



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Ad Standards Limited
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0166-20
2. Advertiser :	Dolly's Dream
3. Product :	Community Awareness
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Determination	27-May-2020
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

There are three versions of this television advertisement. All three versions feature a teenage girl reading messages on her phone and the song "When the party is over" by Billie Eilish.

The 15 second version features a young teenage girl lying in her bed looking at her phone. Another girl stands in the corner of the room and throws stones at her, which correspond with the message tone on her phone. The girl flinches as the stone hits her. The bullying girl continues to throw stones at the bullied girl while she is sitting with her family playing a game. The words "Are your words doing damage?" appear, followed by, "Be Kind. Do it for Dolly." The advertisement ends with information on Dolly's Dream and the words "For support, call Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 or Lifeline 13 11 14".

The 30 second version features a young teenage girl lying in her bed looking at her phone. Another girl stands in the corner of the room and throws stones at her, which correspond with the message tone on her phone. The girl flinches as the stone hits her. The other girl is seen picking up a stone from a large pile and throwing it at the first girl, as she looks at her phone whilst sitting on the couch with her younger brother. The bullying girl continues to throw stones at the bullied girl while she is sitting with her family playing a game. One of the stones hits her in the face. The words, "Are your words doing damage?" appear, followed by, "Be Kind. Do it for Dolly." The advertisement ends with information on Dolly's Dream and the words "For support, call Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 or Lifeline 13 11 14".



The 60 second version features a young teenage girl lying in her bed looking at her phone. Another girl stands in the corner of the room and throws stones at her, which correspond with the message tone on her phone. The girl flinches as the stone hits her. The other girl is seen picking up a stone from a large pile and throwing it at the first girl, as she looks at her phone whilst sitting on the couch with her younger brother. The bullying girl continues to throw stones at the bullied girl while she is sitting playing a game with her family. The bullying girl is joined by two other teenagers she hands them both stones. The bullied girl is seen in the bath, being hit by stones as she reads group messages on her phone. The messages read:

- "Slut
- Ur such a loser
- Ugly bitch
- U r ugly
- hope u know that I don't like u
- I hope you know ur just a bitch with no life and no friends
- Why don't u just go kill yourself
- Stop being so gay
- Some people make me want to kill myself
- Everyone hates you"

The three teenagers continue to stand over the girl in the bath throwing stones at her. The girl catches one of the stones in her hand.

The words, "Are your words doing damage?" appear, followed by, "Be Kind. Do it for Dolly."

The advertisement ends with information on Dolly's Dream and the words "For support, call Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 or Lifeline 13 11 14".

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

While I FULLY support the campaign objectives and the need to raise awareness of anti-bullying to change behavior, the advertisement portrays equally totally disgraceful behavior of a physical nature, there is a lot of hate on the offending girl's face. The images are disturbing and I fear if viewed unsupervised (without explanation) could in itself encourage copied behavior.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

Our response

Dolly's Dream acts as a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves and creates change by:



- *raising awareness about the serious issue of bullying and its devastating effects*
- *providing assistance to and supporting those affected by bullying*
- *educating the community about bullying issues and advocating for bullying laws and regulations*
- *delivering information on ways to help prevent bullying and cyber bullying in communities*
- *working to change cultures and prevent bullying through a variety of educative approaches.*

It was clear that Dolly Everett's death had a huge impact on Australians across the country and the Everett family is still overwhelmed by the support and kindness shown by friends and strangers.

To safeguard the future of Dolly's Dream and to ensure it operates to its full potential, Kate and Tick chose to work with the Alannah & Madeline Foundation. They were seeking an experienced charitable organisation with extensive experience working with children and families who have experienced bullying and/or cyber bullying, to ensure that all funds raised have the maximum impact.

Late in 2019 the 'Words can Hurt' campaign was produced for Dolly's Dream by Cox Inall Change, one of Australia's leading behavioural change agencies. The entire video was made pro bono from production to actors and placement.

It was written and directed by a 15-year-old girl overseen by an experienced production team and crew to conform to Ad Standards.

The purpose of the advertisement was teens do not relate to most bullying advertisements, particularly those shown in schools, because they are made by adults, from an adult point of view. This advertisement was made by a teen who has had first-hand experience and wanted to show, adults, teens, everyone, how hurtful words can be.

The only way for the campaign to be successful was it needed to be powerful to help get the message across. So everyone can start the conversation... it is impactful and makes everyone stop and think.

The advertisement was originally a short film launched through the Dolly's Dream facebook page in September 2019 which was viewed more than 1 million times and inundated with over 800 comments and messages of support. A selection of these comments are included in the attached PDF. In September 2019 it also featured on Channel 10's The Project with an interview with the young filmmaker.

Since its airing late last year, messages of support have been received from children, teens, parents and adults alike saying how the film has really helped them understand the impact bullying can have and has started many conversations with adults and teens especially. This campaign has helped adults see first-hand how younger people



can feel and that it can be happening right under their noses. Some of these comments from Facebook are included in the appendix.

The campaign was supported and endorsed by Tick and Kate Everett, Dolly's parents.

As part of this year's Do it for Dolly Day on Friday 8 May 2020, the advertisement was broadcast free of charge as content fillers across Australian networks including SBS, Nine, Ten, Seven, WIN, SCA and Foxtel/MCN. Airing will conclude on Friday 22 May 2020 with the exception of WIN who have requested being able to use the advertisement throughout the rest of the year as they believed it was immensely impactful.

The 15 and 30 second advertisement received a G rating from ClearAds (see documentation attached) which states that it may be broadcast at any time except during P & C programs or adjacent to P or C periods. Advertisements which comply with the G classification criteria of the Code of Practice and provided the content is very mild in impact and does not contain any manner likely to be unsuitable for children to watch without supervision.

