

Bullying And Peer Victimization

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SUMMARY

Violence among children and young people is considered to be any physical or psychological violent behavior aimed at children and young people and done on purpose by their peers. This has a goal of insulting and it includes repetition of the same behavioral principle and perseverance of an unequal strength ratios, i.e. stronger against weaker or group against individual. Children bullying behavior has been an established behavior in our society and school that it is ignored very often and considered to be a "part of a normal behavior". However, researches show that bullying has long lasting consequences both on victims and doers. Furthermore, sharp reactions against bullying have consequences of an extreme increase of violence in schools that obtain great media attention. Bullying includes different types of violent behavior ranking from hassle or purpose social isolation and ignoring to severe offences and abuse. Bullying doers could be individual or groups of peers. This type of behavior is objectionable and socially unacceptable. It is estimated that more than three fourths of adolescents have some kind of experience related to bullying such as calling names or public scorn. The aim of the paper is to present bullying as one of the major social problems that has a serious effect on the school children and youth's wellbeing. It is going to present bullying in relation to the type, including "cyber-bullying", thereupon, in relation to the individual characteristics of a victim and bullying doer, in relation to the environmental elements which have some influence on bullying, as well as bullying effects and prevention.

Keywords: bullying, peervictimization, cyber-bullying, bullying victim, bullying doer

1. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a form of violence and represent attack aimed at causing harm or suffering and inconvenience of other persons, or victims of bullying whether it is physical or emotional suffering. Bullying is so long established behavior in our society and schools that is often ignored and considered as "part of normal behavior during growing up". However, research shows that bullying has long-term effects on victims and perpetrators. In addition, severe reactions to bullying have resulted in extreme increase of violence in schools that take great media attention. This type of behavior is undesirable and socially unacceptable.

Violence among children and young people is considered each intentional physical or psychological violent behavior directed towards children and young people by their peers that has been done with the aim of hurting regardless of the place of execution, can vary by type,

severity and duration and that includes the repetition of the same form of conduct and maintenance of unequal power relations of stronger against the weaker or groups against an individual.

It is estimated that more than three quarters of adolescents had experience some kind of bullying as is calling by insulting names or public derision. Bullying has the biggest trend of development in adolescent age, and at the advanced adolescence the frequency of bullying behavior decreases. Research carried out in the world show that 15-25% of students were victims of bullying and 15-20% of students were the perpetrators of bullying. Survey conducted among students in 14 elementary and secondary schools in Massachusetts showed that more than 30% of adults help just a little or not at all in the event of an incident related to bullying.

Violent behavior of children (bullying) is different from the one time incidents and children's quarrel, or brass, because it is a behavior characterized by aggressive behavior that deliberately seem evil that is repeated during a certain period with the imbalance of power. Differences in power can be compared on physical strength or skill, or in relation to the perception of social power and influence. Attention to the perpetrators of bullying can be focused on any aspect of life, certain persons, or victims: from looks and stature, disability, or cultural origin, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual ability. Thus, bullying is a form of victimization, not a conflict. The term bullying is used to indicate the behavior of groups or individuals, and victimization is a term used to designate a person with experience of the existence of bullying.

Bullying includes various types of violent behaviors ranging from the hassle or the deliberate isolation from the society and ignoring up to the serious assaults and abuse. Perpetrators of bullying may be individuals or groups of peers. Sometimes those who were victims of bullying themselves become perpetrators of bullying, and for these people we used the term "perpetrator-victim" of the bullying. Difficulties later in life, such as domestic violence can be seen from people who are "perpetrator-victim" of bullying. Bullying behavior can occur in all areas, including family, school, workplace, sport and the wider community. Yet research indicates that the incidence of bullying behavior is on the rise, especially in schools

2. GOAL

The goal of this paper is to show the kind of bullying, including "cyber-bullying", then the individual characteristics of victims and perpetrators of bullying, according to environmental factors that influence bullying behavior, consequences, and prevention of bullying.

3. TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Bullying represent one of the biggest social problems that has a serious impact on the welfare of school children and youth. Bullying occurs in many forms: psychological, verbal, nonverbal or emotional form (intimidation through gestures or social exclusion) as cyber bullying (the use of the internet, text messages or e-mail to slander or create disrupts). Also exist different direct and indirect forms of bullying behavior. Direct bullying includes physical and verbal attacks or aggressive behavior: kicking by leg, pushing, calling names, while indirect bullying includes behaviors such as ignoring, or gossip, which often rely on third parties. Indirect bullying also applies to relations such as aggression with harmful or disastrous social relations. Direct bullying is more represented in males, while indirect bullying more represented by women.

Types of bullying behavior include: verbal bullying behavior (a hassle, shouting, calling names, vilification, denigration, threats, mocking, racial, ethnic and religious comments, criticism of sexuality), psychological bullying behavior (threatening looks, faces, derision), social bullying behavior (spreading rumors and lies, social exclusion, humiliation, extortion, blackmail, spying, gossiping, making bias), physical bullying behavior (pushing, destruction or theft of personal belongings, hitting, slapping, spitting, attacking), sexual bullying behavior (make suggestive comments, touching, displaying insulting and unpleasant material, short-hitting rap), and electronic "cyber bullying" behavior (sending malicious e-mail's, text messages).

The problem of verbal, psychological and social bullying behavior is much more delicate and difficult to identify, while physical abuse can be quickly detected and identify the perpetrators-abusers.

"Cyber-bullying" is a type of bullying used by any electronic communication, including but not limited to media such as e-mail, instant messages, text messages, cell phones, pager, internet email, internet chat, online games and websites.

Computer revolution during eighties and especially from the period of the nineties of the last century, as well as expansion of the global world of computer networks or the Internet has led to new forms of behavior that are socially unacceptable and that as such require to be criminalized in a certain way so the Council Europe made "Convention on cybercrime," on November 23rd 2001, which came into application on July 1st 2004. This Convention was signed by 38 countries, including countries that are not members of the Council of Europe (Canada, Japan, South Africa and the United States), and ratified by 11 countries. The State of Bosnia and Herzegovina has also signed the Convention (B&H Official Gazette, supplement, International Agreements No.6/2006). Convention on cybercrime is a

form of international agreement as an important source of international law, which regulates the mutual relations between subjects of international law. This Convention is one of the so-called Framework Convention because its provision is directly applicable, so that each country should implement it in their own legislation. In addition to this Convention, the Council of Europe has adopted on December 12th 2003 the "Additional Protocol to the Convention on cybercrime crime acts of racism and xenophobia committed through computer systems". Additional Protocol was signed by 28 countries, including the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H Official Gazette, supplement, International Agreements No.6/2006), but without the USA. Additional Protocol requires signatory states to criminalize dissemination of racist and xenophobic content through the computer system and xenophobic-racist threats and insults, and denial of the Holocaust and genocide.

4. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLYING VICTIMS

Victims of bullying are often persons with low self-esteem level, seemingly shy and withdrawn, often have speech impairment such as stuttering, mental or physical disability, or belonging to some marginal or ethnical groups, to other race or sexual orientation, that feel physically weaker and have fewer friends than those who are not victimized. Adolescents who are gay, lesbian or bisexual are more often victims of bullying than heterosexual peers. Also, adolescents who are overweight or obese are more abused and harassed by teenagers with normal weight, especially the girls younger than 20 years.

Research conducted in Australia shows that victimization in half of adolescent is a predictor of worse physical health in late adolescent age, with significant psychosocial consequences.

Research also shows that boys who were identified as victims of bullying in high school were four times more often convicted of at least one crime in the age of 24 years compared to their peers who were not exposed to bullying.

In addition to this, victims of bullying change attitudes and behavior in comparison to usual, they are anxious, frightened and hurt in order to report violence.

5. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLYING PERPETRATORS

Perpetrators of bullying-a, or abusers are mostly people insecure in themselves and without confidence, and they necessarily need certification of society and try to have as many levels of control or total control of the problem and be more involved in violent behavior such as carrying weapons and fighting. Also, the perpetrators of bullying are more inclined to wear and show weapons to cause compliance or fear in other peers in high-risk situations.

