



MIKE DUROCHER: BULLYING

Focus Questions

What is loneliness? Who is Leah and what kind of loneliness did she experience? Why was Leah lonely? How did Leah combat her loneliness and isolation to survive? What can we do to feel better when we feel lonely? Why did this happen to Leah? What is the difference between a sense of loneliness and being alone?

Time

90 minutes

Grade Level

7-9

Learning Goals

- Define the different types of bullying and abuse that happened at residential schools.
- Identify the effects of bullying behaviour on the individuals and communities involved.
- Identify the different roles people take in bullying and abuse and why the people working at the residential school failed to protect Mike.
- Develop strategies that respond to the needs and gaps identified by students to move toward a safer, healthier and happier school and community
- Develop and present an anti-bullying campaign (educational or justice) and apply the lessons learned in their own lives and communities.

Materials Needed

- Mike's Story card
- Mike's story on the [Paths to Reconciliation](#) website*, available in the following formats:

Introduction

Bullying is a rampant, widespread issue that can have damaging and irreversible effects on the development of school-aged children. It can take place in communities, in schools, and sadly, even in homes. Bullying statistics in Canada are notable: reports indicate that 38 per cent of adult males and 30 per cent of adult females were the target of occasional or frequent bullying at school, and almost half of all parents in Canada have reported having a child who was a victim of bullying. However, when all Canadians, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit citizens (who are often underrepresented in data and surveys due to historical and social reasons) are considered, the numbers become even more staggering. Indigenous youth are especially vulnerable to the implications of bullying due to the ongoing marginalization of their communities and their disproportionate access to support.

Lesson Implementation

Minds on

Ask students: What words, phrases or pictures come to mind when you hear the word "bully"? List their responses on the board.

Write the definition of bullying on the board. Bullying is when someone hurts someone else's body, feelings, or reputation on purpose. Bullying behaviour is characterized by the intent to threaten, intimidate, or harm others, particularly people who may be different from the bully in some way. Bullying is about more than disagreements, differences of opinion, or conflicts that occur between friends and classmates. Bullying definitions typically include the following:

- A person is being hurt, harmed or humiliated with words or behaviour.
- The behaviour is repeated or there is a concern that it will be repeated.
- The behaviour is being done intentionally.
- The person being hurt has a hard time stopping or preventing the behaviour.
- The hurtful behaviour is carried out by those who have more power, such as being older, being physically bigger or stronger, having more social status, or when an individual or group is targeted and singled out.

On paper or in a student journal, have students think and write about or illustrate a time when they were deliberately bullied by someone or saw another student being deliberately bullied. They should include how the incident made them feel and how they reacted.

Action

Introduce Mike's story to students using the Mike's Story card.



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- Photos of Mike Durocher
- Mike Durocher artworks
- Photos of le-à-la-Crosse school
- Audio interviews with Mike

*Note: to access survivor stories, click on “Legend,” then “Survivor Stories,” and choose a survivor from the map view.

Connection to the Canadian Geography Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Spatial significance
- Interrelationships
- Geographic perspective

Inquiry Process

- Ask geographic questions
- Acquire geographic resources
- Interpret and analyze
- Evaluate and draw conclusions
- Reflect and respond

Geospatial Skills

- Spatial representations

After reading Mike’s story, review with students their brainstorm about the definition of bullying and ask them: Is Mike’s story a typical example of what you know about bullying?

Now that you know Mike’s story, revisit the description you brainstormed earlier for a bully? How does this story stretch our understanding of what a bully is?

Some ideas:

- Bullying occurs everywhere (school, community, workplace). The amount of bullying that goes on in the world is dependent upon the extent to which the community and social culture allow or enable it.
- Boys and girls as well as men and women can be bullies, although the ways in which they bully may vary.
- Children who are victims of bullying often report that adults do not notice what is going on.
- Bullies can exist even among the people you are supposed to trust the most (e.g., teachers, coaches, clergy, relatives).

