

School Bullying: Understanding Impacts of Bullying Behavior Among School Children-A Review

Rajeswari Krishnasamy

PhD Research Scholar, Nursing Department, Rani Meyyammai College of Nursing, Annamalai University, India
Corresponding author: Rajeswari Krishnasamy

Abstract: Bullying in schools is an issue that is gaining recognition as a serious health concern due to its physical and emotional effects. Bullying is a subgroup of aggressive behavior characterized by frequent acts against another individual who cannot easily defend oneself. Being bullied can seriously affect a person's physical, emotional, academic and social well-being. Many sufferers of school bullying lack confidence, feel bad about them, have few friends and spend a lot of time alone. The impacts of bullying are recognized by school children, their families, school personnel, and the community and may result in children and adolescents feeling defenseless, overwhelmed, and degraded by the destructive acts of other peer group(s). Hence it is very essential to comprehend how bullying and victimization distress the welfare of the school children.

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I. Introduction

Bullying behavior is a serious problem among school-age children and adolescents. Schools are recognized as one of the most important settings for promoting social and emotional well-being among children and adolescents. Children and adolescents spend a considerable portion of their day-time in the school, away from the scrutiny of their parents and guardians. Whereas, on the overall, the interface between students provides excellent opportunities for learning, social and mental development, school children may be victims of violence in the form of bullying 'behind the scene'. Bullying is a repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behavior by an individual; or group directed towards a less powerful individual or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear. Bullying behavior has emerged as a major factor persuading the adjustment of children who were involved in intimidation activities and the learning circumstance of children. It is also reported that bullying is linked with educational, psychological, social and health related issues. (1) Children who bully others are more likely to participate in violent and hazardous activities into adulthood including abusing alcohol and drugs, dropping out of school, having criminal convictions, and engaging in abusive relationships. Children who are being victimized often develop emotional problems including social isolation, social phobia, anxiety, and sadness. Overall, the consequence of bullying behavior has a long term effect on their school performance as well as their physical and mental health.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as any undesirable hostile behavior(s) directed by an individual or a group of people with more power, repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person who feel hard time to defending him or herself. [2]. Bullying can be defined as "a destructive, intentional action that is carried out by a single or a group repeatedly and over time against an individual who has difficulty in protecting oneself" [3].

3. Constitutes of Bullying Behavior

Typically, bully behavior is stated by three defining characteristics:

3.1 Power Imbalance: There is an unequal power between the individual who involved in bullying others (bully) and being bullied (victim). For instance, the power imbalance may be actual (older and younger students) or perceived (relating to social status or online anonymity). Individual who bullying others use their power, such as physical strength or popularity to control or harm others.

3.2 Repetition: Bullying activities take place in several times and it is repeated over time. This includes making threats, spreading false rumors, aggressiveness towards someone physically or verbally, and purposely excluding someone from a group. [4].

3.3 Intention: Harming another person intentionally. The individual who involved in bullying (bully) is intended to use destructive behaviors against the targeted individual (victim) on purpose. [5].

4. Types of Bullying

The various types of bullying behavior:

4.1. Verbal bullying: This includes name-calling, threatening somebody, making fun of others, malicious teasing, verbal harassment or verbal assault towards another individual. [6].

4.2. Social bullying: known as relational bullying, is often trouble to identify and can be carried out by the victim's back. It includes telling lies and rumor spreading, showing threatening looks or physical gestures and excluding someone's from the group. [6]

4.3. Physical bullying involves the use or threat to use physical force. Example; hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing someone and damaging or stealing others belongings. [6] This can lead long-lasting traumatic effects on the emotional, physical and social prosperity of children who are involved in bullying. [5].

4.4 Cyberbullying: An Electronic aggression, which involves an electronic medium to hurt or disturb another individual. [7]. This type can be more harmful than the other type of bullying because the attack can instantly reach a wider spectator while allowing the bully to remain unidentified. Example; using an electronic technology in spreading rumors, sending the mean text messages, email, posts, pictures or videos. [8].

5. Roles in bullying

Children play many roles in bullying. The roles are as follows:

- **Bully** - perpetrate the aggression; never victims. (Bullying others)
- **Victim** - being bullied; never bully others. (Bullied by others)
- **Bully/victim** – get victimized and bully others frequently. (Both Bullying others and being bullied)
- **Bystander**- who witnessed bullying activities.

This role is a dynamic and continuum. For example, a child may bully others in elementary school level, be victimized in middle school level, and be a bystander in high school level. Bullying affects everyone, and everyone plays a part. [9,10]

6. Risk factors for Bullying and Victimization

There are many factors contributing to children at risk of being involved in bullying.

