

The BOW GROUP



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From the Chairman: "For too long sexual abuse, bullying and poor mental health have gone unaddressed in Britain, particularly by conservatives. With numbers reaching crisis levels it is time to change our approach. Empowering children to defend themselves responsibly while gaining mental and physical fitness should form part of our national physical education syllabus, and could have a dramatic effect on improving the quality of life of our nation."

Ben Harris-Quinney

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In Britain's *Self-Defence*

Empowering a culture of self defence and personal responsibility

INTRODUCTION

Sexual abuse and bullying have reached unprecedented levels in the United Kingdom. According to the *Crown Prosecution Service*, rape statistics have spiked up to 123% in the UK from the years 2015-16. Of that percentage a third of these abused people were children. *The National Centre for Social Research* reported in 2011 that more than 16,000 young people missed school in the UK because of bullying and over 24,000 children called *Childline* seeking help from counselors after being bullied in 2016/17. Bullying, child abuse and lack of personal confidence are common root causes of lifelong mental health issues. According to the *NSPCC*, the cost of services of children affected by sexual abuse was estimated at £3.2 billion in 2012 and the overall cost of mental illness in the UK is estimated at £100 billion according to a *Mental Health Network* report in May 2016. Britain faces a crisis of spiking rates of sexual abuse and mental health issues that urgently require attention and innovative solutions to avert great cost both financially and to the wellbeing of the populous.

Examples of physical bullying include pushing, hitting or kicking; verbal bullying would equate to the calling of names, relational bullying tends to fea-

ture the spreading of rumours and virtual bullying most often relates to public shaming on social media.

Sexual Abuse (contact abuse): involves touching activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, including penetration.

This paper advocates the implementation of self-defence tuition in schools to teach school-aged children how to defend themselves both physically and mentally. The utilization of timeless self-defense techniques have the potential to raise the self-confidence, discipline, tolerance, goodwill and respect of student bodies across the United Kingdom. This, in turn, can dramatically reduce the instances of abuse and bullying in our schools.

The 2013 *UK Mental Health Awareness report* found a clear linkage between increased physical activity and better mental health outcomes. The philosophy underlying most forms of self defence is that life and individual agency are valuable gifts, and that every person has both the right and obligation to be able to protect themselves. Forbidding, or preventing, individuals from the ability to defend themselves creates a handicapped society, prone to victimization. Weaponless self-defense can be the most effective tool in prevent-

ing violence, preventing both short term physical trauma and long-term emotional wounds; resulting in a healthier more vibrant society. The mind and body in harmony philosophy that runs throughout almost all systems of self defence has also helped victims of extreme, sometimes life threatening, traumas overcome their experiences and take control of their lives.

WHY ADDRESSING THE ISSUE IS IMPORTANT FOR THE UK

According to *Ditch The Label's* 2014 report, one in ten teenagers in the United Kingdom, bullied at school, have attempted suicide. An additional 30% go on to commit self-harm. 45% of 13-18yr-olds have experienced bullying by the age of 18. The report also states:

"Victims of bullying were also less likely to do well in exams, with 41 per cent of those who had not been bullied achieved an A or A* in English compared to just 30 per cent of those who had been bullied."

Professor Ian Rivers, from Brunel University, an expert on bullying, said:

"Very able pupils are

disadvantaged by their constant experience of bullying and this ultimately means that schools that fail to tackle bullying will also face questions from Ofsted on their grades decline."

Additionally, Liam Hackett -- chief executive officer of *Ditch The Label* -- said the survey showed

"The profound effect bullying is having on children's self-esteem and therefore the future prospects of millions of young people across the UK".

Sexually abused children experience similar and often more severe mental health problems. The NSPCC defines Child Sexual Abuse (contact abuse): involving touching activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, including penetration. It includes:

- sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child's wearing clothes or not
- rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus
- forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.

A study by Calder (2010) revealed that self-blame, self-harm and suicide are common mental health issues that are caused by sexual abuse. Researchers discovered participants sexually abused in childhood were more than twice as likely to consider committing suicide later in life.

If these children do not commit suicide or do not deal with the abuse by seeking help, there are other potential chronic long term effects.

The NSPCC lists potential long term problems as:

- emotional difficulties such as anger, anxiety, sadness or low self-esteem
- mental health problems such as depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), self harm, suicidal thoughts
- problems with drugs or alcohol
- disturbing thoughts, emotions and memories that cause distress or confusion
- poor physical health such as obesity, aches and pains
- struggling with parenting or relationships
- worrying that their abuser is still a threat to themselves or others
- learning difficulties, lower educational attainment, difficulties in communicating
- behavioural problems including anti-social behaviour, criminal behaviour.

