

# My ans to bullying

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



Primary and secondary schools children have been or are being bullied in one way or the other, by the time they reach their teens, fewer than half will tell a parent and at the very most, only a third will tell a teacher. Some children may get over an episode of bullying quickly but for others, the damage can go on for years. Children who have been bullied may suffer personality changes, can do poorly at school, may get ill, depressed or sometimes, even kill themselves. Bullying interferes with children's learning, concentration, and desire to go to school.

Bullying can be defined as the ongoing abuse of another person through physical or mental torture. To make matters worse this torture is conducted in the presence of others. The humiliation felt by the victim is hard to understand if you have never been bullied. If it happens over a long period of time it can have devastating effects on a young person's mental health. There are a whole lot of myths about bullying such as: "It's a fact of life... everyone is bullied at some stage" of which to me is false.

Bullying, is "physical or psychological intimidation (that) occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse," appears to cut across all the demographics of school size, place, and wealth. Bullies exist in schools big and small, urban and rural, rich and poor.

"Their targets tend to have lasting emotional scars and low self-esteem", Education Daily reported in October 1998. "Ten percent of eighth-grade students stay home at least one day a month for fear of another student." Not only does bullying harm both its intended victims and the perpetrators", say Limber and Nation, "it also may affect the climate of schools and,

indirectly, the ability of all students to learn to the best of their abilities.

Bullying deprives children of their rightful entitlement to go to school in a safe, just, and caring environment.

There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be, deliberately hurtful including aggression repeated often over a period of time difficult for victims to defend themselves against. Bullying can take many forms, but three main types are: physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings, there are verbal bullying which includes name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks, and Indirect bullying which includes spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e mails or text messages on mobile phones.

Name calling is the most common direct form. This may be because of individual characteristics, but pupils can be called nasty names because of their ethnic origin, nationality or colour; sexual orientation; or some form of disability.

### **Extent of the Problem:**

Various reports and studies have established that approximately 15% of students are either bullied regularly or are initiators of bullying behavior (Olweus, 1993). Direct bullying seems to increase through the elementary years, peak in the middle school/junior high school years, and decline during the high school years. However, while direct physical assault seems to decrease with age, verbal abuse appears to remain constant. School size, racial composition, and school setting (rural, suburban, or urban) do not

seem to be distinguishing factors in predicting the occurrence of bullying. Finally, boys engage in bullying behavior and are victims of bullies more frequently than girls.

There was bullying in all schools, although a comparison with earlier work indicates a reduction during the 1990s. Although bullying can occur during the journey to or from school, eg extortion or theft of possessions such as mobile phones, most typically it takes place in school. It is more likely where adult surveillance is intermittent. In primary schools, up to three-quarters of bullying takes place in the playground.

In secondary schools, it is also most likely outdoors, but classrooms, corridors and toilets are common sites. Both boys and girls bully others. Usually, boys are bullied by boys, but girls are bullied by girls and boys. The most common perpetrators are individual boys or groups of several boys. Children who bully others can come from any kind of family, regardless of social class or cultural background.

Usually one pupil starts bullying a victim. There are often other pupils present.

These may: help the bully by joining in help the bully by watching, laughing and shouting encouragement remain resolutely uninvolved help the victim directly, tell the bullies to stop, or fetch an adult. Any child can be bullied, and although none of these characteristics can excuse it, certain factors can make bullying more likely: lacking close friends in school being shy an over-protective family environment being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority being different in some obvious respect- such as stammering

having Special Educational Needs or a disability behaving inappropriately, intruding or being a 'nuisance' possessing expensive accessories such as mobile phones or computer games .

Some victims may behave passively or submissively, signaling to others that they would not retaliate if attacked or insulted. They may benefit from assertiveness training. Others may behave aggressively, sometimes provoking others to retaliate. Some pupils are both bullies and victims; approximately 20% of victims also act as bullies although tending not to direct their aggression towards their own aggressors. They may come from disturbed family backgrounds and are likely to need special help in changing their behavior. Verbal bullying is common amongst boys and girls. Boys experience more physical violence and threats than girls, although physical attacks on girls by other girls are becoming more frequent. Girls tend to use indirect methods which can be more difficult to detect.

Being bullied tends to decrease with age probably because older pupils are developing coping skills. In addition, older pupils meet fewer people who are physically stronger than them. However, attitudes to victims tend to become less sympathetic over the age range 8 to 15 years, especially in older boys. Physical bullying declines with age, but indirect bullying increases.

### **The risks of bullying to the victims**

Victims may be reluctant to attend school and are often absent. They may be more anxious and insecure than others, having fewer friends and often feeling unhappy and lonely. Victims can suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-image, looking upon themselves as failures - feeling stupid,

ashamed and unattractive. Victims may present a variety of symptoms to health professionals, including fits, faints, vomiting, limb pains, paralysis, hyperventilation, visual symptoms, headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting, sleeping difficulties and sadness. Being bullied may lead to depression or, in the most serious cases, attempted suicide. It may lead to anxiety, depression, loneliness and lack of trust in adult life.

