying. Mobile phone/video clip bullying, while rarer, was perceived to have more negative impact. Age and gender differences varied between studies. Most cyber bullying was done by one or a few students, usually from the same year group. It often just lasted about a week, but sometimes much longer. Being a cyber victim, but not a cyber bully, correlated with internet use; many cyber victims were traditional "bully-victims". Pupils recommended blocking/avoiding messages, and telling someone, as the best coping strategies; but many cyber victims had told nobody about it.

Conclusions: Cyber bullying is an important new kind of bullying, with some different characteristics from traditional bullying. The majority of cyber bullying happens outside of school.

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Term of Reference 2

Factors Contributing to Bullying

As we are all aware many factors contribute to bullying. Bullying can even be as simple as name calling, all the way to a more physical demonstration. The major overriding guideline contributing to bullying is:-

"Behind almost all inappropriate behaviour there is fear"

Even as adults entering new social environments we are likely to experience some levels of anxiety. These anxieties result in physiological changes too. Our heart rates may rise. Our stomachs may churn and our voices may tremble. These reactions and many others are common to all of us when initially thrust into unfamiliar social situations. After a while our fears begin to subside somewhat. But what would happen if our anxieties remained high throughout a school term? How would those fears impact our performance? How would they affect our willingness to take risks in the classroom? How would high levels of anxiety impact a child with tendencies towards bullying and aggressiveness? How would they affect a child with tendencies towards timidity?

The fact is that research indicates individual and group performance is enhanced significantly when individuals report feelings of safety within group settings. If this is true, it would follow that creating safe schools and classrooms should be of paramount concern of educators and not only in terms of physical safety, but of psychological safety as well. Therefore it is critical that we remember that kids are more anxious about the way their peers will respond to them than they are about their teachers. The most difficult task for teachers is to create an environment where the fear of peers is reduced.

So if fear contributes to almost all inappropriate behaviour how do we stop inappropriate behaviour? Take away the fear!

We are aware that four important areas are targeted in bullying and they are:

- flexibility
- confidence
- self esteem
- a climate of trust

Several tactics are consistent with bullying at school, in the workplace and at home namely:

- Blame for "errors"
- Unreasonable demands
- Criticism of ability
- Inconsistent compliance with rules
- Threats of job loss
- Insults and put downs
- Discounting/denial of accomplishments.
- Exclusion/Isolation
- Yelling, screaming
- Stealing credit.
- Don't let it slide, it won't get better.
- Enlist support. For witness. Not gossip.
- Work at being totally comfortable before confronting the bully.
- Know what your resources are.

Term of Reference 3

Prevention & Early intervention approaches to address bullying, including cyber bullying

An action research project report provided students with social skills training to effectively handle bullying situations in the fourth grade. The study involved 70 fourth-grade students and began Monday, January 14, 2008 and concluded Friday, May 2, 2008. The behaviours documented from the fourth grade students were name calling, exclusion, pushing, disrespect of people and property and intimidation. Teacher researchers used several tools to document the evidence of bullying. These tools were a student survey, teacher survey, observational checklists, and parent survey. When implementing the student survey, the teacher researchers noticed that over three-fourths of the fourth-grade students felt that they had been bullied. Boys bullied more frequently than girls. Bullying occurred most often on the playground, the bus, and the hallway.

One of the most concerning issues was that one-third of the students did not feel safe at school. The strategy that was most beneficial to the students in classrooms was teaching social skills. The social skills that were taught to prevent bullying included: assertiveness training, cultural awareness, empathy, respect, and appropriate responses and choices. Students became more confident in their ability to handle bullying situations. Students felt comfortable coming to an adult, but were also able to handle more situations independently. The perception of feeling safe at school increased throughout the intervention. This is due to the students' increased knowledge of how to handle a bully or bullying situation. Students used the strategies that were introduced during the intervention, thus empowering them to handle any given situation. The key to the success and take-up of these skills was the strength of the teacher/student relationship.

Take for example what are the Significant Identifying Characteristics for Victims:-

- Exhibit obsessive or rigid actions
- Believe that they cannot control their environment
- Have ineffective social skills
- Have poor interpersonal skills
- Less popular than others
- Have underlying fears of personal inadequacy

- Blame themselves for their problems
- Given labels suggesting inadequacy
- Isolated socially
- Afraid of going to school
- Are physically younger, smaller and weaker than peers
- Have limited skills for gaining success and acceptance
- Run out of communication capabilities during high stress incidents
- Have a poor self-concept
- Show physical mannerisms associated with depression
- Have frequent feelings of personal inadequacy
- Perform self-destructive actions
- Believe others are more capable of handling various situations
- Have difficulty relating to peers
- Have family members who are over-involved in the student's decisions and activities
- Perceived progressive failures cause this person to put forth less effort
- Feel external factors have more of an impact on them than internal control

Capturing Kids' Hearts believes that to combat the problem of bullying and cyber bullying "the horse has bolted" by addressing what to do if one is bullied. The focus should be on prevention of bullying occurring in the first place. This prevention can only take place at the grass root level and that is in the classroom where children spend the majority of their time and where social impacts are at their greatest. The CKH process is a classroom management tool where the teacher is instructed on how to take a diverse group of individuals (including bullies) and turn them into a high performing team and where the focus is on a safe learning environment. We believe that teaching personal leadership skills to all students and giving teachers the skills to develop and lead powerful self managing classrooms is the most effective way to improve the current climate in education.

If 16 year-olds are asked how many rules they need, they usually say that they don't need very many. If their parents or school administrators are asked, they say that those same 16 year-olds need more structure than they think. The result is tension between the two. One wants fewer rules, while the other sees the need for more rules. We can use this model to determine where we are with our teachers, other administrators, the board, the students, etc. The key points of concern are: Where does

the person think the rules need to be for him, and where does the leadership think the rules need to be for that person? The greater the distance apart, the greater the tension.

For example, do you see the need for rules as being more important than the need for relationships? Where do you focus most of your activity? Is it on enforcing the rules or working to build the relationships? Where do most of your problems occur? On the rules side it's easy to identify a problem. You broke the rules . . . so there's a problem. Would it surprise you to hear that most people don't even know what I'm talking about when I ask them if the problems are on the relationship side of the equation?

At Capturing Kids hearts, we are more concerned about the relationships than we are the rules. We do not believe in being their buddy or knowing everything about their lives down to the most intimate details. We do, however, believe that we can respect each other and be committed to working through issues that come up. It's not okay to act any way you want and think that it will be overlooked because of a relationship or commitment that would excuse inexcusable behaviour. **Wrong behaviour is wrong behaviour.** And there are always consequences aimed at learning how to do it better next time.

"Rules without relationships breed rebellion." This is currently the case in many schools, work places and homes.

As a society/school we write the rules. We work on the rules. We try to enforce the rules. And we never stop to think that even in the best possible scenario, we can achieve only compliance. Compliance is not what we are after. Lots of people settle for compliance because they don't know how to win respect. Compliance is what you get with rule-following. Respect comes from the relational side of the equation, from how the person feels toward you.

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Appropriate Relationships with Appropriate Adults

In September of 1997, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* published the results of a significant study. The authors found that the one factor that lowered adolescent risks in the key areas of risk, such as bullying, dropping out of school, drugs, sexual activity, etc., was connectedness to an adult. We have said that this connectedness needs to be to an "appropriate" adult, and then we have allowed the group to determine what "appropriate" means.

What is the bottom line to this study? Children need relationships, and they do not do well without them. More than anything, they need appropriate relationships with appropriate adults. When children come to school, do they see attention or time or energy being given to building effective relationships between their teachers and themselves? On the contrary, they see us, as adults, focusing on the things that can be directly measured by others and will provide quantifiable results. Hence, children do not get their needs tended to. And as we have learned from Abraham Maslow, if their needs are not met, they cannot possibly deliver the performance we need from them.

We measure what we treasure. We measure academic performance because we treasure it. What if we find that there is a major factor that affects performance, but we don't have a good way of measuring it, so it's hard to find the "secret" to what really gives us performance? We think there is a secret, and great teachers are doing it without realising it. We believe it's tied to the idea of winning children to themselves and getting performance through the relational side.

Respectful and Responsible Behaviour

How do we get respectful, appropriate and responsible behaviour? I submit that we cannot get it the way we are currently going about it. I don't want to be responsible to a set of rules. The rule "do not bully" has meaning to me only when I realise that when I bully someone I let someone down or hurt a person by my behaviour. If I don't care about the person, then my "breaking the rule" will have little,

if any, internal consequence. It is only in knowing that my behaviour has an effect on someone I care about, that I begin to modify my actions. As I mature, I internalise these values and then will act in the appropriate way even when no one knows. This is the foundation of character.

Most of the systems involved with children today are totally focused on rule-based behaviour. This will never bring more than behaviour within the rules, which again, is compliance. We have found that children behave for people they respect. The question then arises, how do we get children, or for that matter anyone, to respect us? The simple answer is to be respectable. But I know many administrators, teachers, parents, etc., who are very respectable, but are not shown respect by certain others. The key here is that those who do not show respect to them are those who are not in a good relationship with them.

One of the things we suggest teachers do to build relationships is to greet each child at the door every day. This allows several things to occur. First, they get to make contact with each child and interact with each child on a more personal basis. Second, they can ask how the students are doing and get some feedback on how they are for that day. After several days of this the teacher can involve other students in this greeting process, creating a warm setting in which to begin class.

Another thing we suggest is that the teacher takes three to five minutes to begin each class with a few comments on "what good things have happened since our last time together." This starts each class off with something good and sets the mood for the day. We hear such things as who got a date, who passed a test, and who scored at a game. Students have a real need to share and be connected with other kids in their class, but we usually don't allow for this and we certainly don't structure class so that these needs are addressed. We ask the teachers to share their "good things," as well, and to rotate this opportunity to the students so that several people have the opportunity to lead the class. We have found that this raises the social skills and speaking skills of each class member. This forms the basis of a secure setting for performance. It is a relationship-based model for leading class. We have many

simple skills and techniques that produce incredible results and all of them are aimed at getting connected to kids.

In the past, there was a place for command-control based leadership, whether it was in the classroom or the boardroom. It served the military well for hundreds of years. This method of leadership has been successful with heavy construction industries, such as mining, utilities, railroads, and numerous other arenas of business. But times have changed. Command-control works when we are dealing, for the most part, with less-educated people, such as labourers at the turn of the century. It also works in times of crisis, such as in wars or riots. It does not work with today's work force or with today's kids. If you really want high performance, you have to build relationships.

We know from the work of Goleman (1995) and others that in today's world those people who are effective in relationships are the ones who are successful in life. Isn't this even truer in the classroom? Teachers who are effective in building relationships with kids are obviously more effective in the classroom.

We are responsible for the culture we create around us. It's easy to dictate effectiveness, but it's another thing to lead effectiveness.

Our company founder coined a phrase in 1977 that has guided us for many years: "If you have a child's heart, you have his head." The same would be true for administrators: if you have your staff's heart, you have their head. But how often do we hear in our administrator training programs that in order to be effective with our kids, we must win our teachers' hearts? And even if we did hear this, would we know where to start?

Some years ago I visited a school to give an in service. I arrived early at the school and happened to be walking through the hall when I noticed the Principal coming toward me. We were the only two people in the hallway, and it was fairly obvious I was a guest. As we approached, I assumed that he

would speak and introduce himself to me. He didn't. No eye contact, no smile, no nod, and no recognition at all. It was as though I were not even there. Who is responsible for the culture of his school? How do you think his staff felt? And then, what do you think was passed on to the students?

