

Odd girl out: a teenagers struggle with peer victimization and bullying assignmen...

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Odd Girl Out is a TV movie that follows the struggles of a young girl named Vanessa Snyder, who must deal with the brutality and peer pressure from the children in her class. This film is based on the advice book Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls by Rachel Simmons. It shows that bullying among girls is usually non-physical, indirect and unnoticeable. This problem is harmful, destructive and usually ignored, leaving victims to suffer in silence. Vanessa is a young girl in eighth grade who begins the year a happy, confident teenager who is “in with the in crowd” led by her best friend Stacy.

When a young boy Tony becomes interested in Vanessa whom her friend already likes, Stacy and her band of loyal followers seek revenge on Vanessa by completely destroying her. Vanessa soon becomes the victim of this non-physical, verbal violence from her former friends. Even though Nikki, Stacy’s other best friend who is jealous of Vanessa, is the main girl who is tormenting Vanessa, Stacy plays her part by pretending she’s still Vanessa’s best friend and not stopping the verbal attacks on her.

Vanessa is slowly pushed out of class activities, called names, socially isolated and the worst, her tormentors create a hate site about her on which they put humiliating photos and hateful comments about her. The bullying escalates, with Stacy, Nikki and the rest of the popular girls, cornering Vanessa inside a bathroom and verbally brutalizing her, including degrading every aspect of her and revealing her embarrassing secrets. Vanessa ends up chopping all her hair off while in a nervous breakdown. Soon she starts cutting school and lying to her mom to avoid the brutal attacks she faces every day.

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Vanessa's mother tries unsuccessfully to address the problems and speaks with the principal of the school to see if any steps can be taken to stop this harassment. The principal, however, informs her that they cannot take disciplinary action against non-physical violence. The bullying never stopped and even went so far that Vanessa took an overdose of pills and ended up in the hospital. Finally, after the whole ordeal, Vanessa found the courage to stand up to Stacy and see through her fake concern and Vanessa was able to see through her bullying that she didn't need the approval of these girls or their friendship.

We've all been there. At some time or another, all young girls are subjected to feeling like the outcast and there is always that one girl who never lets you forget it. Bullying can come in all forms, not just physical abuse. Girls are genius' when it comes to finding new and inventive ways to make another girl's life miserable. " The term " relational aggression" is used to describe a type of bullying primarily used by pre-adolescent and adolescent girls to victimize other girls—a covert use of relationships as weapons to inflict emotional pain. (Carney, 4) Acts of relational aggression are common among girls in schools today. These instances include rumor spreading, secret-telling, backstabbing, ignoring, excluding from social groups and activities, and verbally insulting. Other behaviors include making fun of someone's clothes or appearance and these types of behaviors are common among young girls and adolescents. Perpetrators might be driven by jealousy, need for attention, anger, and fear of competition. In Odd Girl Out, Nikki was so harsh to Vanessa because she was jealous of her and Stacy's close friendship.

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She was afraid that they would exclude her so she went out of her way to hurt Vanessa because of her own insecurities. One reason girls choose to engage in such non-physical behavior because it makes it hard to be held accountable for their actions. Girls who appear the most innocent may indeed be the most hostile in their actions. Stacy, for example, was just as bad as those girls who were openly harassing Vanessa. Stacy instead let her group take care of the grunt work, and she pretended like she wasn't involved, yet she did nothing to stop the behavior.

She I believe is the worst kind of bully; the kind that acts like they're your friend, but is a completely different person once your back is turned. Stacy even went as far as to pretend to be Vanessa's friend again so that she could copy her homework assignment, and once that battle had been one, Stacy continued to let her friends bully Vanessa. This type of relational aggression can be devastating. This seems to be a very common trend among girls, mostly between the ages of nine and thirteen. Girls around this age are particularly vulnerable because of the high value they typically place on friendships.

Victims sometimes feel that they are in part to blame and therefore deserve to be isolated. The isolation makes them feel socially inept and unattractive. When their teen daughters appear secretive and moody, many parents attribute these behaviors to normal hormonal changes and adolescent behavior. However, these may well be symptoms that the girl is a victim of bullying at school. School absences, anxiety, and depression can all be consequences of relational aggression. Victims of relational aggression often

experience a range of difficulties in school, where much of the harassment takes place.

Seemingly harmless school activities become painful experiences. Victims may struggle to find a seat in the lunchroom, participate in team projects, work with a partner in science, or join a team in gym class. These students feel vulnerable, and the problem is invisible to school faculty. School absences become more frequent because the child feels afraid to go to school. In fact, it has been reported that 160, 000 students each year fail to attend school out of fear of relational aggression. At its extreme, relational aggression has been linked to acts of school violence.

For example, a 14-year-old from Pennsylvania shot and killed one of her female classmates. In court, the defendant's lawyer reported that the girl shot her classmate in order to free herself from repeated incidents of teasing and verbal abuse. These types of relational aggression cannot be taken lightly. Some adults may see these types of acts as normal adolescent behaviors, when in fact, such behaviors should be addressed to avoid this type of instance. Perceptions of Bullying and Associated Trauma during Adolescence by JoLynn Carney, addressed the idea that being a victim of bullying is a serious matter.

She explores the fact that children who are victims of bullying, including verbal and physical aggression, are under a " chronic stressor that often results in traumatic responses. " Many adults don't see the damaging effects that so called minor exposures to bullying, can have on young adolescents and just how subjective they are to it. The purpose of this study was to

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explore potential connections between bullying and trauma levels involved with adolescents in a school environment. Children and adolescents seem particularly vulnerable to trauma.