The 60 second advertisement received a P rating which may be broadcast at any time of day except during P and C programs or adjacent to P or C periods. Commercials which comply with the PG classification criteria of the Code of Practice and which contain careful presentations of adult themes or concepts which are mild in impact and remain suitable for children to watch with supervision.

The advertisements have no words, only a sound track from singer Billie Eilish, "When the party is over" which does not have any violent or inappropriate language used (see attached lyrics in the appendix).

The end frame includes the Dolly's Dream website address for further information and also directed the audience to Kid's Helpline and Lifeline for further support.

Addressing the complaint

The complaint states that:

- "equally totally disgraceful behaviour of a physical nature, there is a lot of hate on the offending girl's face."*
- "the images are disturbing, and I fear that if viewed unsupervised (without explanation) could in itself encourage copied behaviour."*

Our response

Taking into account the Community Panel's consideration that the phenomenon of 'violence' includes the consequence of violence, feelings of violation, shock and frights and may involve:

- Depictions that condone or incite violence*
- Intimidating behavior*



- *Bullying*
- *Aggressiveness*

It is justifiable in the context of the advertisement which addresses the issue and impact of bullying. The community panel has generally considered violence to be justified where it is mild in impact (the stones were in fact made of wax) for the viewer, generally does not depict any person injured in pain (which this advertisement does not) and the action does not include aggression (no words are said.)

See classification rating above and the end frame which directs viewers to support lines. It was at the network's discretion on when the advertisements were placed in the appropriate classification times as the advertisements were provided as community service announcement fillers.

2.1 Discrimination or vilification

The advertisement does not contain a portrayal of people and does not discriminate against or vilifies a person or a section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

2.2 Exploitative or degrading

The advertisement does not depict sexual appeal of a person, some nudity (noting the girl in the bath is fully covered by water and bubbles), no sexual poses or tight clothing. There were no shots of the use of people as sexual commodities or focusing on relevant body parts that bears no relevance to the narrative.

2.3 Violence

This is an anti-bullying campaign, written by a 15-year-old, depicting how it feels to be bullied. It doesn't shy away from the fact that bullying takes its toll on people mentally and the wax stones are a symbol of the taunts by bullies.

The throwing of the stones depicts that physical and mental harm that bullying has on a person and it is justifiable in the context of the advertisement which addresses the issue and impact of bullying. The community panel has generally considered violence to be justified where it is mild in impact (the stones were in fact made of wax) for the viewer, and generally does not depict any person injured in pain (which this advertisement does not) and the action does not include aggression (no words are said).

2.4 Sex, sexuality and nudity

There is no sex, sexuality or nudity in this ad. A girl is immersed fully in a bath with bubbles and has no reference to sexuality.

2.5 Language

There is no obscene language and a soundtrack was only used with approval from the artist given (see lyrics attached). The lyrics mimic the scenes with sensitivity and context. It is appropriate and relevant for the audience, including the classification, as Billie Eilish is hugely popular with the target audience of teenagers.



2.6 Health and Safety

There are no known health and safety issues caused in the advertisement's production or airing.

2.7 Distinguishable as advertising

This advertisement is a community service announcement with an end frame that provides a call-to-action for people to find out more information and where to get help.

ATTACHMENTS

Some of the comments received when the campaign was launched on Facebook in September 2019. Extracts of these comments are included in the uploaded PDF document.

MUSIC USED IN CAMPAIGN

Lyrics – when the party's over – Billie Eilish

*Don't you know I'm no good for you?
I've learned to lose you, can't afford to
Tore my shirt to stop you bleedin'
But nothin' ever stops you leavin'
Quiet when I'm comin' home and I'm on my own
I could lie, say I like it like that, like it like that
I could lie, say I like it like that, like it like that
Don't you know too much already?
I'll only hurt you if you let me
Call me friend but keep me closer (call me back)
And I'll call you when the party's over
Quiet when I'm comin' home and I'm on my own
And I could lie, say I like it like that, like it like that
Yeah, I could lie, say I like it like that, like it like that
But nothin' is better sometimes
Once we've both said our goodbyes
Let's just let it go
Let me let you go
Quiet when I'm comin' home and I'm on my own
I could lie, say I like it like that, like it like that
I could lie, say I like it like that, like it like that*

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).



The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement displays physical bullying which is disturbing and could encourage copycat behaviour.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and the noted the advertiser's response.

The Panel considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised".

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the advertisement depicts the physical and mental harm that bullying has on a person and it is justifiable in the context of the message being delivered.

The Panel considered the advertisement is a visual metaphor for how painful online bullying can be and how it impacts every aspect of a person's life.

The Panel considered that the advertisement was a reference to the adage 'sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me' by directly showing that words can hurt like physical harm, and finishing on the message 'are your words doing damage?'

The Panel acknowledged that there is a limit to the level of violence appropriate to show in a community awareness advertisement, however in this case the Panel considered that the focus on the advertisement is on the effect of the bullying behaviour and is not excessive or graphic in its depictions. The Panel considered that the bullying behaviour is depicted to illustrate the negative effects of bullying, and clearly does not condone the behaviour depicted.

The Panel considered that the advertisement depicted the bullying behaviour in a negative light, and that the overall anti-bullying message of the advertisement would be clear to all viewers, particularly with the clear reference at the end of the advertisement to the need to consider whether words are hurtful, to be kind and to contact Kids Help Line. The Panel considered that the advertisement would be unlikely to encourage bullying or copy-cat behaviour.

The Panel considered that in the context of a promotion for a community service message, the depiction of the effects of bullying in the advertisement was justifiable in the context of the message advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaint.