
An Informative Bullying, Its Causes, Effects And Ways To Tackle

What is bullying? Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. In the next paragraphs of this essay we will talk about bullying, its causes and effects on victims.

Victims of bullying are described as more anxious and insecure in comparison to their fellow students. They have a tendency to be uninvolved, shy, and lonely. They are usually not aggressive and have a negative self-image. As Dake, Price, & Telljohann (2003) describe it, "Poor self-concept plays a central role in a vicious cycle that perpetuates and solidifies a child's status as a victim of peer abuse." Consequently, research found that children who are victims of bullying are at risk for a variety of mental health problems, the most common being depression. Victims of bullying are reported to have higher rates of smoking addictions and alcoholism.

Wilhelm (2007), in an interview with Hermann, describes what he thinks may have been the reason he was bullied. "I went through all kinds of bullying – verbal, emotional, physical ... I got picked on because I was 'annoying'. I suppose I was – I had an emotional, verbal personality and had no idea how to fit in, no capacity to be 'cool'."

Emotional distress provoked by bullying, impedes student's ability to concentrate on their academics. Bullied students are likely to earn lower grades and score lower on standardized achievement tests. Fitting with the aforementioned "vicious cycle", children with learning disabilities are more likely to be bullied. They tend to have characteristics that aggravate and intensify their risk of involvement in victimization. Unfortunately, once a student is perceived as a victim it can be very difficult to change that label even if the active bullying decreases.

In contrast, typical bullies are described as popular and often athletic. As mentioned earlier, they have excellent social skills and can persuade others to join them in their "fun". Bullies are psychologically strong and often have the ability to turn nearby peers into fellow bullies.

As a practice, bullies have more aggressive attitudes towards their social surroundings and a positive attitude about violence. Accordingly, there is a positive correlation seen between bullying and misconduct. Compared to others, bullies are significantly more likely to become involved in self-destructive behaviors such as alcohol use, tobacco use, fighting, stealing, vandalism, skipping school, and having trouble with the police.

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Studies have found that most bullies believe fighting will make them popular and that victims deserve what happens to them. Bullying is most likely to occur when there is limited adult supervision and tend to involve several peers as onlookers. Unfortunately, bystanders tend to respond in ways that are out to protect only their social status.

Research has clearly indicated that peer victimization is highly correlated with school maladjustment such as lower school attachment, perceived peer rejection, loneliness and school avoidance. In addition to social realms, studies concur that a relationship exists between bullying behaviors and academic competence. Researchers found that students who were bullied and victimized displayed lower academic competence. Other studies showed that students involved in bullying were significantly less likely to reflect high levels of school adjustment (doing well on schoolwork, following rules, doing homework) or school bonding (desire to do well at school). Also, researchers found significant correlations between victimization and school avoidance and that “victimized children tend to become ... school avoidant after they are victimized by peers”.

To continue the essay, while bullying is known to affect those involved, it is becoming recognized internationally as a significant public health concern because of increased risk for the negative effects to extend into adolescence and adulthood. Recent studies indicate that victims may have serious problems with their social life into adulthood. Dorn (2005) in an interview with Dufresne gives details “There are so many victims who have taken their own lives, who have dropped out of school, who are in prison because of what they went through ... It is also pretty clear that chronic bullies have a much higher likelihood of serving prison time.”

In addition to the physical and emotional scars caused by bullying, a new study found that victims may suffer long lasting academic affects. Shah (2011) describes a study conducted based on the performance of 9,590 students enrolled in 580 schools. The study’s results indicated that the grade point average of students, who were harassed or teased, dropped significantly in high school years.

Prevention of school bullying needs to become a priority issue for schools. A strong, safe support network must be developed within school systems. In order to develop the network, input from school personnel, parents, and children should be solicited. An anti-bullying program should be consistent of school rules being enforced, increased awareness of the problem and should target multiple levels.

A crucial group that needs to be addressed is the bystanders at the scene of any bullying. Bystanders are generally the majority of the people in the room. That makes them a powerful force if they choose to speak up against a bullying attack. Far too often, unfortunately, bystanders are hesitant to defend a victim, for fear of becoming the victim themselves.

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This should be an important focus in any anti-bullying program a school or organization conducts. If there is bullying in the institution, the institution's culture must change. Bystanders, just like potential victims, should be empowered and taught that they can make the difference in the well-being of the people around them.

Once the culture becomes one that does not tolerate bullying, the situation can drastically improve. Aside from isolated incidents of bullies being told off by their peers or authorities, potential bullies would be discouraged from acting on their negative impulses. Bullies tend to be desperate for the approval of others. If a school can make it clear that it's not "cool" to bully, that school runs a much lower risk of having issues with bullying among their students.

