

Bullying

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Abstracts: In recent years, there's been much discussion about bullying issues surrounding children as well as adults. The issue is alarming to say the least and gives us, as parents, cause for concern. Bullying is when someone keeps doing or saying things to have power over another person. Bullying can take many forms like physical, emotional, verbal, psychological and combination of these. Some bullies may not even understand how wrong their behavior is and how it makes the person being bullied feel. A lot of reasons why people bully is that, they may see it as a way of being popular, or making themselves look tough and in charge. Some bullies do it to get attention or things, or to make people afraid and might be jealous of the person they are bullying. There are four kinds of bullies, it is physical bullies, verbal bullies, relational bullies and reactive victims. Many factors cause bullying, like parental relationship, school failure and peer rejection. Suggestions are meant to provide a beginning for attacking the behavior of child bullying, not the child. Determine the seriousness of the behavior, look for triggers to the behavior, determine if the child is mimicking abuse and educate the child about acceptable social behaviors are the recommended ways to remediate bullying. People including students, parents, teachers and administrators can make a significant difference to the lives of all the bullies.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Bullying in school has become an issue of concern in most developed countries (Smith et al., 1999). Report of the incidence of bullying in schools now become more numerous in recent years and they leave little room for doubt that many pupils are involved (Stephenson & Smith, 1989; for Norway and Sweden, for the UK, see Boulton & Smith, 1994). Moreover, it appears that both bullies and victims are likely to be harmed by their involvement in this type of behavior (Olweus, 1993; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Thus bullying is an issue that demands the attention of all those who are concerned with children's well-being in schools.

For many people bullying has not figured in their lives to any troublesome degree. Many men and women who were bullied at school have largely forgotten about it and have become preoccupied with something else. Spectism about the negative effects of bullying may well extend to those who have the power to act so as to counter bullying in schools and beyond.

When a child or adolescent is mean to another, it is important to look for patterns and motivations. Bullies are often different from children who fight indiscriminately. Children who are fighters may simply do as a result of impulsivity or misreading of social cues. A fighter is often unpopular with his peer. He tends use fighting to settle a dispute and will fight anyone, whether or not adults are watching. He tends not to chose a particular victims. On the other hand, a bully often surrounds himself with a group of peers. He consciously picks weaker, more vulnerable victims, and repeatedly bothers the same people. He tends to do his bullying when authorities are not around. The bullying is not to settle a clear dispute. Instead, the motive is to gain control over others. He may enjoy watching the victim's reaction.

2.0 DEFINITION OF BULLYING

A generally acceptable definition of bullying is as follows : “Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons” (Rigby, 1996). Note that this definition is different from a more general description of aggression or violence. It incorporates the notion that for bullying to occur there is any imbalance of power between the perpetrator and victim. Bullying does not refer simply to conflict between people of equal power.

Bully is if someone who takes advantages of another individual that he or she perceives as more vulnerable. The goal is to gain control over the victims or over the bully’s social group. Besag (1989), Olweus (1993) and Farrington (1993) describe bullying as aggressive behavior (either physical or psychological), intended to hurt the victim, in which there is an imbalance of power and where the action is focused on particular victim(s) and often repeated over time. This type of behavior occurs in all ages and in all social groups. Most adults, if they think about it, have experienced bullying too.

Bullying behavior harms both the victims and the perpetrator. If a child experiences chronic intimidation, he or she may learn to expect this from others. He may develop a pattern of compliance with the unfair demands of those he perceives as stronger. He may become anxious or depressed. Finally, he may identify with the bully and become a bully himself. The bully is also harmed. If she is allowed to continue the behavior, it becomes habitual. He becomes more likely to surround himself with friends who condone and promote aggressive behavior. He may not develop a mature sense of justice. If he intimidates others to cover up his own insecurities, his own anxiety may increase.

Bullying is persistent unwelcome behavior, mostly using unwarranted or invalid criticism, nit-picking, fault-finding, also exclusion, isolation, being singled out and treated differently, being shouted at, humiliated, excessive monitoring, having verbal and written warnings imposed, and much more. In the workplace, bullying usually focuses on distorted or fabricated allegations of underperformance.

Bullies usually bully somebody that they are jealous of. In some cases it may be that they are being bullied themselves and let out anger by hurting other people. Sometimes it may be that there are problems in their house. Some people think bullying is just part of growing up and a may for young people to learn to stick up for themselves. But bullying can make young people feel lonely, unhappy and frightened. It makes them feel unsafe and think there must be something wrong with them. They lose confidence and may not want to go to school any more. It may make them sick.

Bullying in its truest form is comprised of a series of repeated intentionally cruel incidents, involving the same children, in the bully and victims role. This however, does not mean that in order for bullying to occur there must be repeat offenses. Bullying can consist of a single interaction. Bullying can consist of a single interaction. Bullying behavior may also be defined as a criminal act if the bully is twelve year of age or older.

Bullying usually, although not always, occurs between individuals who are not friends. In a bullying situation, there is a power differences between the bully and the victims. For instance, the bully may be bigger, tougher, physically stronger or be able to intimidate others or have the power to exclude others from their social group. The intention of bullying is to put the victims in distress in some way. Bullies seek power. Bullying knows no financial, cultural or social bounds. Bullying may not look exactly the same everywhere, but it has the same devastating effect on everyone, and during adolescence, bullying is not a problem that usually sorts itself out. The effects of bullying last a lifetime. It cause misery for the bully's victims, and leaves a lasting impression on all those who witness repeated bullying incidents.

3.0 WHAT MAKES A BULLY

Bullying behavior can be identified as early pre-school age, and some children who are bullies continue this behavior into adulthood. Most children learn to control their anger and fighting instincts as they grow older, but not the bully. These children have special

characteristics. Children who systematically bully others usually have a group of children they bully regularly while other bullies randomly target a variety of students.

Bullies have particular behavior and personality traits. Drs. Sam Samenow describe these as :

- greater than average aggressive behavior patterns.
- The desire to dominate peers
- The need to feel in control, to win
- No sense of remorse for hurting another child
- A refusal to accept responsibility for his/her behavior.

The first step in educating yourself about bullying behavior is to identify what bullying is. In short, bullying is a harassment which over time can cause emotional pain to target. There is always a pattern of behavior present which will help observers to differentiate between the occasional childhood scuffles that occur and bullying. All children are fight with their friends once in a while. This is normal. It is not normal when one child intentionally targets another child with abusive behavior and continues to do so over a period of time. These attacks are sometimes done in a devious manner so that on the surface, it could appear that no harm was intended.

4.0 KINDS OF BULLIES

1. Physical Bullies

Physical bullies are action-oriented. This type of bullying includes hitting or kicking the victim, or, taking or damaging the victim's property. This is the least sophisticated type of bullying because it is so easy to identify. Physical bullies are soon known to the entire population in the school. As they get older, their attacks usually become more aggressive. These aggressive characteristics manifest themselves as bullies become adults.

2. Verbal Bullies

Verbal bullies use words to hurt or humiliate another person. Verbal bullying includes name-calling, insulting, making racist comments and constant teasing. This type of bullying is the easiest to inflict on other children. It is quick and to the point. It can occur in the least amount of time available, and its effects can be more devastating in some ways than physical bullying because there are no visible scars.

3. Relational Bullies

Relational or relationship bullies try to convince their peer to exclude or reject certain person or people and cut the victims off from their social connections. This type of bullying is linked to verbal bullying and usually occurs when children (most often girl) spread nasty rumors about others or exclude an ex-friend from the peer group. The most devastating effects with this of bullying is the rejection by the peer group at a time when children most need their social connections.

4. Reactive Victims

Reactive victims straddle a fence of being bully and or victim. They are often the most difficult to identify because at first glance they seem to be targets for other bullies. However, reactive victims often taunt bullies, and bully other people themselves. Most of the incidents are physical in nature. These victims are impulsive and react quickly to intentional and unintentional physical encounters. In some cases, reactive victims begin as victims and become bullies as they try to retaliate. A reactive victim will approach a person who has been bullying him/her and say like “You better not bug me today, otherwise I’ll tell the teacher and boy, will you be in trouble, so you just better watch out.” Statements such as this are akin to waving a red flag in front of a raging bull, and may provoke a bully into action. Reactive victims then fight and claim self defense. Reactive victims need to learn how to avoid bullies.

5.0 CAUSES OF BULLYING

There are numbers of reason that children or adolescent becomes bully. He or he may need to cover his own feelings of inadequacy. He may lack good adult role models. If he see parents bullying him or each other, he may regard this type of behavior as simply the way one should act. Other children fall in with a peer group that uses bullying. They may learn it from these friends. In some cases, the behavior improves when the child is separated from that peer group, and make new friends.

1. Parental Relationship

Bullies tend to come from families that are characterized as having little warmth or affection. These families also report trouble sharing their feelings and usually rate themselves as feeling less close to each other. Parent of bullies also tend to use inconsistent discipline and little monitoring of where their children are throughout the day. Sometimes parents of bullies have very punitive and rigid discipline styles, with physical punishment being very common. Bullies also report less feelings of closeness to their siblings.