The impact on development has been shown to be significant and long-lasting. Repeated traumatic exposure to bullying appears to affect the victim's sense of trust in one's self, others, and the world, which leaves the child to suffer significant helplessness and fear. Chronic exposure to bullying appears to increase feelings of distress and has been linked to greater expressed physical, psychological, and emotional problems in children. (Carney, 1) This study aimed to draw attention to the fact that bullying is not an issue that should be taken lightly.

However, more often than not, parents tends to see bullying as a right of passage for young adults and an issue that will eventually pass. While that may be true, I don't think that it should be left untreated. This study shows the damaging effects that bullying can have on children and how it can impact the m severely not only at the time of the incidents but also later on in life. In *Odd Girl Out*, Vanessa's mother tried to right off the bullying as "girls being girls" and refused to believe at first that it was as bad as Vanessa said it was. It wasn't until Vanessa's behavior changed dramatically did her mother take action.

Bullying Perspectives: Experiences, Attitudes, and Recommendations of 9 to 13 Year-Olds Attending Health Education Centers in the United States, was a study conducted to determine the causes, effects, and preventions of bullying. This study took opinions of 9 to 13 year-olds regarding bullying.

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Data was obtained from 1229 students visiting 11 health education centers in seven states. Students responded via anonymous, electronic keypads. Half the respondents said they have been bullied at least once in a while. When bullied, almost half said they fight back, about a fourth tell an adult, and 20% do nothing.

Nearly two thirds claimed they tell or try to stop bullying when they see it, but 16% do nothing, and 20% join in. Almost 42% said they bully others at least on one occasion. About one in five elementary school and one in ten middle school students in the United States is bullied. Bullying can have physical, emotional, and social consequences for both victims and perpetrators. Bully victims have documented symptoms such as sleep difficulties, bed-wetting, headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, and school-related problems. They can also experience low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and may feel socially rejected or isolated.

Children who bully often suffer from low school bonding and adjustment, which can be associated with low school competence and increased truancy. Moreover, bullies are more likely to be involved in various self-destructive or antisocial behaviors such as fighting, vandalism, carrying weapons, stealing, and getting in trouble with the law. (Brown, 3) The goal of this study was to bring attention to the overwhelming problem of bullying in elementary and middle schools. It shows that even when children are being victimized by their peers that they are apprehensive about telling adults about what is really going on.

It's hard to stand up to those who are persecuting you, especially when it's you're the odd one out and everyone is against you. Many children don't know how to deal with these bullies, or how to avoid them. In the movie, Vanessa tried to her best to ignore the problem without seeking help from her mother or teachers until the harassment became increasingly worse. She also experienced severe depression and anxiety from all that was going on at school. There was a scene in the movie when the group of girls who were bullying her invited her to a party they were throwing.

Vanessa for the first time in months showed signs of life. She was excited and laughing and got dressed up to go. When her mom went to drop her off at the party location, it turns out that the whole thing was a joke, and it was the final straw for Vanessa. She was inconsolable and ended up taking an overdose of sleeping pills to escape from her pain. Even then, the bullying didn't stop. It is astonishing the great lengths that adolescents will go to be accepted and things they will do not to be cast out from the social hierarchy.

This story is just one of thousands of children who are subjective to this kind of abuse in school. Being a teenager is hard enough without having to deal with problems like this. It wasn't too long ago when two teenaged boys brought guns into school and killed and injured so many young adults. Their peers said they were harassed by the popular kids who made their lives miserable. I don't know what it would take to make these youths see the damages they are inflicting on others. It's Just a Grade 8 Girl Thing:

Aggression in Teenage Girls by Robin M.

Bright is a journal article written by a mother of a girl who just entered into the eighth grade who became the victim of bullying. The article's central theme is the same as the one in the movie *Odd Girl Out*; showing the damaging effects bullying can have on young girls. Robin relays the story of her daughter's experience with two girls in her class who constantly harassed her at school and made her life miserable. Before she entered into middle school, Robin and her husband were confident that they're smart, confident and athletic daughter would have no problem coping with the mean girls and bullies she would inevitably encounter.

A few weeks into the school year, their daughter started coming home in foul moods and began secluding herself from her family. After a while, she confided to her parents of the abuse she was suffering at school. Her former friends were continually ganging up on her, turning other people against her or bombarding her with vicious name calling and demeaning words. The bullying ensued for months. The girl tried to get her principal and teachers to see what she was going through, but they waved it off as a normal preadolescent behavior and sought no punishment or reconciliation from those who were doing the bullying.

It finally came down to the parents moving to another town for their child just to get away from it all. I think that people don't realize just how bad these situations can get. It shouldn't have to turn into suicide attempts or changing schools for adults to see exactly how these victims are feeling. " In her own words, Caroline described what she had been experiencing on a daily basis—notes with ' whore' written on them, lewd songs sung with her

name inserted, missing belongings, alienation during group projects and exclusion from class sports teams.

In her own words, Caroline described what she had been experiencing on a daily basis—notes with ‘whore’ written on them, lewd songs sung with her name inserted, missing belongings, alienation during group projects and exclusion from class sports teams. ” (Robin, 4) Her principal wrote a letter back saying that he didn’t see the girl’s behavior as anything serious and that if she just talked to the girls, then maybe it would stop. Nobody would see what was being done, even after she spoke out. We can learn from *Odd Girl Out* that relational aggression among pre-adolescent girls is a serious problem among the youth today.

Research shows us that girls who are victims of this type of abuse are depressed, secluded, and withdrawn. Every girl feels like this at one point in their lives; completely victimized by your peers. It makes girls feel bad about their appearance and who they are in general, which can lead to such problems as eating disorders and psychological problems. From the articles and the movie, we can shed light onto the fact that bullying is a real issue among girls and should be addressed before there are more violent behaviors.