6.1 The Bully: Children who bullying others are more likely to have one or more risk factors

- Frequent loss of temper
- Frequent physical fighting
- Extreme impulsiveness
- Easily frustrated
- Harmful acts to animals
- Name calling and abusive language
- Excessive feelings of rejection, isolation, or persecution
- Peer who bully and are aggressive [11]

Other contributing factors which include: family conflict, Family violence, lack of parental attention, lack of warmth and involvement on the part of the parent, child maltreatment, such as physical abuse, Substance abuse by someone in the family, poor social perception regarding school climate and, living in an unsafe neighborhood. [12,13,14].

6.2. The Victims: Those who are at risk of being bullied may have one or more risk factors

- poorly developed social skills
- are poor peer relationships
- are less assertive, withdrawn, insecure or sensitive than bullies,
- are depressed, anxious and fearful
- have lower self-esteem and sadness
- have trouble in making friends and may relate better to adults than peers

- have the high level of loneliness and engage in self-inflicted ideation
 - are perceived by peers as different or quiet
 - being physically weaker than to peers
 - have negative self-perceptions
- Other contributing factors which include: experiencing noticeable rejection, isolation by peers, insecure mother-child attachment,[12]. Family problems and history of trauma,child abuse and, lack of community support.[14,15]

7. The Impact of Bullying:

Bullying has a negative impact on school children. It involves;the bully, victim, bystanders and the schools.

7.1 **Impact on Bullies:** Children who involved in bullying others (bully) they are predisposed to:

- Involve in frequent fights with peers
- Steal and damage others belongings
- Smoke and substance abuse
- Show the evidence of getting poor grades
- Perceive an adverse environment at school
- Truancy
- Engage in violent activities in their adult life [14-16].

7.2 **Impact on Victims:** Children who are being bullied by others might develop the adverse consequences in their life time. This includes:

- Depression and Anxiety [1].
- Lack of self-confidence
- Recurrent health complaints
- Low grades in academic activities
- Unwillingness to take a part in group activities High rate of school absenteeism
- Risk of Substance abuse and
- Attempt self-directed injury or suicidal thoughts.[13,16]

7.3 **Impact on Bystanders: Students who witnessed bullying might**

- Frightened to go to school
- Defenseless to act and embarrassed of not acting
- Develop Anxiety and Depression

7.4 **Impact on Schools: School environment is affected in many ways.**

- The school progresses a situation of distress and lack of respect
- Children find difficulty in learning; feel lack of confidence and reluctant to go to school. Also they perceive that school staff has lacked control over the situation of bullying [6, 14].

8. School Approaches on Bullying prevention and interventions

Bullying prevention at School: Bullying has the impacts of the children's' physical, psychological and social wellbeing. [17].The best approach to address bullying is prevention. The Mechanisms for reducing and preventing the school bullying are; Increasing adult supervision at school, empowering school rules, obligating a whole school anti-bullying policy, and implementing the school bullying policy regularly, supporting cooperation among diverse professionals and parents and providing specific social skill training to the target groups are reduces and address bullying at school. [8,18].

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP): *OBPP* is a widespread interventional strategy for prevention of school bullying. [19] Program targets school children at different grade levels and it involves school staff to execute the task to prevent school bullying. [20,21] Essential mechanisms of the program are employed at three levels:

- **Schoolwide Interventions:**
 - Development of an training protocol for the school Staff
 - Conducting comprehensive surveys on bullying prevalence.(filled out anonymously by the school children)
 - Establishment of an Organizing Committee on Bullying Prevention
 - Development of schoolwide guidelines against bullying behavior
 - Formation of an supervisory method for supervising the school children during their break times in

school promises.

- **Classroom-level Interventions:**

- Discussing the issues related to bullying problems on regular basis.
- Conducting parent meetings.[20]

- **Individual-level Interventions:**

- Conducting a regular individual meeting with target groups.
- Conducting a special meetings with parents of children who involved in bullying activities.[20]

The Key mechanisms of the bullying prevention program, according to Olweus, are better adult management in all sectors of the school, increased concerns for bullying behavior, and a clear announcement that bullying will not be accepted. [17, 22].

II. Conclusion

It is important to highlight bullying as a public health problem to keep children safe. Bullying perpetrators, targets, and both perpetrators-targets are at high intimidation in developing short and long term effects. School Bullying can be effortlessly measured and supervised by school officials and health care professionals and prompt interventions that decrease Victimization are presented. In addition to this, further research is needed to obtain more in-depth at the different level to prevent the bullying behavior among school children.

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