2. School Rejection

A major cause of stress at school for children is the fear of being taunted or bullied. Kids who are bullied are two to three times more likely to have headaches or other illnesses. (ABS News, Sept, 22, 1996). Bullies are usually not model students. Very often they are not doing well in school and do not have good connections with their teachers.

3. Peer Rejection.

Researchers who are interested in how children form relationships with heir peers have identified four categories that describe how children relate to peers, based on having children name that they like as well as children that they don't like :

- Popular children are those many children say they like, and few children say that they dislike. These children have developed positive social and communication skill.
- Controversial children are both actively liked and dislike by many of their peers. They tend to have good social skills, but also exhibit aggressive behavior. Class clowns often fit into this category.
- Rejected children are actively dislike by many of their peers and well liked by few of their peers. They show high rates of conflict, aggression, and immature play, and they have trouble taking the perspective of another person. They also have a hard time solving problems without resorting to violence. Rejected children are often prone to delinquency and dropping out of school later.
- Neglected children are seldom neither liked or dislike by their peers. Although they are very shy, and may have low self-esteem. Many neglected children do very well in school and are able to develop friends as they approach adolescence.

Bullies come most often from the rejected category, but they sometimes are popular children as well. Victims can be selected from any category, although neglected children often are more likely to be victims.

6.0 STEPS TOWARDS REMEDIATION

If you have recognized that your child or a child you know fits the profile of the child bully and displays some of the aggressive behaviors mentioned, there are steps you can take towards remediation.

- **Determine The Seriousness Of The Behavior**

It is essential to determine if the behavior is a phase the child going through or is a deeper problem. Keep in mind that a child bully exhibits inappropriate, abusive behaviors over a period of time and will have a multiple targets which may be

simultaneous or consecutive. A child which is going through a phase may target a few children in a relatively short period of time and then extinguish the behavior.

- **Look For Triggers To The Behavior**

Often children will act out in socially unacceptable ways because they may have a slight impairment which has previously been undiagnosed. This behavior could, for instance, be symptomatic of a slight vision or hearing deficit. If the child is frustrated by some slight, but bothersome, physical deficit it might explain some aggressive behavior. Sometimes by dealing appropriately with the underlying problem, the bullying behavior can be stopped before they become reinforced. A good vision therapist or hearing specialist can be invaluable.

- **Determine If The Child Is Mimicing Abuse**

The child may be mimicing abusive behavior which have been seen or experienced. A child's home life is an important clue. If the child is exposed to verbal physical abuse, he or she is likely crying out for help by behaving in an aggressive manner. If the child's home experience isn't in question, then talking to the child bully may be very revealing. The child may have experienced abuse from some other source. If this is the case, then the child needs to receive help before his or her behavior will change. Help is available through a number of governmental agencies, the school system, private organizations, churches, and welfare programs.

- **Educate The Child About Acceptable Social Behavior**

Attempts must be made to educate the child about appropriate and inappropriate social behavior. You may talk directly to the child as these behavior occur. Praise the child for appropriate behavior, offering occasional rewards, which decrease overtime. It is important, even critical, that when inappropriate behavior occur

that they be pointed out and discussed in a non punitive manner. The child needs to be told exactly which behaviors are not acceptable and why they are not acceptable. Punishment will not eliminate the problem. Some children may equate punishment with abuse and this can be extremely confusing when they are being told to stop abusive practices. It is much more likely that the behavior will be remediate when the child is taught what is and is not acceptable in a supportive manner. By doing this, the child learns from an adult role model that he or she is responsible for his or her own actions and is not ok to be abusive.

7.0 WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

A child can be a bully for a variety reasons. Not all bullies are the product of violent or neglectful home. If your child continually bullies other, he too experiences psychological harm. Patterns of aggression and intimidation can become ingrained. The longer they persist, the more difficult they are to expunge. Find out as much as you can about the problems. Is your child the leader or just one of the group of followers? If your child is a follower, talk to him about the situation. If his behavior persists, you may need to keep him away from the leader of the entire group. Supervise your child more closely when he plays. If he is an adolescent, you may need to put the brakes on certain unsupervised activities.

If your child is the leader in bullying activities, you need to find out as you can about the extent and nature of his or her activities. Protect your child by seeing that his victim is protected. If necessary, restrict your child from going near his victim. Cooperate with teachers and other parents monitoring your child's activities. Make sure that they know that you are responsible and want to be involved. Ask them to report back to you if your child resumes any form of intimidation. Talk to your child about alternatives to violent or socially intimidating behavior. Make sure that your child understands the personal impact that the bullying can have on the victim. Make sure also your child apologizes and makes meaningful reparations. Finally, you and your child should try to understand why

he has the need to intimidate others. You should start an ongoing dialogue. In some cases, your child may have so much anger, impulsivity or depression that you cannot handle it alone. In this case, you should seek professional advice.