How can children survive if they come from a cold home or difficult situation to a cold and aloof school? How can we expect them to perform under such conditions? Leaders who are effective in building relationships with staff will more than likely be successful in building a good school.

Term of Reference 5.

The Evidence base for effective anti bullying approaches

Given the privacy laws within Australian schools, the limitations for recording data and the fact that such data is not required to be published, it is difficult to deliver a broad sample size of statistical data for Australian schools. As the sample size of Australian schools is small, we have attached testimonials (at the back of this submission) from Australian schools and statistical data collected from a variety of schools in the US where each school is obligated to collect and publish statistical data covering a variety of areas.

The following school has been able to provide data:

Rutherford Technology High School has recorded the following reductions as a percentage after the implementation of Capturing Kids Hearts to just 30% of the teaching facility.

Reduction In Bullying related incidents:	15%
Reduction in absenteeism of Students:	7%

The Principal has provided not only these statistics but also this analogy:-

"The key to the prevention of bullying related incidents and anti social behaviour is the building of relationships. A relationship between the student and teacher, between student and student and between teacher and teacher.

The difficulty is in the "how". It is an easy thing to say "build a relationship", but not an easy thing to do for new teachers or for teachers who have an ingrained methodology they have been using for many years.

Capturing Kids Hearts is a 5 step process that gives specific tools and methodologies that can be utilised by any teacher to develop a relationship. The process is not a curriculum, rather it is incorporated into both classroom management and the delivery of existing curriculum. Through the building of mutually supportive relationships, classrooms move toward self management.

After introducing Capturing Kids Hearts to just 30% of our teachers, bullying incidents have decreased by approx 15%. Because the children feel safe and supported they are more likely to come to school. Our absenteeism has also decreased. By approx 7%. We also have less teacher absentee days.

Capturing Kids Hearts is a 3 day workshop that not only explains and talks about the 5 step process. It is an interactive simulation of the relationship building process where teachers are challenged to look at themselves and __their__ impact on the learning of the children they teach."

Paul Tracey

Principal, Rutherford Technology High School NSW

We have also included 2 short DVD's. One showing the impact on Australian teachers and students. The second contains excerpts from news programmes that include statistics of the CKH process in the United States

Term Of Reference 6.

Approaches to address bullying in Australia and overseas jurisdictions.

We will not achieve the victories we long for if we continue to think they will come from government decrees, special orders, or edicts from on high, from our boards and administrations. The victories we long for will come only from creating schools that are passionate about children and that create environments that make children acutely aware of their personal value and worth. "School" can be such a cold and distant concept, but the idea of a teacher or administrator who knows me and values me . . . well, that's different. I'll come for that kind of relationship. I'll respect that kind of person. And, by the way, I'll perform for them, too.

But if we are genuinely concerned about getting different results, what we need is a different way of doing things . . . and that way is through the hearts of our children and staffs.

Programmes currently available to address the issue of bullying, typically deal with the person being bullied. There are tools and strategies on how to seek help, deflect and stand up to the bully for example:-

- Take a stand and get the help you need.
- Fight back from the beginning
- Realise that the bully is really a coward.
- Don't back down, but don't become a bully yourself.
- Build support and get ready to confront.
- Realise that this is not a truth about you.
- Constantly do reality checks with others.
- Keep a record of bullying incidents
- Be prepared to go to the corporate office or district manager or as far as necessary.

Although these may be positives steps to take, they have one thing in common. They are all band-aid solutions after the event. The damage to the victim of bullying has already occurred and reaches far beyond the school play ground. Psychologically, the victim carries the trauma of being bullied into

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adult hood and their potential and behaviour will, in most instances, be compromised. Victims of bullying rarely reach their full potential, and in certain circumstances may even take their own life. Will bullying be completely eradicated from society - No, but for us to eradicate bullying to an acceptable level, then steps must be taken to prevent the bullying taking place in the first instance. All programmes, as good as they are, are doomed to failure without the common dominator of "building the underlying relationship that occurs in a safe environment". To decrease the incidences of bullying and to eliminate environments where bullies flourish, we need to educate teachers on how to build relationships. At present, teachers are taught, during their own education, how to deliver curriculum. They are not taught how to take a diverse group of individuals and turn them into a high performing team. Teachers don't teach curriculum, they teach children.