Perpetrators of bullying, or abusers are usually people who are hyperactive, have poor control of behavior, lack of concentration in solving problems, poor communica-

tion skills in solving social problems, do not feel remorse because they have injured another person and refuse to accept responsibility for their behavior, and often themselves has been victims of abuse, so they accept bullying behavior as a model for others.

On the other hand, nervousness and anxiety in school children and adolescents are poorly connected with violence. Lower IQ and poor school success is permanently linked with violent behavior, including bullying.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Various social factors influence the development of aggressive behavior in adolescence. In general, family characteristics such as lack of parental care, supervision, control and love, the application of strict disciplinary measures and physical punishment, lack of family cohesion (dysfunctional family), father's aggressive past, single parents, as well as lower economic status of the family are considered to be significant factors for the increase in violence among the youth, or in school children and youth.

7. BULLYING CONSEQUENCES

Bullying affects basic human values and prevents students to achieve great success in all spheres of life. School children and young people should learn to exempt from the humiliation of oppression and abuse. However, bullying has far-reaching implications in the school environment either directly or indirectly creating a harmful atmosphere in the classroom and at school.

Thus, children who were exposed to bullying considerably more than their peers are subject to depression, loneliness and anxiety, have a lower degree of self-esteem, suffer from more types of migraine headaches and have suicidal ideas and stress due to bullying can interfere with school duties and learning, which result in a fear of going to school. Experiences of peers who are abused show that they had worse success in school and were less popular in school.

Observers and witnesses of bullying are also affected. Unpleasant atmosphere of fear and bullying creates a negative impact on their learning. Observers and witnesses of bullying a generally little or no help in incidental situations related to bullying. Observers are usually passive and not willing to report or testify about the violent behavior. In psychology, this passivity is known as a social phenomenon of "diffusion of responsibility", which allows the observer to pretend that it was not directly involved, and that nothing should be taken so that responsibility should be left to someone else, because there is a fear that any intervention will lead to inconvenience and spending time around the "someone else's problem."

Also, there is a "phenomenon of a group" when someone as paralyzed watching and does not condemn the violence and stop it. But if someone in the group still dares to stop passively watching violent behavior, the rest of the group became vocal opponents of the violence.

8. BULLYING PREVENTION

A bullying prevention should start early as a "transitional period" for children in kindergarten and continue through the continuing education of school children and youth through various programs. Bullying prevention programs that are most promising are those that have comprehensive approach to this problem. These programs should be involved in the school environment, family, the school-wide activities, including activities in the classroom and individual activities. Also, these programs should be strictly implemented through the mandatory procedures of leadership and teaching staff to improve the school systems in the area that relates to the period of growing up.

School policies should be focused on strategic objectives such as raising the level of awareness and knowledge about bullying, opposition to views that bullying is normal and acceptable behavior, improve safety in the school environment, establishing the atmosphere of trust and support to the demolition of the "rules of silence" about bullying in the establishment and improvement of appropriate services for counseling and support to all those who are involved in the process related to bullying behavior and provide a proactive management approach to bullying in the school environment. For the realization of these strategic goals necessary are activities related to teachers, parents and students.

Activities to be undertaken by teachers include activities to detect and monitor early signs of conduct disorders in students, then reporting activities to the school director or coordinator of all incidental situations or suspicious situations, activities that provide immediate support and assistance in solving problems related to bullying and the organization of adequate educational activities for the opposition to bullying as well as organizing discussion forums related to bullying.

Activities that parents should take are the following: to monitor early signs of conduct disorders in their children, undertake activities that are interesting to children in their social life, to talk openly and often with children and listen to their concerns and try to understand the situation that concerns them, contact the school to gain support and strategies that will help their children, and in case of doubt that students from the school makes bullying against their child to immediately contact the coordinator or director of the school.

Activities required to students are: activities that will encourage students to tell teachers or coordinators in confidence of all bullying incidents, even when not directly involved, then talk with friends and cultivate healthy and positive relationships, also activities that will provide support of school staff to students to share with them opinion and speak about incidental situations in which were present aggression and conflict, as well as activities which will support students who were victims of a bullying and to students who committed bullying to indicate that it is socially unacceptable and wrong behavior.

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