As a parents also we have to create a safe environment for your children to tell you about being bullied. Many times kids are embarrassed to tell their parents what happened, thinking that their parents will blame them. Reinforce the idea that if they are bullied, it is not their fault. Don't make your child feel like a wimp. The person that is picking on you is the one with a problem, not you. Bullies pick on people for no real reason, but it is just because they have problems of their own, not because of anything you have done.

Don't teach your kids to hit or fight back; it will only make things worse. Here are five steps to suggest; *Ignore, Move away, Ask to stop, Tell firmly to stop and Tell an adult.* Notify teachers whenever an incident happens, be prepared to be persistent until some action is taken! Ask the teacher: *Would it be possible to have the class get involved in a discussion about bullies, or to separate my child from those who are bothering them.* If your child is unwilling to report child behavior to a teacher, offer to make the complaint yourself. Stress that it can be done in a way that is confidential.

8.0 WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

Schools need to establish a social climate where physical aggression and bullying are not used to gain popularity, maintain group leadership or influence others to do what they are told to do. No one deserves to be bullied. Once the 60% of children who are neither victims nor bullies adopt the attitude that bullying is an unacceptable behavior, schools are well on their way to having a successful bullying program.

Schools need to advertise the fact that they have adopted a Zero Tolerance policy for bullying, and that they have a working Anti-Bullying plan in force. School faculty must maintain a high profile in terms of the behavioral expectations of their students in order

to gain support from the community and send a clear message to the families of present and future students that bullying will not be tolerated. Once a school has established itself as a safe place for all students, school personnel will need to continually work at maintaining that reputation. It is a difficult task that requires the school faculty to put student safety at the top of their priority list.

Remember, students who do not feel safe at schools are unlikely to perform as well academically as they are capable, thus possibly impeding their future opportunities. A commitment by the staff to no-bullying in the school must be along term undertaking. When a new school year begins, staff should be sure Anti-Bullying policies have been included and discussed in the yearly goal setting process. Schools can create support groups where victims can concentrate on developing the skills needed to change their place within the social hierarchy of the student body.

Students are key to a successful Anti-Bullying campaign primarily because they usually know who the bullies are long before the adults do. Students are more likely to support an Anti-Bullying campaign when they been directly involved in determining the need for such a program, and deciding on its implementation. This includes developing Anti-Bullying policies and subsequent school-wide or classroom activities. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that they accept and encourage.

Teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that the level of student participation in the Anti-Bullying campaign will vary. Once students are mobilized to take action against bullies, they must feel secure that teachers understand their need to stay safe. For some students this means ensuring that the information they share will not cause them to lose status in their peer group. Confidentiality must be maintained in order for the program to be viewed by the students as credible. As well, to help students actively participate and take on the challenge of reducing bullying, it is very important that they learn the difference between “ratting” and “reporting”. “Ratting” occurs when a student tells about an inappropriate act with the idea getting another student into trouble with the

administration. “Reporting” happens when a student have an understanding of the difference between the two, reporting bullying incidents become much less of a social taboo.

9.0 CONCLUSION

Bullying in its truest form is comprised of a series of repeated intentionally cruel incidents, involving the same children, in the same bully and victim roles. This, however, does not mean that in order for bullying to occur there must be repeat offenses. Bullying can consist of a single interaction. Bullying behavior may also be defined as a criminal act if it is twelve years of age or older.

None of us wants our child to be in a bullying situation or worse yet to be bully causing the situation. However, it is a sad fact that child bullies do indeed exist. If we are to attack the bullying issue and resolve it, we must examine ways in which we can help the child bully. According to information gleaned from the UK national Advice Line run by Tim Field, a child bully who is not made accountable for his or her actions may grow up to become an adult serial bully. For this reason, it is imperative that we try to remediate the child bully’s behavior while he or she is still young. The adult serial bully is unlikely to respond to remediation. By eliminating the bullying behaviors during childhood, we could prevent much of the current bullying which is now so widespread in the world.

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Safe Child Bullies

<http://www.safechild.org/bullies.html>

What Is Bullying. The Twelve Types of Bullying, Bullies Tactics, How Bullies Select Their Victims.

<http://www.successunlimited.co.uk/bully/bully.htm>

What Is Bullying

www.nobully.org.nz/advicek.htm-12k