

# Effects of bullying

[Sociology](#), [Bullying](#)



Bullying is defined as a behavior used by a person to deride or ostracize another person, but bullying is far more complex than this simple definition. Bullying, as perceived by many teachers and administrators in the school systems, only exists in the physical form, but bullying takes many forms and does not stop at physical violence. Other forms in which bullying appears are verbal, emotional, and cyber. Verbal bullying uses words and other verbal tactics to tear down the victim's self-esteem. Emotional bullying is more traumatic than verbal and focuses on making the victim feel like he or she is isolated and an outcast.

Cyber bullying targets victims through social networking and text messaging; bullying victims through the cyber world causes more damage because it gives the victim no escape from their tormentors, even when they are not face to face. No matter the tactic, the severity, or the cause, bullying hurts, and the effects are considerable. Although different people will handle being bullied in different ways, there are three main effects to being bullied: the development of depression, anxiety, or other mental disorders, a decline in academic achievement, and a stunt in social development.

One study showed that victims of bullying have more anxiety, sadness, sleep difficulties, low self-esteem, headaches, stomach pain, and general tension than other classmates who are not experiencing bullying ("Consequences of Bullying"). Bullying leads to the development of anxiety and other mental disorders because it plays on the mind and mental health of the victim by downgrading them and making them believe that they are worthless. When a student goes to school every day and gets pushed, shoved, made fun of, and laughed at, they develop a feeling of being an outcast, or a freak.

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This view that they develop of themselves causes them to shut down mentally. They can no longer think logically, because their view of logic is disrupted by the taunts and actions of the bully. Evidence indicates that the anxiety the victim develops will escalate into much more severe anxiety disorders such as depression, separation anxiety, and panic disorders (“Consequences of Bullying”). The disorders that the victim develops will not go away when he or she gets out of school, but they will follow the victim into adulthood.

One study conducted by Dr. William Copeland analyzed the mental disorders in adults that were bullied as children. He analyzed these adults when they were children as well, before and after the bullying occurred.

Since childhood mental health was evaluated and any preexisting mental disorders could be ruled out, the study showed that the adults’ mental disorders were a long lasting effect of being bullied as children (Pappas).

Other side effects of the mental disorders associated with bullying include: suicidal thoughts, harmful actions, and paranoia.

Bullying is mentally exhausting on its victims, and they will eventually break down emotionally, physically, and mentally. A major effect of bullying is an overall decline in academic achievement. The victim will start to miss days of school either in fear of the physical harm threatened to them by a bully, or to avoid the verbal humiliation. One study concluded that eight percent of eighth graders in the United States miss at least one day of school per month for fear of bullies (“Consequences of Bullying”).

As they become stressed and paranoid by the bullying, their focus on their classes deteriorates. This nonchalant attitude towards academics results in poor grades and academic performance, which will lead to even more anxiety and embarrassment, and give the victim's tormentors yet another thing to pick on him or her about ("Consequences of Bullying"). They will also start avoiding certain parts of the school that are prime areas for bullying such as cafeterias, bathrooms, and even certain hallways if possible. Bullying can affect a student to the point of dropping out of school altogether.

They will feel like a lost cause because they are outcasts, their grades are poor, and they are scared to walk through the school doors in the morning. The victim will get out of bed every morning and dread going to school because they will be wondering what will happen to them on that day. Academics will take a backseat to the stress and anxiety of being bullied, because it is all the victim will think about. Academic achievement not only declines for the victim, however. The bully will at times be more focused on bullying another student rather than doing a homework assignment, and even bystanders will become too intrigued in the gossip and stories to pay attention in class. As the bullying gets worse, so does the overall academic performance of bullied, the bully, and the bystander. Social development during and after bullying is almost nonexistent. Victims of bullying often have very few friends and sometimes none at all. Since they possess such high anxiety levels from being bullied, and have very low self-esteem, they have a hard time making friends because they do not contain the confidence to walk up to someone and start a conversation.

They view themselves as an outcast or a freak, and believe that no one wants to be friends with them. They have feelings of isolation and believe that they are not worthy of having friends (“Consequences of Bullying”). Other kids or students may want to become friends with the victim, but they refrain from making any efforts to reach him or her in fear of being bullied themselves. Other students may also fear disapproval by their group of friends or clique if they were to reach out to a bullied victim. The victim becomes reclusive and socially awkward.

This social awkwardness will continue to affect the victim long into adulthood and make job opportunities scarce and dealing with the public a stressful and awkward situation. Bullying is an aggressive behavior that affects the lives of more than twenty five percent of the United States’ children. Whether it is physical, verbal, emotional, or through the virtual world, bullying and its many forms are damaging. It can cause a straight “A” student to drop out of high school. It can cause a small town girl with a dream to commit suicide. Being bullied changes the victim.

The mental trauma he or she goes through will cause anxiety and other mental disorders that will last well into adulthood. Emotionally, the victim takes so much pain until they cannot even feel anymore. They become like stone. Academic performance and achievement will decline, as well as participation in any school related function. Socially, the victim becomes a recluse or an outcast. Making friends becomes close to impossible, and they lose their self-worth. Bullying is more than a behavior; to the victim, it is a

prison, and he or she will spend their whole lives trying to break free from the effects of this condemnation.