According to Rape Crisis, the first joint official statistics bulletin on sexual violence released by the *Home Office, Office for National Statistics* and *Ministry of Justice*:

- Approximately 85,000 women and 12,000 men are raped in England and Wales alone every year; that's roughly 11 rapes (of adults alone) every hour. These figures include

assaults by penetration and attempts.

- Nearly half a million adults are sexually assaulted in England and Wales each year
- 1 in 5 women aged 16 - 59 have reported experiencing some form of sexual violence since the age of 16
- Only around 15% of those who experience sexual violence choose to report to the police
- Approximately 90% of those who are raped know the perpetrator prior to the offence

Not only do these violations cause horrific physical trauma to the individuals subjected to them, but they are also likely to lead to a series of severe mental health problems like depression and anxiety. Studies have found that such victimization and the resulting mental health issues can lead to direct self-injurious behavior (D-SIB) and suicide.

These statistics are alarming, and reveal that the current management of these violent acts is not working. It is clear that there is a causal link between psychological debilitations and bullying and sexual abuse, with a high chance of suicide.

CURRENT MANAGEMENT OF THE ISSUE

The 2016 Springer study into the association between victimisation by bullying and direct self injurious behavior found that the most effective way for children who have been the victims of bullying to recover is through parental or peer intervention. It is also thought to help if the student has prosocial behavior. According to the study, these students 'were at significantly lower risk of engaging in D-SIB after being victimized compared to students without support/pro-social behaviors.'

The peer and parental support strengthen Thomas Joiner's interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidality which identifies **failed belongingness** as one of two proximal predictors of self-harm. The study also explains that such interventions are most likely not at the level they are needed.

Regarding sexual assault and/or rape, the NSPCC has an outline of preventable measures parents can take to ensure an assault never occurs. They suggest four areas to monitor in order to prevent sexual assaults on children: the child's online use, their physical environments, supervised locations and unsupervised locations.

The NSPCC's preventative measures in detail:

Online

We know that children can be vulnerable to sexual abuse and inappropriate content in the online world. There are tools we can use to keep online spaces safe for children. For parents and carers there are parental controls and for schools and organisations filtering software.

Physical environments

Adults can make sure children are kept safe by checking on areas that are infrequently used or left unsupervised such as quiet corridors or outdoor spaces. We can also make sure everywhere is well lit.

Supervised locations

We must ensure we only allow suitable people to work with children.

At home this could mean ensuring the babysitter has

trusted references. Parents and carers can also ask to see a club's safeguarding policy and procedures. Schools and other organisations should follow safer recruitment practices and ensure everyone working or volunteering with children has regular child protection training so they know the signs of sexual abuse.

Unsupervised locations

We should also think about the wider context of abuse.

Young people are likely to spend time in environments with little or no adult supervision. They may also be in situations where unhealthy behaviours are seen as the norm. By promoting healthy relationships we can create positive social norms and challenge unhealthy behaviours. We can also support young people to develop the skills and confidence to identify abusive and controlling relationships and to speak out.

These are all well founded solutions and work in an ideal environment, but it is clear from the growing mental health and sexual abuse crisis in the UK that a more comprehensive and holistic approach is required to address the scale of the problem.

THE SOLUTION PRESENTED

However safe a society, and however caring an environment, in most lives the responsibility of self-protection will at some point fall to the individual. Every parent should ask the question: how does my child protect themselves in the moment if an incident does occur?

Self-defense is the easiest way for a child to protect and prevent an attack, but of equal importance is the philosophy of self reliance, confidence and mindfulness that it equips students with. All UK schools are required to provide basic swimming lessons to Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, but children are far more likely to be in a situation that requires self defence than danger of drowning, making self defence at least of equal importance.

The priority must always be prevention, and children that have been taught to be both self-aware and aware of the dangers of their surroundings in the context of self defence are far more likely to avoid an incident or display levels of confidence that will deter an attacker.

If an attack does occur, the moment a bully or rapist tries to attack a child, that child has but a moment to respond correctly. Every potential victim could be taught at school level both the knowledge and ability to subdue their attacker as part of the national education curriculum. These techniques are defensive and are taught in a way that prevents or stops an attack, and does not make room for initiating an assault on another person.

1. This paper proposes implementing a self defence programme into the national curriculum as part of a pupil's physical education.
2. We propose that a NGO is formed to create a compatible programme to implement the teaching of self defence in UK schools

3. We propose that the programme is first trialed in a small number of schools to gather data, refine the programme and work with the Department of Education to allow compatibility with the national curriculum.