Do a Think-Pair-Share activity using these questions:

- Why do you think Mike reacted the way he did to the bullying?
- How did the behaviour of some students affect Mike and other students?
- Why was this behaviour allowed to continue at the school?
- Do you think members of the school community have a responsibility to address bullying behaviour? Why or why not?
- How was this allowed to go on for so long without being addressed?

Have students engage more with Mike’s story by giving them some time with the short story, photographs and audio files on the [Paths to Reconciliation](#) website. Caution students to put on their emotional armour since this story can trigger strong emotional responses, and let students know what they can do and where they can get support if they need it. Ask students to look for what changed in Mike’s life after he left the school and then as he got older. To what does he credit his career success? What sorts of issues does he say stayed with him into his adult life? What things are important to him now at the age of 64?

What is Mike’s message to other kids who might have experienced the same thing as him, or who are having other issues with bullying?

Conclusion and Consolidation

Rights come with responsibilities. Just as we are all born with human rights, we also have responsibilities to respect and protect the rights of others. This means that it



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is important to always be respectful of one another and to speak out or take action to help others when we recognize injustice. We all have a responsibility to avoid all forms of bullying, including spreading gossip or making offensive comments about others online. As much as you have the right to express your own views, the well-being and personal safety of others is more important.

Have students create questions for a survey of other students in the school, school staff, and even parents to collect and analyze data and report on the perceived status of bullying behaviour at their school. Have students analyze the data they receive to identify a list of needs or ways that the school can improve. Once the needs are known, have students develop strategies that respond to those needs and find solutions for a safer, healthier and happier school.

Extensions

Plan a Campaign (educational or advocacy-based)

Here are some campaign ideas to get you thinking about the right project for your class:

- Organize and execute a half-day, youth-led symposium at school about what it takes to build good and healthy relationships, how to get along with others, and how to solve problems without aggression.
- Run an information campaign on bullying prevention for your school (or alternatively, for your family or community).
- Run a social media advocacy campaign (e.g., tweets, texts, letters) to politicians about the need for justice for kids that went to schools excluded from the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.
- Write a song, skit, play, or video about Mike's, or another person's, bullying story.
- Assign students individual art projects inspired by Mike's story and his art.
- Hold a benefit concert or an event in honour of residential school survivors that have not yet seen justice. Donate the proceeds to an organization of your choice that works toward eliminating the gaps in socio-economic opportunities between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people (e.g., improving healthcare access, offering educational opportunities, supporting language revival programs).
- Create a poster and/or organize a peaceful protest for justice for survivors of residential schools who have not been acknowledged yet or compensated for what happened to them. Set a date for your peaceful demonstration. This could be an event you plan for your school's annual anti-bullying day or for September 30th, Orange Shirt Day. [Here](#) is a resource to help you with making your posters.
- Celebrated in May and June, the *Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams* program of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society invites individuals, schools and organizations to join in reconciliation by planting heart gardens in their



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communities. Heart gardens honour residential school survivors and their families and show that we care about what happened to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children in all different types of residential schools, not only those that were included in the Settlement Agreement. Each heart in a heart garden represents the memory of a child lost to the residential school system. In this case, every heart could represent a survivor of one of these other types of residential schools that went by a different name. The act of planting represents that individual's commitment to finding their place in reconciliation. In some ways, planting gardens offers lessons on working towards reconciliation. Similar to planting a garden, taking part in reconciliation requires commitment, ongoing attention, care and learning. Both are places where knowledge and action meet, where we honour the past and prepare for the future.

Modifications

- Students can be assigned questions to answer in writing rather than sharing with the class.
- Most of these topics are sensitive, so it is important to take into consideration students' histories and personal experiences before implementing the lesson.
- If students have a past trauma, consider the material and its effects and how you might adapt it to be more suitable.
- Students can answer questions anonymously prior to the lesson to create discussion without having to put a face to the stories.

Assessment Opportunities

- Anecdotal notes can be taken throughout the various discussions.
- Discussion points can be written down for formal assessment.

Sources and Additional resources

- [Shattering the Silence: The Hidden Story of Indian Residential Schools in Saskatchewan](#)