



# The Methodist Church

Safeguarding in Lincolnshire District

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## Responding Well to Bullying

On the 10.03.2021, the District held as part of a 2 week safeguarding fortnight a session on responding well to bullying.

The following are some of the headlines to provoke thought and further discussion.

At the start of the session, the following clip was played relating to the Handforth Parish Council meeting.

[Watch the full Parish Council Meeting with Jackie Weaver | The Guide Liverpool - YouTube](#)

- We need to be aware that studies show those who bully are often subjected to bullying elsewhere or in the past.....we need to be aware that other things may be going on.
- Perhaps we need to have a working definition of bullying - anything that makes someone else uncomfortable? ***If someone feels bullied, then they are being bullied.***
- In meetings - Boundaries, ground-rules, purpose, who is leading the meeting, giving the chairs opportunity to learn skills to facilitate meetings

Promote that all, whoever they are, free to have an opinion, listened to, discussed rationally, recognise and acknowledge all have a say.

- Developing *The Thinking Environment* - where all encouraged to speak, and discussion once everyone had their voice.
- Silence in itself is power maybe
- Involving God in the middle of a meeting not just at the beginning and end.
- If we don't challenge, we collude and condone – it is a brave thing to speak out, especially when others don't share the same view. Get help from those who you feel safe with – especially the District Safeguarding Officer.

- Bullying is a safeguarding issue – procedures should be followed.
- The Methodist church is working on policies about Harassment which comes into the definition of bullying- eg unwarranted contact, unwarranted communication, repeated faults and malicious assertions

A scenario was discussed:

A man in a church comments to a woman that she always provides the same flowers each week:

- How do we respond well?
- What are the body language messages? (conscious or not)
- Earliest opportunity to diffuse or acknowledge the feelings, be aware of context and 'reason' behind enquiry
- Wondering if there is an assumption as we are talking about male and female - how would the same be interpreted if asked by another woman.
- Is he coming with another agenda - not the flowers, just a symptom?
- Neuro-diversity can influence how someone behaves or interprets another' behaviour
- Silence condones, chaos, mess and unhealthy culture pervades

The District have committed itself to considering the Methodist Positive Working Together material.

#### **REMINDER.**

**IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED, FEEL YOU ARE BEING BULLIED OR NEED HELP TO STOP BULLYING OTHERS – please speak to someone.**

**07758 239286 – District Safeguarding Officer**