Another important angle to tackle is to help the bullies themselves address the issues in their lives causing them to hurt others. Counseling services for bullies should include helping these students improve social skills, manage anger, and learn better problem solving strategies. Interventions with identified aggressive youth must begin with behavior management and students must receive clear instructions that bullying will not be tolerated and will have disciplinary consequences.

Schools should make use of incentives and rewards for appropriate behavior. Interventions would help reduce the negative consequences of peer victimization by supporting stronger peer relationships and promoting stronger peer acceptance at school. The students, faculty, and parent body all need to work together to eliminate bullying from their midst.

Bullying cannot be ignored when trying to improve educational outcomes. Ignoring social-emotional issues such as bullying is a short-sighted view of educational progress. The connection between student peer relationships and their academic performance is indisputable.

In our times, the subject of bullying cannot be discussed without discussing the rampant issue of Cyberbullying. Defined by Oxford Dictionaries as "the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature", cyberbullying can be tremendously harmful in our world today.

There is a myriad of venues in which cyberbullying can occur. It can be a harmful text message, or an insult thrown into the midst of an active group text. Perhaps a barrage of emails, or even a defamatory personal website. The world of social media is fast-changing and wide-reaching, but on any platform where people interact from behind a screen, cyberbullying is a threat.

A critical factor unique to the issue of cyberbullying is anonymity. A common "playground" bully will sometimes be deterred from attacking the victim if they are afraid of getting into trouble with authorities, retaliation from active bystanders, or disapproval from their peers. A cyberbully,

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however, can often fire their hateful words from behind a mask; unknown and untouchable.

Schools can assist in fighting cyberbullying with educational programs, strict on-campus technology rules, and counseling, but preventing cyberbullying is ultimately a responsibility that lies on parents. Anyone with a son or daughter must make sure they are giving him or her the proper guidelines and restrictions to ensure they are not the victim, nor the perpetrator, of cyberbullying.

Within the last two decades, bullying among elementary and middle school aged children has become a growing concern. The majority of bullying research has focused on schools and school-aged children. Much research has focused on the negative impact bullying has on a child. It is believed that students involved in bullying and victimization are more likely to have academic and social adjustment problems. Research has been conducted to determine the effects bullying has on a student. Research suggests a strong correlation between bullying and weak academic achievement as well as poor socialization.

Just as bullying is not limited to the school grounds, it is not limited to people in school. People of all ages in all areas of life can bully or be bullied. There is more bullying in offices than one might expect. Recent studies have indicated that workplace bullying is on the rise.

The “2017 US Workplace Bullying Survey” showed that almost 60% of American workers are affected. It has also been shown that although workplace bullying is not equally split between men (70%) and women (30%), women tend to bully more women than men (more than 65% in both cases).

Workplace bullies are very often the bosses or superiors, but this is not always the case. There are plenty of cases of bullying within co-workers. The common denominator throughout these cases is some sort of fight for power or control. Employees are always competing for status, position, and promotions. Employers are prone to feeling the need to assert dominance so they feel in control.

These struggles can spill into the social interactions between employers, employees, and co-workers, and bullying will often ensue. A study in Australia found this bullying to be quite frequent. Nearly one in every two Australians faced some kind of workplace bullying in their lifetime. These were not simply unique, one-time cases. Of the people who were bullied, 40 percent said they had experienced workplace bullying in multiple workplaces throughout their career.

We saw that bullying had strong effects on school-aged children. People get older, but even a fully grown adult can feel very real effects from being bullied at work. The survey found that

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nearly half (46%) of people say bullying directly hurt their performance in the office, and the same amount believe their mental health was affected as well. More than a quarter (28%) say it has a detrimental effect on them physically, and more than one in five (22%) have reportedly had to take time off work because the bullying was becoming too much to handle. A shocking 36% workers have permanently left their jobs due to bullying.

Not only does this obviously hurt the individuals involved, it also has negative impacts on businesses and the economy. Acas (2018) estimates that bullying at work costs the UK economy £18 billion a year, from employees missing work, quitting their jobs, and reduced quality of work.

Studies have shown that bullying in the workplace causes stress, low self-esteem, weakened cognitive functioning, and threatens overall emotional and physical health. People who are targeted by these harmful actions are at high risk of depression. Researchers have found a direct correlation between the 'learned helplessness' caused by victimization, and subsequent depression. Some people have even experienced post-traumatic stress from bullying, and it is sadly a known cause in too many cases of suicide.

