

# Chapter 24

## An Increasing Problem in Schools: Peer Bullying

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### ABSTRACT

*Peer bullying is when an individual is exposed to negative actions on his/her property, body, emotions, relationships, reputation, digital presence by a stronger peer or peers. In peer bullying, there are different roles such as bully, victim, bully/victim, bystander, and even these roles can change over time. Bullying is examined under five headings: physical, verbal, relational, sexual, and cyberbullying. Studies show that there are some differences in the types and frequency of peer bullying in schools according to age and grade. As a result, peer bullying is frequently experienced in schools. For this reason, many different intervention programs have been developed and implemented in the world.*

### INTRODUCTION

Peer bullying is the continuous exposure of the weaker person to the negative behavior of one or more stronger peers among unequally powerful peers. Bullying is a negative interaction between the bully and the victim in a social ecological context, including teachers and peers. Studies show that children who are bullied at an early age are more prone to problems such as academic failure, withdrawal from school, antisocial problems, violence and substance use.

Bullying behaviors occur in a variety of ways. physical bullying; verbal bullying, relational bullying, sexual bullying In addition to these bullying types, homophobic bullying and racist bullying are also defined in the literature. There are different roles in peer bullying; Apart from the bully and the victim, there can be both the bully and the victim, and bystanders.

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School bullying, a type of aggression that occurs in schools, involves older or physically stronger students directly or indirectly harming and harassing children who are weaker than themselves. Bullying is common in schools. In schools, physical bullying is more common in younger age groups, and psychological/emotional and verbal bullying is more common in older age groups.

Early intervention programs are needed to prevent peer bullying from an early age. Although the types of bullying differ according to age, in general, the aspects of bullying and the victim need to be developed are similar. Contrary to the intervention strategies applied in the whole school in the fight against peer bullying, the potential power of education to target social-cognitive and moral factors that will less stigmatize students and give them individual needs is emphasized. Although the effectiveness of school-wide intervention programs is recognized, it is very important to expand these interventions to include individual applications.

## **What is Peer Bullying?**

Known as the founder of peer bullying literature, Olweus started his studies in Norway in the 60s, when bullying became a problem in Scandinavian countries (Karaman Kepenekçi & Çinkır, 2006). Olweus (1994) defined peer bullying as the continuous exposure of the weaker individual among peers with unequal strength to the negative actions of one or more stronger individuals. According to another definition, the term bullying refers to a wide variety of behaviors that can have a negative impact on a person's property, body, emotions, relationships, reputation and social status (Beane, 2008).

For any behavior to be defined as bullying, it must have three basic components. These components can be listed as follows: the harmful behavior must be intentional and done with the purpose of causing harm, the harmful behavior must be repeated, and there must be a power imbalance between the bully and the victim as an asymmetric power relationship (Harris, 2009; Tarshis, 2010). The said power imbalance can be physical or psychological (Beane, 2008).

## **Types Of Peer Bullying**

Bullying behaviors may occur in various ways, and their classification is done in different ways. As a general classification in the literature, bullying is examined under three headings as physical, verbal and social-relational bullying. In some studies, sexual bullying (Duncan, 1998; Fredland, 2008) and cyberbullying (Beale & Hall, 2007; Shariff, 2008) are included in the types of bullying. Accordingly, types of peer bullying are discussed under 5 categories in this study.

### **Physical Bullying**

It is also called open (overt) bullying in the literature (Crick et al., 1997). It is quite common and is the most easily recognized type of bullying. Physical bullying describes situations in which the bully harms or hurts the target person through physical contact (such as hitting, slapping, kicking or punching, tripping, pushing, pulling, poking, pulling hair, attacking with a knife, etc.) (Gültekin, 2003; Karaman Kepenekçi & Çinkır 2006; Pişkin, 2002). Physical bullying does not necessarily include all undesirable physical behavior. For a behavior to be considered physical bullying, it must have the purpose of hurting, injuring, harming or intimidating the other person (Smith, 2016).

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