Good research paper on bullying in schools

Law, Criminal Justice

Bullying is a form of violence characterized by an attack or harassment intended to cause intimidation or harm to the victim either physically, verbally or psychologically. Bullying occurs through face-to-face victimization or using technological tools such as social media networks and mobile phones, popularly known as cyberbullying. Bullying has far reaching effects on the victims, especially children, including health and social problems, as well as physical injuries and, in extreme cases, death. Parents, schools, stakeholders and the society at large are also affected in varied ways both in the short and long term. Interestingly, bullying affects not only the victim, but also the bullies, who may have academic issues and problems with law in the future due to persistent violent behavior. Owing to the seriousness of bullying in schools and other settings, it is imperative that effective solutions are developed to prevent bullying before it starts, or minimize its likelihood and the associated impacts on all the affected parties. Towards this end, this writer argues that developing and consistently enforcing school anti-bullying policies, enhancing supervision of students in schools and cooperation among various stakeholders with a view to dealing with the problem are viable solutions to bullying.

Similarly, helping the young learners to be assertive, social and confident could reduce their likelihood of being bullied. The anti-bullying program can also be integrated into the curriculum to ensure that as the children learn and grow, they are exposed to the risks and protective factors of bullying so that they can understand the associated risk factors and how to avoid the vice. Also, the bullying-prevention policy should encourage school-children to report bullying cases, which could help in minimizing the effects of the

incidences on the victims and give an opportunity to deal with the bullies. This, coupled with appropriate disciplinary actions against bullies, means that such an anti-bullying policy can be leveraged to prevent or minimize bullying in schools.

Moreover, " promoting cooperation among different professionals and between school staff and parents" (CDC 2011, 2) can help in dealing with bullying in schools. Each of the aforementioned stakeholders has a key role to play in preventing or minimizing bullying in schools. For example, teachers interact with the learners while in school and are likely to notice any aggressive behavior among students or effects of bullying on the victims. Teachers are trained in child development and psychology and can use their knowledge to deal with the problem at school. Parents, on the other hand, stay with the child after school and understand them better. Cooperation between teachers and parents is especially important in preventing bullying and its impacts on victims. To this end, for example, teachers can meet with parents to discuss the behavior of their children who are aggressive towards other students and agree on the best way to deal with them, including taking them to counseling professionals for behavior correction (Mikulak 2013). Without such cooperation, the teacher alone may find it difficult to help the bullies to change their behavior, leading to deleterious effects such as academic problems, substance use and violence in their adulthood (CDC 2011). The foregoing is also true for victims of bullying and bully-victims (individuals who bully others and are also bullied). According to Mikulak (2013) and NIH (2012), individuals who are exposed to bullying in childhood have a higher risk of having poor social relationships,

difficulties keeping a job which may translate to economic challenges and, perhaps more importantly, serious health issues such as anxiety, depression, headaches, emotional distress, physical injuries and even death. Counseling the victims of bullying and seeking appropriate healthcare is important in minimizing the impacts of bullying. More importantly, periodic evaluations should be undertaken to measure how successful the anti-bullying policies have been and make adjustments and improvements so as to bolster efficiency.

Moreover, professionals in areas of child development and psychology and bullying are in a position to understand the problem, and provide useful information and research evidence with regard to bullying. Cooperation among stakeholders will ensure sharing of information and ideas with a view to developing appropriate solutions to prevent bullying before it starts, or minimize its effects on the victims, bullies, bully-victims and other groups affected by the vice (NIH 2012; CDC 20122). Professionals in the relevant fields conduct research to understand the parameters of bullying and the resulting research evidence-based programs could be implemented and evaluated by teachers in cooperation with the parents and other stakeholders. According to CDC (2011), a lasting solution to bullying should be based on understanding the problem, identifying risk and protective factors, developing and testing preventive strategies and undertaking evaluations to measure their success.

In addition, bullying can be prevented before it starts, by adequately supervising students in school. As children grow and interact with each other, bullying can sometimes happen if there is no one looking over them.

This underscores the need for teachers to appropriately supervise, guide and correct the children at school (CDC 2011). Through close supervision in classrooms or during out-of-class activities, teachers would be able to notice student bullies and stop them at the scene. This can help in preventing bullying since the students would know that their teachers are watching, and will reprimand them if they are caught harming other children. When children are left alone, those perceived to be weak, quiet, lacking assertiveness, or having poor social abilities may be victimized by their peers who may be violent or lack self-control. If there are no teachers on site, the bullies have a good chance of intimidating or harassing their fellow students at will. The teachers would learn of such incidence later or never at all, especially seeing that some bullying victims may be reluctant to report the incidences. As it may be seen, therefore, lack of supervision implies that bullies can inflict their harm on their victims and possibly get away with it, which increases the likelihood of a repeat intimidation and harassment, besides increasing the effects of the vice on the victims, bullies, on-lookers and the school at large (NIH 2012). What is more, there have been incidences of bullying victims turning to be bullies themselves due to lack of " the emotional regulation or support required to cope with it" (Mikulak 2013, par. 7). This can be avoided through supervision whereby a teacher or social worker easily learns that a certain student has been victimized even without the student reporting the incidences themselves. This way, the victim can get emotional and social support, as well as medical attention where the effects include physical injuries.

In conclusion, bullying is a serious issue with far reaching effects on the

victims, bullies, bully-victims, schools, policymakers and the society at large. The problem can be solved by establishing and enforcing evidence-based anti-bullying policies in schools, supervising the students and cooperation among parents, professionals and the teachers. The ultimate goal is to prevent the crime from happens with a view to alleviate its various impacts.

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