Aside from the damage done to the bullying victim, it also has an impact on the other people occupying a given workplace. A positive work environment is built on respect, encouragement, and healthy competition. An office infested with bullying will produce the opposite of the desired results. Fellow employees will spend their day in fear of becoming the next victim. The helpless feeling bullying causes is certainly not empowering to those in a workplace. The damage it does to office morale goes without saying.

Some fields have shown to be particularly prone to workplace bullying. It is scarcely acknowledged how serious of an issue this is in the health care industry. As is the case in every other area in which bullying exists, bullying among medical professionals can cause significant physical, psychological, and financial harm.

In Greece, 635 doctors and nurses working in neonatal intensive care units were surveyed on this topic. Over half of them said they had seen or experienced bullying in their workplace. Both nurses and doctors alike had these numbers over 50%. According to the survey, nurses considered themselves victims less often than doctors. Another survey analyzed nearly 1,400 American students in their final year of medical school. Of those questioned, an enormous 84% reported to have experienced belittlement during their time in medical school. Nearly 600 people claimed to have gone through outright harassment or abuse,

This survey also inquired as to the source of the bullying behavior. The least common starters of bullying were fellow students. The bullying was found to be primarily provided by their

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supervising professors and residents. It is theorized that this comes from a feeling of unacceptance of the incoming professionals. Those ranking higher the students may feel threatened by those who are learning under them and this can bring aggressive behaviors to the surface.

In another Sekeres study of an American medical school, students were asked to provide examples of the bullying and abuse they had witnessed or endured. The answers very often included being verbally negative stereotypes. Female students were attacked with disrespectful comments about their “small brains” and inability to control emotions.

There were many reports of the abuse being in a subtle or even blunt sexual manner. Being frequently touched inappropriately led to a strong sense of discomfort and insecurity. The sexual harassment was not limited to physical instances. One student reported, “The chief resident asked explicit questions about my sexuality, sexual experiences, and sexual practices. He could not be discouraged and continued doing so throughout the entire rotation.”

These results are sadly ironic when we consider why doctors and nurses are drawn to their field in the first place. Many of these people enroll in medical school to pursue their passion of caring for others. Sadly, the students are too often treated abusively by their colleagues and superiors. It is a cruel irony that doctors and nurses are drawn to medicine to care for others, yet the majority have been bullied by their colleagues and superiors.

Even beyond medical school, bullying in the health care field continues. The most common cases being nurses abused and berated by doctors. Many accounts of physicians screaming profanities at nurses in hospital rooms, and even physically attacking them have gone viral around the internet; exposing a very prevalent issue

Not only does this behavior harm the victims directly as we’ve discussed in the essay previously, but there is far more at stake in a medical scenario, concerning the wellbeing of the patient. Bullying can cause malpractice in a variety of ways. If a nurse feels stressed and afraid while caring for a patient, it is much more likely for them to slip and err, potentially causing more damage. A shaky hand can insert an IV incorrectly. A stressed mind may forget a basic piece of information or medical procedure.

Sometimes the effects of bullying will show on the end of the doctor who is doing the bullying. If a physician doesn’t respect the nurse’s medical expertise, or feels too much pride to listen to a nurse’s suggestion, it can result in the wrong care being administered; harming the patient and making everyone involved liable.

Unfortunately, some healthcare institutions seem to contribute to the culture that belittles nurses.

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In many hospitals in the United States, the administrations add menial labor to the nurse's job description. They are told to sweep floors, manage trash cans, and clean bathrooms in an effort to cut expenses of a janitorial staff. This only feeds into the divide between nurses and doctors and validates the disrespect directed at nursing staff. The roles of physicians and nurses need to be presented as complimentary. Nurses have graduated extensive schooling of their own, and while they do not and should not outrank physicians, they have far too much to offer medically to be merely the doctor's "handmaid". Once respect between health care professionals is at a healthy level, bullying will dissipate, and the health and safety of the patients will be better maintained.

The effects of bullying can be compared to the danger of radioactive waste. It damages anyone exposed to it. It has immediate and long-term ramifications on its victims. Being a target of bullying does not abruptly end when school years are over. The harm of being bullied has been proven to be very real in every way. It can haunt a victim emotionally, academically, and physically. These are facts proven over and over again. The effects last well into adult life, as do the actions. As shown in this essay, there is evidence of bullying of all ages in high-level colleges, on the internet, and even the most prestigious professional fields.

Bullies are troubled individuals, and ideally we as a society can help them work out their causes and make them positive social contributors. There should be no such thing as a victim of bullying. Schools, homes, workplaces, and online platforms need to be safe places where no one can be hopelessly abused. Bystanders must be empowered to discourage bullies from their actions.

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