

# An analysis of aggression

Psychology



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## 11 November An Overview of the Hostile Aggression

Hostile aggression or hostile-aggressive behaviour generally involves individuals who suffer from emotional or behavioural disorders, or those who have poor individual achievement. In most cases, it stems from anger and goes after causing pain. According to Berk (2007), hostile aggression is an aggression category that is “meant to hurt another person”. There are three types of hostile aggression according to Berk (2007): verbal aggression, physical aggression, and relational aggression. Verbal aggression can be described as imposing threats of name-calling, mocking, or even “threats of physical aggression” (Berk, 2007). Physical aggression aims for inflicting harm or injury towards another person through violent physical acts like “pushing, hitting, kicking, or punching others or destroying another’s property” (Berk, 2007). Relational aggression is rather indirect in approach. It is achieved by causing damage to relationships in a group instead of using more physical harms. Oftentimes, this is carried out through “...social exclusion, malicious gossip, or friendship manipulation” (Berk, 2007). As oppose to instrumental aggression, hostile aggression is always encouraged by anger and objective. Individuals who go through hostile aggression succeed on imposing physical and emotional injury on their victims. While all three varieties are rampant in schools and in other social settings, statistics shows evidence of dissimilarities when it comes to the number of people involved in each type of hostile aggression. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2007) finds out that 14% of students between grade levels 9 and 12 are involved in a physical conflict. Although physical aggression is oftentimes expected to constitute males more than females, the same study shows that 8.8% of female students are likewise involved in

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a physical fight within the last 12 months. Furthermore, “ 5% of teachers in central city schools and 3% in suburban and rural schools were physically attacked by students” (Larson, 2010).

According to Tremblay (2000), among children, the frequency with which physical aggression takes place maxes out at ages between 2 and 3 years old; nevertheless, this result slowly drops on the whole. In terms of gender, “ women tend to get into conflicts with other women more frequently than with men” (“ Aggression”, n. d.).

There are manifold factors that cause hostile aggression and most of these factors are contingent to the person’s individual perception towards others, the individual’s behavior, and the setting within which potential contributing factors are highly triggered. Perhaps, the most provoking of all factors is an upset to pride or self-confidence especially if the setback occurred in public. Hostile aggressive responses are highest in open spaces where there is an inevitability of “ watchers’” presence.

Positive reinforcement is an important intervention that helps to subdue or effectively divert hostile-aggressive behavior. Since most contributing factors are inspired by a jolt to the self-confidence or poor individual achievement, this can be a very effective approach to redirect such chaotic behaviors. In a school setting, it is beneficial to employ role-playing in the classroom as it aids students who experience hostile aggression to learn new behaviors.

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