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## Letter to IDA re Bullying

**Thank you** Paul and Alyson for your article (IDA Summer 2016) re Bullying and Paul for your personal reflections.

I often hear people with intellectual disabilities speak about their experience of bullying at school and elsewhere as if it was something that happened yesterday even if it happened a number of years ago. Their reflections are always very emotionally charged. So I have no doubt of the impact bullying has on people with intellectual disabilities and no doubt that it is something that happens far too often.

Recently I read a University of South Australia report on School Bullying (Rigby & Johnson, 2016) which reported that students with a disability were at a higher risk of bullying. This report also reported that the 'Restorative Justice' approach Paul took to address his bullying was reported by victims and school staff as the most successful method of responding to stop or mitigate bullying.

Some further points:

Bullying, it appears to me, is part of a continuum of violence and exploitation which includes sexual violence

and domestic violence and at least in the area of sexual violence we know people with intellectual disability are overrepresented as victims. Like these, bullying is fear inducing and emotionally damaging although usually associated with less overt physical violence and force.

Bullying is also something that generally, although not always, happens earlier in people's lives. So perhaps robust anti-bullying, bullying prevention programs targeted towards young people with intellectual disabilities and those in their lives is a potential entry point for prevention of those other continuum issues, sexual violence, domestic violence.

Yours,

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Rigby, K & Johnson, K (2016) *The prevalence and effectiveness of Anti-bullying strategies employed in Australian Schools*, University of South Australia