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SCHOOL BULLING AS A SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON

KRYSTINA AVADNIOVA, SVIATLANA ASTAPCHUK
Polotsk State University, Belarus

One of the main problems of teenage age is the problem of communication with peers. Prevention of cases of school violence is the most important issue of an education system as cruel attitude towards children inevitably leads to negative consequences. Bullying is a process, generally latent for people around, but children who undergo school persecution get a psychological trauma of varying severity that can lead to serious consequences even up to suicide. Bullying can have a wide spectrum of effects on a student including anger, depression, stress and suicide. The person who is bullied is affected, and the bully can also grow up to develop different social disorders or have higher chances of engaging in criminal activity.

Introduction. Bullying is widespread around the world, and its "epidemiology" is quite various. At American schools there are about 2, 1 million abusers and 2, 7 million of their victims. According to a national poll, about 30% of school students of the 8-10th classes faced bullying. According to other data, every fourth teenager is a victim of school persecution, and every fifth considers being an abuser [1].

In Belarus large-scale researches of school bullying have not been conducted, therefore we cannot specify prevalence of this phenomenon in our country.

There is no universal definition of school bullying. As a rule, school bullying is characterized as intimidation and a peculiar physical and psychological terror of a person towards others to have their submission because of the fear, which is purposely caused by persecutors in their victims [1].

Main part. It is widely agreed that bullying is a subcategory of aggressive behavior characterized by the following three minimum criteria [5]: hostile intent (i.e., the harm caused by bullying is deliberate, not accidental), imbalance of power (i.e., bullying includes a real or perceived power inequity between the bully and the victim), and repetition over a period of time (i.e., more than once with the potential to occur multiple times) [6].

School bullying should be divided into two main types:

1. Physical type of school bullying – deliberate pushes, blows, kicks, fighting, hazing, pinching, pranking, punching, teasing, using nearby objects as weapons, etc. The sexual type of bullying is a subtype of physical type (actions of sexual character).

2. Psychological type of school bullying is violence that causes damage to a victim's psyche and emotional well-being, causing a psychological trauma by harsh language or threats, prosecution, intimidation which deliberately cause emotional uncertainty.

It can also include the following forms:

- Verbal bullying (an offensive name of a victim, name callings, distribution of offensive rumors, etc.);
- Offensive gestures or actions (for example, spits on a victim or to victim's direction);
- Intimidation (use of aggressive language of a body and voice intonations to force a victim to do something or not to do anything);
- Isolation (a victim is deliberately isolated, expelled or ignored by a part of pupils or all pupils);
- Extortion of money, food, other things, making a victim steal something);
- Damage and other actions with property (theft, a robbery, hiding of personal belongings of a victim);
- School cyber bullying-humiliation by means of mobile phones, the Internet, other electronic devices (transfer of ambiguous images and photos, name calling, distribution of rumors) [1].

The causes of bullying are various: social stratification, falling of moral principles, loss of national traditions, erosion of family values, weakening of educational functions of schools, strengthening of social evils (alcoholism, drug addiction, and prostitution), individual child characteristics, etc. [2].

According to E. V. Grebenkin, children's aggressive behavior is influenced by a complex of factors:

1. Personal factors (low level of education, inadequate underestimated self-assessment, high impulsiveness, alcohol abuse, drugs, computer games, readiness for risk, limited sense of self-preservation);

2. Behavioral factors (behavior creating hindrances for people around, vandalism, aimless pastime, idling from school and weak progress at school, early sexual contacts, drives to the militia and an early criminal record);

3. Social factors (a cult of violence in society, influence of media, deviant behavior of parents, low social and economic status of a family, dependence on the public assistance, change of tutors, family and sexual abuse, friends with deviant behavior.

4. Conflicts within family (a divorce of parents, new people in the family, a stepfather or a stepmother, birth of another child in the family, overestimated requirements to progress which do not always correspond to the child's abilities and opportunities). Children from dysfunctional families have more chances to become offenders, than children raised in good, safe families. Hyper guardianship or indifference from parents can also provoke aggressive behavior of a child.