### **Pupils' attitudes to bullying**

Pupils' understanding varies with age. Infants may confuse bullying with fighting and nasty experiences generally; juniors develop a more mature understanding. But difficulties in identifying bullying in 4 to 7 year olds should not prevent schools taking action. About 75-80% of pupils in surveys say they would not join in, or would like to help a bullied child.

Fewer say they would actually help. About one fifth of pupils are less sympathetic. Girls seem more supportive of victims than boys, but not necessarily more likely to intervene. Families are told about bullying more often than teachers; older pupils are less likely to tell at all. A 'culture of silence' persists; many victims - a majority of secondary-aged pupils - have not told anyone in authority of the bullying. The 1997 survey found that 30% of victims had not told anyone. Often teachers and parents need to take steps to uncover bullying.

Most victims who do tell teachers or parents describe the outcome as positive. Victims need help and support. However, a small minority of victims reported bullying getting worse, especially when teachers were told. It is important that claims of bullying are taken seriously; a half-hearted response

might make the problem worse.

Sexual bullying is impacted on both genders. Boys are also victims - of girls and other boys.

A case of proven sexual assault is likely to lead to the exclusion of the perpetrator.

In general, sexual bullying is characterized by: abusive name calling looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty inappropriate and uninvited touching sexual innuendoes and propositions pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content in its most extreme form, sexual assault or rape. Sexual bullying can also be related to sexual orientation.

Pupils do not necessarily have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to experience such bullying. Just being different can be enough. A survey of 300 secondary schools in England and Wales found 82% of teachers aware of verbal incidents, and 26% aware of physical incidents. Almost all schools had anti-bullying policies, but only 6% referred to this type. Factors hindering schools in challenging homophobic bullying include staff inexperience and parental disapproval.

### **Eradicating Bullying In Schools:**

Bullying is a problem that occurs in the social environment as a whole. The bullies' aggression occurs in social contexts in which teachers and parents are generally unaware of the extent of the problem and other children are either reluctant to get involved or imply do not know how to help. Given this

situation, effective interventions must involve the entire school community rather than focus on the perpetrators and victims alone. Olweus (1993) emphasize the need to develop whole-school bullying policies, implement curricular measures, improve the school ground environment, and empower students through conflict resolution, peer counseling, and assertiveness training. Olweus (1993) details an approach that involves interventions at the school, class, and individual levels.

Bullying should be discussed as part of the curriculum, but teachers also need general.

### **Strategies to deal with the problem**

Whilst they should try strategies such as those described below, schools may find that stronger measures are needed in the more serious and persistent cases. Where other strategies do not resolve the problem, permanent exclusion may be justified in the most serious and persistent cases, particularly where violence is involved. The Department's updated guidance for local education authority exclusion appeal panels makes clear that pupils responsible for violence or threatened violence should not normally be reinstated.

One of the strategies is including it in the school's anti-bullying policy - so pupils know discrimination is wrong and the school will act covering it in inset days on bullying in general guaranteeing confidentiality and appropriate advice to lesbian and gay pupils challenging homophobic language exploring issues of diversity and difference - discussing what schools and society can



do to end discrimination exploring pupils' understanding of their use of homophobic language - they may not understand the impact.

Parents can also help to stop children from bullying others in schools. For instance parents should talk to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want.

Show your child how to join in with other children without bullying make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or form tutor; explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing; discuss with the teacher how you and the school can stop them bullying others regularly check with your child how things are going at school. Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people.

### **Conclusion:**

Bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect the ability of students to progress academically and socially. A comprehensive intervention plan that involves all students, parents, and school staff is required to ensure that all students can learn in a safe and fear-free environment. There are key points to consider when dealing with bullying as a teacher, Never ignore suspected bullying , don't make premature assumptions listen carefully to all accounts, several pupils saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth adopt a problem-solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves follow-up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed.

The curriculum can be used to raise awareness about bullying and the anti-bullying policy increase understanding for victims, and help build an anti-bullying to teach pupils how constructively to manage their relationships with others. Through the curriculum it is possible to explore such issues as: why do people bully each other? what are the effects of bullying on the bullied, on bullies, and on bystanders? what can we do to stop bullying? There are now many videos that illustrate bullying, for example Sticks and Stones (secondary) and The Trouble with Tom (primary). Pupils can explore different characters' perspectives and suggest anti-bullying strategies.

## **References:**

1. Nan Stein in Bully proof: (1996) A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying published jointly by the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women and the National Education Association Professional Library.
2. Olweus, D (1993). Bullying at School: What we know and what we can do. Cambridge, MA Blackwell.