

Chapter 21

Emotional Bullying Towards Children

Mehmet Kanak

Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Turkey

Seda Sakarya

Kırıkkale University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

In the literature, the concept of emotional bullying is mental cruelty, mental injury, emotional or verbal abuse, emotional maltreatment, mental deprivation, emotional assault. Emotional bullying is one of the commonly used concepts related to emotional abuse. Emotional abuse has been defined as a form of behavior in which a person is deliberately and repeatedly subjected to non-physical acts by another person that harms their behavioral, emotional, and mental functioning. Although it is more harmful than other types of abuse, it is difficult to notice. This type of bullying can be seen alone, or it is more common because it accompanies other types of bullying. Using the child, forcing the child to take a side in domestic problems, isolating him from the society for fear of being harmed, leaving him alone, dressing the child in a way that is not suitable for the society and place in which he lives in a way that is ridiculed by his friends and environment are also considered as emotional bullying.

INTRODUCTION

It is noteworthy that the concept of childhood is defined in different ways in different societies and even in different segments within these societies. As a result of the changing perspectives on the development and education of the child, the different approaches discussed, and the increasing interest in issues such as children's rights with an interdisciplinary approach, different perspectives on childhood and child development have emerged, and the concept of child has begun to be discussed in a multi-faceted context (Sağlam & Aral, 2016). For instance, in this regard, the Turkish child protection law addresses the child as a juvenile; and Juvenile Protection Law No. 5395 defines the juvenile as “Any individual that has not yet completed age eighteen, regardless of whether they have reached full legal age earlier” (mevzuat.gov.tr).

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tr). In line with various social, economic, and cultural developments, the concept of the child includes the characteristics of being an individual with their own rights, separate from adults. All segments of society, especially families, have serious responsibilities in the protection and care of children. There is no doubt that having more individuals who are aware of these responsibilities will contribute to the welfare of the society (Çetin, 2020).

Any kind of behavior involving violence against children is defined as child bullying. The World Health Organization reports that the cause of death of 31000 children under the age of fifteen every year is bullying and addresses the fact that bullying of children can occur in every country, at every socioeconomic level and in every cultural class. In general, since the concept of bullying has an interdisciplinary nature and cultural/social values, it is difficult to express its definition with clear lines. For this concept, which is included in law, health and many different disciplines with different content, the definition of legal discipline is built on the intention of the person who performs the action, while the definition of health discipline is built on the effects of the action on the child. When some cultural influences are added to this formula, the perception on behaviors to be considered as bullying can be shaped within the framework of different views (WHO, 2006).

The types of bullying experienced in childhood are generally classified as physical bullying, sexual bullying, emotional bullying and neglect. Actions or inactions that are not in compliance with and are considered damaging in social and professional norms directed to the child by parents or by any other person who provides primary care to children, and that negatively affect the development of the child, are described as child bullying and neglect (Taner & Gökler, 2004).

Emotional bullying occurs in the form of being exposed to behaviors involving psychological pressure by the bully. Although emotional bullying may occur separately, cases accompanied by physical and sexual bullying are often possible. In general, it manifests itself in forms such as an expectation of success above the individual's capacity, aggressive-violent behaviors, judgment, unfulfillment of the need for loving relations, and excluding the individual (denial) by the people around the individual (Görener, 2010, Ersanlı, Yılmaz, & Özcan, 2013; as cited in Hürler, 2018). Emotional bullying encompasses all other forms of ill-treatment and accompanies all acts that can be considered ill-treatment, the resulting effects are often covert and destructive; therefore, it is a more difficult type of bullying to diagnose and detect than other types of bullying due to its characteristics (Sneddon, Iwaniec, & Stewart, 2010). Often there is a superficial impression that children who are emotionally bullied are well cared for; in order to eliminate this factor, growth and development patterns should be carefully evaluated by examining in detail whether there are findings causing delay in emotional development (Romeo, 2000; Schöt & Frank, 1989).

Within the concept of bullying, especially emotional bullying can negatively affect the psychological and mental development of individuals and can cause some destructive undesirable effects on individuals in all developmental periods of life. There is no doubt that children who are exposed to emotional bullying especially at early ages will encounter some situations that may harm their development. The issue of emotional bullying should be discussed in detail and explained with the support of the literature, since emotional bullying has challenges in terms of understanding its findings compared to other types of bullying, and creates undesirable effects that are likely to occur in developmental areas. From this point of view, in this section, the definition and categories of emotional bullying, the behaviors accepted as emotional bullying, the causes and consequences of emotional bullying will be presented in line with the findings of relevant studies.

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