

**The String Movement
'Think Tank Tool'
Hillsong Conference 2015**



The String Movement exists to empower young people to disarm bullying in their community. Over the past four years we have seen hundreds of young people gather together to impact their communities by using their voice, creativity and those in their world to make a difference. Statistics state that over 160,000 young people stay home from school each day because of bullying and that over 3.2 million young people around the world are currently experiencing bullying today. Researchers state that the most strategic way to stop bullying in the playground is to develop a whole-school method to disarm bullying.



The String Movement uses a whole-school method as we practically outwork a strengths based approach to bullying through our local schools. Through encouraging young people to “Tie It, Tell It and Yell It” we are leading them through the process of being culture-setters in their communities. The area that we want to focus on today as a Tool to disarm bullying in our communities is “Yell It”. The String Movement believes in working alongside young people at a grass roots level in order to see effective change. This will only happen as we empower young people to believe that they truly can make a difference to the real social issues that they are faced within their communities.



A practical way that we have outworked this through our campaign is through our “Think Tank Model” where we have had the opportunity to gather with young people from schools across the community to hear their thoughts and encounters with bullying. This model was inspired by a group of young people from Orange in Rural NSW. After being so impacted by the story of bullying at their local school they decided to meet monthly with young people that represented schools all across their community to practically think of ways that they could make a difference to the issue in their world. Ideas that came out of that group allowed young people to use their voice in sports, leadership and the creative arts space to make a difference to the issue and raise awareness. This resulted in local high schools wearing bright orange shoe laces in their sporting matches to disarm bullying on the field. Another school decided to have The String Movement Team set up a stand at their school fair where we had the opportunity to speak to hundreds of parents and students about how they could see an end to bullying in their community. This model has outworked itself within that community to the point where every senior school in Orange, NSW has adopted The String Movement as their official anti-bullying policy and they are seeing the rapid effects of change within that community. This all started with one young person choosing to do something to make a difference in her world after she made a personal decision after hearing about The String Movement.



The String Movement THINK TANK encourages you to gather young people from all walks of life in your school community outside of the school framework. This is so young people feel comfortable to be themselves, share their opinion and have the confidence to outwork their ideas practically when they step foot in the playground. At our THINK TANKS we will have food, music and a fun atmosphere to inspire the young people that they can make a difference.



Practical Outworking of the Think Tank Model

1 Organise a Venue - The String Movement Team suggest off site of the school property to create a new environment/atmosphere for the students.

2 Invite a Guest Speaker - This can be a student from a local high school or someone that is going to inspire young people and empower them to make a difference.

3 Food & Music - We want to create an environment feel comfortable to be themselves, confident to share their opinion and leave empowered that it was a valuable experience.

4 Organise Small Group Leaders – Again we encourage older students to take part in being leaders for discussion at the event. In doing this we are encouraging a Peer Mentoring Model that has proved to be effective in harnessing leadership potential & creativity in young people.

5 Atmosphere – Take control of the atmosphere in the room. Have a photo wall set up to inspire young people to Be Kind and Disarm Bullying. Organise games and icebreakers that will set the tone for the rest of the event. Remember that you are setting the scene for young people to be inspired to make a difference.



Guest Speakers – We will usually invite a Guest Speaker from a local high school that has practically made a difference to disarm bullying themselves or has a story to share. This allows for the young people to be inspired and empowered to make a difference when they see that other young people have succeeded.

Small Group Discussions – A key part of any Think Tank is the practical small group discussion time. We encourage young people to connect and meet other students from schools in the community and to split up into a discussion group that shows a mix of schools which could encapsulate a variety of stories and opinions that may widen their community perspective.



During these small group sessions we will give young people a series of questions. For example;

1 If they have ever experienced bullying in their school and if so how did it make them feel?

2 What types of Bullying have they personally experienced or witnessed?

3 How do they think Bullying can be disarmed within their community?

The purpose of these questions is to begin to see them considering and thinking about the impact of Bullying in their current world. Our aim is for them to start thinking of practical ways that they can ‘Be Kind’ and combat bullying whether within their school playground, class room or online.



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