2.1 The protagonists of bullying

Bullying is a relational phenomenon in which there are at least two co-players, but there is also the participation of other actors.

Thus, there are several figures:

● The child or young person (CYP) engaged in bullying behaviour: is actually the one who commits acts of bullying.

● The helper: he is a follower of the CYP engaged in bullying behaviour. He often acts in a bullying manner as well.

● The supporter: is the one who by laughing, inciting or simply observing tends to reinforce the bully's behavior

● The target: is the one who suffers the bullying.

● The upstander or defender: is the one who stands up for the victim by trying to console him or her or to make the bullying stop

● The outsider: is a passive bystander who tries to stay out of the situation

https://www.youtube.com/embed/85cLpFcpagg?ab_channel=NoelleKinman

The CYP engaged in bullying behaviour

There are different types of bullies. In general, the definition refers to a person who feels the need to dominate over others, feels a strong need for power and self-assertion, and tries to impose their wishes or dominance on another person or group. The CYP engaged in bullying behaviour tends to seek to dominate others by instilling fear, targeting weaker or defenceless members of the group, and seeking to recruit the complicity of other group members (bystanders). In most cases he/she uses physical force, relational dominance, or social popularity within the group to achieve their

objective: he/she usually has a physical build that allows him/her to do so and is frequently supported by supposed helpers.

CYP who engage in bullying behaviour can do so for many reasons. In fact, there is evidence that CYP can switch roles depending on circumstance or people. There is also evidence that those who engage in bullying behaviour can also have low self-esteem, be vulnerable, or have experienced bullying themselve. Typically, he/she is a person who likes to stand up for him/herself, who presents dominant personality and a decidedly impulsive temperament, which easily manifests itself when he feels under pressure. The intention is to frighten others into perceiving their strength and power and to try to gain control over the victim. In reality, those that engage in bullying behaviour towards others may be a fragile person who uses this behavior to hide their perceived "flaws" as best he/she can.

The target

The individual targeted within a bullying interaction generally presents as someone who differs or is distinct from the perceived norms or expectations of the group. Research has shown that regular targeted individuals in bullying share a number of key features. These are

- Children who have difficulties in social understanding relationship skills (Garner & Stow Hinton, 2010)
- Low social status within the group (Card & Hodges, 2007)
- Perceived ‘difference’ or deviation from peer group norms (Horowitz et al, 2004)
- Present as either passive/submissive or as provocative victims (Olweus, 1993)

The outcomes of being targeted by bullying interactions can mean these young people become more anxious and insecure than others. They may also become socially withdrawn and have low self esteem or views of themselves.

Some indicators of violence are encountered in the victim:

- Anxious Symptoms: physical and psychomotor agitation, nervous tics, night terrors and altered sleep-wake rhythm, altered appetite, widespread fear and avoidance of group settings.
- Somatic Symptoms: stomach pain, gastrointestinal problems, headaches, dermatitis.
- Depressive Symptoms: apathy and disinterest, fatigue, sadness, asthenia, sudden bursts of anger, unwarranted isolation

Bystanders

Bystanders are students who witness bullying. They can be powerful influencers — how they react can either encourage or inhibit those who bully others. There are different types of bystanders:

- followers (assistants) - do not initiate, but take an active role in the bullying behaviour

- supporters (reinforcers) - do not actively attack the target, but give positive feedback to the initiator of the bullying behaviour, providing an audience by laughing and making other encouraging gestures
- defenders - dislike the bullying and try to help the target by intervening, getting teacher support (using safe telling) or providing direct support to the target
- outsiders - stay away, do not take sides with anyone or become actively involved, but allow the bullying to continue by their 'silent approval'.

Bystanders can play a number of different roles:

- helping students who are engaged in bullying behaviour and actively joining in
- encouraging or showing approval to the students who are engaging in bullying behaviour
- doing nothing or being passive
- defending or supporting the target (the student who is being bullied) by intervening, getting help or comforting them.

Bystanders who take no action or behave in ways that give silent approval (watching, nodding, turning a blind eye) encourage the bullying behaviour to continue. Teaching bystanders to respond appropriately (by discouraging, intervening in or reporting bullying) can be an effective way to limit and prevent bullying.

ACTIVITY

- How can you pass from being a bystander to be an upstander? (There is no right answer).

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