5. Personal problems (a phase of puberty and problems of physiological and psychological character connected with it). Discontent with one's appearance, inadequate perception from adults: "I am a grown-up, and they treat me as a kid". Development of critical thinking allows a teenager to contradict actions and opinions of adults, to protest against their morals. There are problems with school progress and gluing of labels (teachers and parents say that a child is incorrigible, brought badly up or dumb). For non-achievers aggressive behavior is one of the means to compensate their poor academic progress [3].

School bullying is much more often widespread at all ages among boys; it is considered by many people as a "normal" aspect of boyish culture. Boys two or three times as often abuse others as girls, and they are the main victims of bullying. Persecution of girls by boys, persecution of boys by girls and girls among their sex have much less occurrence [4].

Complete overcoming of bullying is impossible, violence and threats are an integral part of our world, in some sense it is one of the aspects of a masculinity and socialization of boys. We should think about prevention of its most dangerous consequences. The most effective program of bullying prevention was initiated by the psychologist Dunn Olveus in Bergen 20 years ago, since 2001 in Norway it has been given the priority status of a national program [3].

Studies have shown that the bullying programs set up in schools with the help and engagements of the staff have reduced peer victimization and bullying. Judging by the results of a long-term monitoring, Olveus's program significantly, up to 30–50%, reduced the number of the pupils who were victims and bullies, and the reduction was confirmed by self-assessments of the schoolmates and experts. At the same time, the indicators of antisocial behavior such as vandalism, theft, alcoholism and skipping of classes were also reduced. The social climate of a school class is improving, there is more positive social relationship between school students, and also their attitude to classes and to school life in general is improving as well [3].

The importance of research into bullying is determined by the fact that there is an increase in violence in the classroom. We conducted an empirical research of social and psychological features of school bullying victims. It became clear that the children's status in the group did not influence their susceptibility to school bullying. Both the non-victims and the victims of bullying had no distinctions according to the status in the form. It also became clear that the victims of bullying were underestimated only because of their physical weakness, so they could not defend themselves.

It is well known that violation in a family environment can cause aggressive behavior in children's groups.

In the first investigation phase, we implemented the technique that allowed us to find out opinions and the relations of each pupil concerning all the pupils in their form. We estimated the following qualities: "kind", "causing conflicts", "nice", "ambitious", "can offend others", "strong", "purposeful", "clever". The pupils estimated each other according to these qualities. Having implemented the technique, we counted only the number of points of the following qualities: "causing conflicts", "strong", "can offend others", "ambitious". These qualities can describe the portrait of a bully.

In the second investigation phase, we used the method of complex express diagnostics of parents — MEDOR (by R.V. Ovcharova). It was aimed at studying some features of the family atmosphere. In the family relations we examined if the children experienced any sense of guilt, anxiety, psychological tension, general family anxiety.

Out of the 21 pupils in our research, 29% of the children had a feeling of anxiety, 5% - psychological tension and general family anxiety and 19% had a sense of guilt.

We used Fischer's criterion. The distinctions were significant.

Analyzing these findings, we learned that 71% of the bullies had no sense of guilt in the family, 76% of them did not feel anxiety, 95% had no psychological tension and 81% did not experience general family anxiety. The percentage of the bullies who felt anxiety, psychological tension and general family anxiety was very small.

The efficiency of a group impact on a pupil's identity in many ways is defined by the relations developing among pupils in a form, and, seemingly, a family can influence it a little. This fact proves that bullying is latent for people around, it happens in a classroom.

Conclusion. The majority of bullies happen to be popular, often they are good at sports, they have sufficient social skills, an ability to draw attention to themselves and they can manipulate others. Such children have high self-assessment and great self-confidence, and such qualities are hardly inherent in children who experience psychological tension in a family. They suit a role of a victim rather, than a bully [4].

It is important to conduct research into bullying because full development and realization of individual potential at school are possible only under certain conditions. The central place among them belongs to the quality of interpersonal communication and psychological safety in the educational environment. Thus it is necessary to investigate the sources and reasons of bullying development. Bullying can have a wide spectrum of effects on a pupil including anger, depression, stress and even suicide. The prevention of bullying helps to reduce this negative phenomenon and also to reduce a number of bullies and victims.

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