

Chapter 23

The Role of Teachers in Peer Bullying

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ABSTRACT

In addition to the school, family, and community, teachers also play a critical role in the prevention and intervention plans for peer bullying. The role of teachers in peer bullying will be explained. It is planned to create a framework for the arrangements that teachers should make in the prevention and intervention phases of peer bullying. Therefore, the components that teachers can apply to prevent peer bullying, education programs, classroom environments, and what needs to be done at the individual level, will be explained with sub-titles. Some suggestions will be made to help teachers support peer relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Peer bullying, which is accepted as a global health problem, is an important problem that draws attention to its worldwide prevalence by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations (UN). According to the WHO (2012) report, approximately 32% of children in 38 countries/regions are exposed to various forms of bullying. Bullying is an international problem that negatively affects prosperity (<http://uis.unesco.org/en/news/new-sdg-4-data-bullying>). Although studies on bullying concentrate on primary and high school students; It is seen that it starts in the pre-school period (Gültekin Akduman, 2012). In order to eliminate the development of bullying in the following years, it is important to monitor the aggressive behaviors of young children closely and to intervene by examining them at the earliest period.

Peer bullying is defined as the deliberate and negative behaviors of individuals that create verbal, psychological, physical, or social pain and stress on powerless people (Besag, 1989). Olweus (1993), on the other hand, defines peer bullying, as a sub-dimension of aggression, as the repeated use of violence by the strong child on the weaker without any provocative element. Bullying is considered as a

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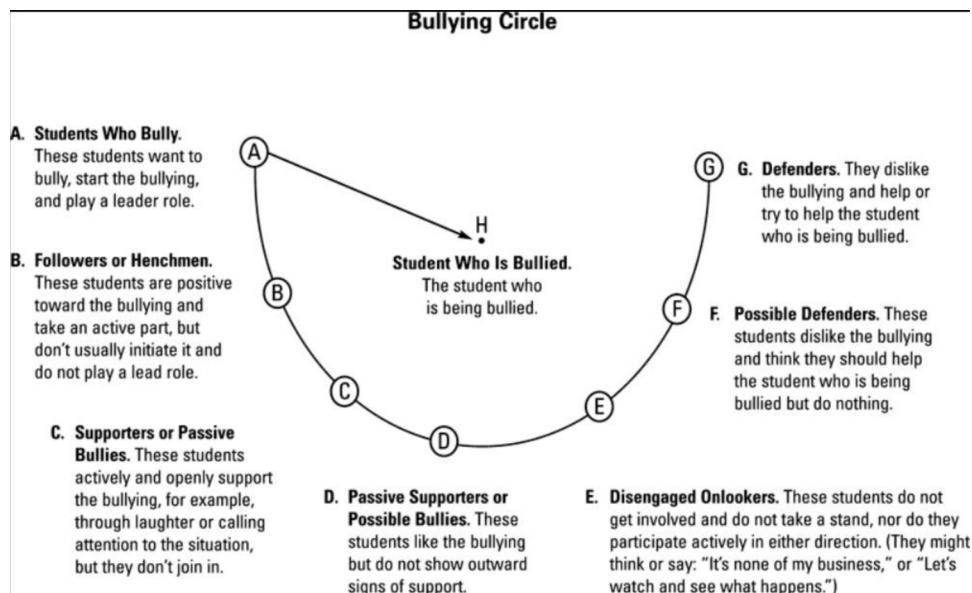
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sub-genre of aggression. Bully children are usually those who are powerful or perceived as powerful by the abuser. Bully children can be active, sociable, popular, full of hostility and aggressive in their peer structure. It has been determined that bully children have aggressive, quarrelsome, destructive, negative self-esteem and low level of social competence. Children who resort to violence have more positive attitudes towards bullying than other children. These children may have different characteristics within the peer group. Some bully children have few friends and are lonely (Gillies-Rezo & Bosacki, 2003; Kartal & Bilgin, 2007).

Children who experience peer bullying in schools are more likely to face negative consequences in the future. Studies have shown that exposure to peer violence may be associated with depression, loneliness, behavioral disorders, low academic performance, school dropout, and substance use in the coming years. On the contrary, it has been revealed that children with higher peer acceptance are more successful in academic and emotional areas in their adult lives. (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Audley- Piotrowski & Patterson, 2015; Ladd & Burgess, 2001).

Olweus and Limber (2010) formed the bullying cycle consisting of 7 types of student groups. Accordingly, the groups in the bullying cycle are bullies (students who bully), followers or henchmen, supporters or passive bullies, passive supporters or possible bullies, disengaged onlookers, possible defenders and defenders.

Figure 1. Bullying Circle (Olweus & Limber, 2010).



- The bullies initiate the bullying and take on the role of the leader.
- Followers or henchmen have a favorable attitude to bullying. But they usually do not initiate the bullying and do not take the leading role.
- Supporters or passive bullies explicitly support bullying. They do this by laughing or drawing attention to the action. But they do not engage in bullying.

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