4. Following the trial phase we propose that funding is made available via the £9000 Physical Education (PE) Premium to allow schools to have the option of teaching self defence as part of their PE programme

5. We propose that once stages 2, 3 and 4 have been met funding and time are allocated in the UK national curriculum to teach all children ages 3-18, how to defend themselves, allowing children to:

- Operate with situational awareness to avoid scenarios that place them at risk
- Learn techniques to defuse dangerous situations verbally and demonstrate assertive body-language
- Physically defend themselves to deflect harmful attack and safely subdue attacker

The courses will focus on both physical techniques, emotional wellbeing and mental fortitude, aiming at a holistic approach to mental and physical wellbeing that compliments other aspects of study.

Physical Elements:

- Stand up self-defense techniques
- ground techniques
- striking techniques
- throwing techniques

Games that enhance Flexibility, agility, coordination, motor skills

Mental elements:

Five elements of a healthy lifestyle:

1. Exercise
2. Hygiene
3. Nutrition
4. Rest
5. Positive mindset

Three States of Mind

1. Equanimity - staying emotionally balanced
2. Preparedness - having a plan if things go wrong and being aware of your surroundings
3. Flow - when life throws you problems don't get stuck, move through them.

Seven Virtues of a Moral Person:

1. Rectitude - Doing the right thing
2. Courage - Being brave, i.e. doing the right thing no matter how scared you are
3. Benevolence - Act of kindness; doing good
4. Respect - Having manners to people of authority and your peers
5. Honor - Having high esteem for yourself and others
6. Honesty - Telling the truth
7. Loyalty - Knowing who to give your support or allegiance to

About The Bow Group

The Bow Group is a leading think tank based in London. It is the oldest conservative think-tank in the UK and celebrates its 65th Anniversary this year. Since its foundation, the Bow Group has been a significant source of policy ideas, and many of its papers and debates have had a direct influence on government policy and the life of the nation.

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This unique combination of physical and mental training is consistent throughout a variety of self-defence and martial arts techniques that are extremely well balanced and proven to give pupils the confidence, discipline and courage needed to become responsible and able citizens in their community. They would be learning how to deal with real life scenarios the most effective way possible.

During instruction, students would have the various techniques demonstrated to them and commence practicing the moves, with an assigned partner. This hands on time with another person, although potentially uncomfortable at first, develops tolerance, equality, empathy, helpfulness, and consideration for others.

Currently, similar models are taught in the public and private sectors in the UK, Mexico, Holland, Israel, Portugal, the UAE and the United States. Self defence courses in the private sector have been popular in the UK for several decades, and are seeing an increase in subscriber numbers in recent years. They are likely to prove popular with both students and parents alike.

COSTS TO THE STATE

According to the *NSPCC*, the cost of services of children affected by sexual abuse was estimated at \$3.2 billion in 2012. The overall cost of mental illness is estimated at £100 billion according to a *Mental Health Network* report in May 2016. The Department for Education has spent up to £6.4 million anti LGBT bullying initiatives in schools between the years 2015-16, and £4.4 million in anti virtual bullying initiatives.

In the private sector, similar self-defence programmes cost approximately £100 per month for group classes per student. This includes two classes per week, one hour in length. After 27 group classes new students are proficient in over 100 self-defence techniques. One-On-One instruction costs approximately £70 per 30-minute session, or £500 for a package of nine classes. The way the program is designed, after 36 private classes each student is proficient in the techniques needed to defend against any possible attack: standing up or on the floor, grappling or striking.

A proposed trial in 5 schools for 27 group classes would cost approximately £5000 per school over 4 months to prove concept, gain data and further improve the programme.

It is anticipated that a nationwide programme could be implemented and integrated into the national education syllabus for an initial

investment of approximately £4.4 million, falling after the first year, with a focus on training the approximately 25,000 UK PE teachers with the skills to teach the programme.

CONCLUSION

This paper has reviewed what the mental health costs of sexual abuse and bullying can be to the lives of citizens in the UK: depression, anxiety, D-SIB and suicide ideation, with a heavy cost in spending and loss of productivity and potential to Britain as a country.

Although the existing methods for avoiding, and dealing with the aftermath of, an attack offer a degree of education towards awareness; they are clearly failing to address the rising problem of bullying, sexual abuse and rape in the UK. Equally mental health in Britain is at crisis level, with suicide now the leading cause of death in men under 40.

There is clearly a requirement to look beyond traditional methods to find a more comprehensive and holistic solution that can begin in childhood, when citizens are most vulnerable, but offer a foundation of knowledge, awareness and confidence for all of life.

The proposed programme goes to the heart of the issue, giving students the tools and ability to prevent and defend against incidents and increase physical fitness, confidence and wellbeing. Participants will know how to harness the



full potential of their minds and bodies; The U.K. will inherit more empowered, capable and confident individuals ready to take their place on the world stage.

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