

Bullying and its Effects on Adolescents

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## **Bullying and its Effects on Adolescents**

### **Introduction**

Adolescents and bullying are interlinked because bullying can cause serious harm to the development and grooming of adolescents. Bullying is one of the serious issues among adolescents and children in the United States of America as well as worldwide (Hellström et al., 2015). Adolescence is a stage of intense physiological, psychological, and relational changes. Those changes can be negatively impacted by bullying with the potential of short and long term consequences. Bullying is a systematic repetition of negative actions or psychological torment (Jennings et al. 2019). As examples, we can cite continual verbal aggression including intimidation, homophobic or racist behaviors, name-calling, etc. Online aggression such as cyberbullying or physical aggression such as pushing, kicking, hitting, etc. While the term bullying can be used in a broad spectrum varying from insignificant to major offenses, it is certain that bullying is a problem that can affect many adolescents in one way or another. Prino et al. (2019) say that externalizing and internalizing symptoms can be directly related to bullying victimization. Researches have shown that victims of bullying are more likely to develop problems such as anxiety, depression, and self-harm (internalizing effects) as well as to conduct disorders, delinquency, and substance abuse (externalizing effects). This essay has the aim to demonstrate that bullying can have a serious and traumatic impact on adolescents in the form of physical and psychological disorders, leading to the death of adolescents in numerous cases.

### **Discussion**

Bullying is directly linked with displaying externalizing symptoms as a result of victimization. These symptoms are substance abuse, conduct disorders, and delinquency. It is

proposed that the insights from social-ecological theory infer human development as a dynamic interrelationship among various environmental and personal factors such as society, neighborhood, home, and school. Bullying can be analyzed within this framework not only as a result of some individual characteristic rather it can be influenced by multiple interactions such as teachers, families, and peers (Prino et al., 2019). The Diathesis stress model highlights that both biological and cognitive vulnerabilities in interaction can interfere with environmental stressors and it can ultimately impact the understanding and development of psychopathology. Then, involvement in bullying as a response or a result of disrupted interactions can contribute to a negative life event making someone a perpetrator, a victim, or both at the same time. Mixed with the right vulnerabilities, i.e. social, cognitive, and biological aspects, impaired social relationship and internalizing and externalizing psychopathology is developed. Usually, adolescents adopt aggressive behaviors as a response to bullying or the stress of victimization. Such a sensation can derive from the feeling of hostility, rage, frustration, and depression in most cases (Prino et al., 2019). According to the Meta analysis performed by Casper and Card (2017) quoted by Lebrun-Harris (2019), it is found that the adolescents who have experienced bullying are at a greater risk of depicting alexithymia. It is defined and characterized as the reduced ability to describe or identify feelings, reduced imaginative capabilities, and the externally oriented way of thinking (Lebrun-Harris et al., 2019). Then, chronic stress is also confirmed as one of the externalized experience depicted because of bullying along with emotional breakdown and depiction of disturbing emotional trauma. In addition, researchers have proved that externalizing symptoms can also lead to long term impairments in the psychological function that can impact school functioning, mental health, physical health as well as peer relations (Lebrun-Harris et al., 2019). There are a number of cases that have been reported so far, inferring

that bullying is one of the serious incidents in the life of children that can impact the physical as well as psychological wellbeing of an individual. There are a number of students in schools who fail to put up with the requirements of the day because they don't have the confidence to make relationships or interact and it is also one of the reasons for externalized experiences. Research insights have proven that when an adolescent is bullied, there are more chances of exhibiting emotion regulation problems (Baek, 2015). It appears in the form of conduct disorders and delinquency. This stance can be retrieved from different research results, where it is found that the adolescent who is bullied in school or other places are at a greater risk of becoming delinquent in the later stages of their lives and it is one of the issues that is promoting criminal activities. The analysis of criminal activities shows that adolescents are at a greater risk of becoming bullies because they are more revengeful and they lack the competencies of team work and cooperation that impacts their cognitive and social wellbeing (Baek, 2015).

Bullying is defined to have a significant link with various internalizing difficulties. Bonanno & Hymel (2013) in his research found that bullying victimization can lead to a negative personality and it can result in serious consequences. In the context of internalized experiences, loneliness and suppressive mood are given special insight. As per the research findings, it is concluded that among 3,112 Australian youth the cyber victims have reported a high level of depression and anxiety along with major social difficulties (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013). Around 2,342 Americans are found to have shown internalized experiences in the form of depression suicide attempts, and suicidal ideation. The survey data of the research shows that there is an increased likelihood of psychological distress such as suicide attempts in the victims of cyber-bullying. It is found that there is substantial victimization in school bullying victims as well and in general, the victims are found to report depression four times when compared to the non-

victims (*Differences by Age and Sex in Adolescent Suicide...* - Google Scholar, n.d.). Evaluating the relationship between engagement in traditional bullying and suicidality, it is conveyed that whenever an adolescent is bullied, it is more like a lifelong scar and the pain of that scar can be in almost all the dealings of a child ranging from participating in classroom activities to engaging in social gatherings. Research insights have proven that a lot of students are found to be a victim of depression after they are victimized with bullying (Sigurdson et al., 2015). The most critical fact is, the evidence of bullying is apparent in almost all the life stages and the life events of adolescents ranging from developing a social circle to making choices in life. Then, when someone faces bullying in his life, there are more chances of becoming a perpetrator in the later stages of life and it is more like a lineage that continues onwards in life. Around 40% of the adolescents are commonly diagnosed with mental illness and among them, 14% are those who have faced bullying at any stage of their life (Herkama et al., 2019). Then, the lifetime analysis of the bullied adolescents shows that there are more chances of becoming used to self-harm. It is because usually adolescents are bullied either because of their appearance or any association that is central to their birth or identity (Herkama et al., 2019). The idea of self-harm is just a response that makes an individual believe that it will reduce harming oneself will reduce the aggression and it might change the way things already are. According to some recent research works, it is concluded that self-harm and suicide is one of the attempts by someone who is bullied, as a response to gain attention and tell others about the pain that the one who is bullied is going through. So, when an individual is bullied, internalizing experiences are central and sometimes these symptoms are treated as a guide to uncover the causes of bullying or to actually find that the individual is being bullied at the workplace or at the school (Boyes et al., 2014).

## **Conclusion**

Bullying is one of the social issues that has always been a threatening and tormenting phase for children and people at any stage of life. When it comes to adolescents, bullying is one of the issues that can lead to lifelong damage and it can appear in the form of externalizing or internalizing experiences. An adolescent might face issues in conduct, he can become delinquent or there are more chances that an individual can become an addict or a victim of substance abuse. These experiences are a clear insight into the severity of bullying and how it is damaging a major section of the population. Another depiction of bullying is internalized experience and it includes depression, suicidal thoughts, or legit statements of self-harm. An insight into these aspects is also a clear and knowledgeable approach to understand the impact of bullying and how it is contributing to the major section of disadvantaged people in the society. The experiences of the adolescents is also an approach to understand the long term impact of bullying and what are the strategies that need to be added and incorporated to address bullying because this social disorder is the root cause of some major social problems. In a nutshell, bullying is not just a social issue but it is one of the evils in society that is impacting the social, moral, ethical and psychological, and physical wellbeing of adolescents.

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