When schools turn to Capturing Kids Hearts, they do not receive a formulaic program to implement and forget. We help schools reach their full potential through a **process**, an ongoing, layered approach that involves training for administrators and teachers and active mentoring and reinforcement.

Truly remarkable outcomes are possible in a classroom where trust, respect, and caring relationships flourish. But creating such an environment is a tremendous challenge.

Capturing Kids' Hearts is a 3-day off-site learning experience that provides tools for administrators, faculty and staff to build positive, productive, trusting relationships — among themselves and with their students. These processes can transform the classroom and campus environment, paving the way for high performance.

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Outcomes: Participants will learn proven, repeatable skills that help:

- Develop safe, trusting, self-managing classrooms

- Improve classroom attendance by building students' motivation and helping them take responsibility for their actions and performance

- Decrease delinquent behaviours such as bullying, disruptive outbursts, violent acts, drug use and other risky behaviour

- Utilise the EXCEL Model™ and reinforce the role of emotional intelligence in teaching

- Develop students' empathy for diverse cultures and backgrounds

Approach: CKH is a dynamic, skill-driven, participatory experience. It is not a theoretical or motivational lecture, but the beginning of an important transformational process. Teachers, staff, and administrators learn and practice skills they will use and model in their schools.

Who: Capturing Kids' Hearts is meant for all faculty, staff, and campus-level administrators. CKH is the core of a powerful process that allows every member of the school family to foster and become part of a high-performing, learning community. We encourage schools to get started by sending to Capturing Kids' Hearts training several respected teachers and administrators-influential faculty and staff that encourage and inspire their peers.

When: This is a three-day learning experience. Open-enrollment sessions are available throughout the year in locations state-wide. We can also schedule client-booked sessions with up to 50 individuals at a time.

Where: Open-enrollment sessions take place at locations we have found to be conducive to learning. Client-booked sessions can be scheduled at a convenient off-site location in retreat or day formats. We will work with you to determine an appropriate location.

Other attendance considerations: Experience shows that the optimal outcome - an intentional culture shift - relies on the complete support and involvement of school administrators. Consequently, they are strongly encouraged to attend as early in the process as possible.

We also provide a curriculum for high schools called Teen Leadership which should be considered as an elective at all High Schools. This curriculum would serve as an immense advantage in preparing students for their future as a citizen.

When students discover their own self-worth and approach life prepared to achieve, the opportunities are endless. This is the philosophy behind the Teen Leadership course. The course teaches students to take responsibility, express themselves, and handle problems and decisions when they arise.

Schools can offer the Teen Leadership course in term or full-year formats. The Flippen Group must certify a teacher to deliver the curriculum. The course builds personal responsibility and leadership skills through role plays, group activities, speeches, and projects.

Outcomes: Through the Teen Leadership curriculum, students will:

- Develop a healthy self-concept, healthy relationships, and a sense of personal responsibility

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- Understand Emotional Intelligence and the skills it measures, including self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, and social skills

- Build skills in public speaking and communication as well as an understanding of personal image

- Develop an understanding of principle-based decision-making and learn to make responsible personal and financial decisions

- Recognise and resist peer pressure

- Learn to become better family members and citizens

- Appreciate the need for vision in goal-setting, personally and professionally

Approach: Teen Leadership prepares students for success in all they pursue, in and beyond school. The course follows an illustrated (consumable) Student Manual and comprehensive Course Leader's Guide that includes activities, handouts, and daily lessons.

Who: This course is intended for middle and high school students of all backgrounds and abilities. The practical skills taught in Teen Leadership will help any student make the transition to life after school. Districts are encouraged to utilise both middle and high school versions of Teen Leadership, but they may use only one, if they prefer.

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