

Bully Busters: Child Abuse as a Risk Factor for Bullying

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Objectives

The participant will:

- Recognize risk factors for bullying in abused children and teens
- Analyze steps medical providers can take for intervention and to help children and teens develop anti-bullying skills
- Discuss strategies for better identification and treatment of abused children that are also bullied

Disclosure Statement

Dr. Ann Botash has no financial relationships with any commercial interests.

Case

- A 15 year-old teen was raped by a 19 year-old male acquaintance.
- She had a previous incident of abuse by a family friend.
- She has mental health issues and has been hospitalized for depression and cutting in the past.
- She provides a history that other students at school know about the rape and that she is being bullied.
- Initial disclosure was on Kik.

CDC Definition of Bullying

Any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social or educational harm.

Olweus Definition of Bullying

- 1) aggressive behaviors that are
- 2) repeated
- 3) involve a power imbalance favoring the perpetrator.

Excludes cases where two children of similar physical and psychological strength are fighting.

Bullying as a Public Health Problem

- Epidemiology of bullying (who, what , when, where and how)
- Risks and protective factors (why)
- Implementation of programs and policies (what works)
- Dissemination of prevention materials and information

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Epidemiology

- Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
 - A national survey of high school students; found that approximately 20% of students reported being bullied at school during the past 12 months (Eaton, et al., 2012).
- School Crime Supplement (SCS)
 - In a 2011 SCS; 28% of 12 to 18 year olds reported being bullied at school (Robers, Kemp, & Truman, 2013).
- Health Behaviors in School-age Children (HBSC)
 - 2005-2006; found that 11% of sixth through tenth graders in the U.S. reported being bullied two or more times in the last two months at school (Wang, 2012).

What is it?

Modes

- 1) Direct
- 2) Indirect

Types

- 1) Physical
- 2) Verbal
- 3) Relational
- 4) Damage to property

The Bully-Sexual Violence Pathway

Bullying behavior + homophobic teasing has the potential for sexual harassment.

Applying Science. Advancing Practice (ASAP). The bully-sexual violence pathway in early adolescence. http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/asap_bullyingsv-a.pdf

Change the Dialogue

When working directly with youth

If you hear this

- *That's so gay!*

You can say this

What does that mean?
You think it means "stupid" but it actually refers to a person's sexuality.

You might be surprised to know that what you said may hurt someone's feelings.

How can something have a sexual orientation?

- *You throw like a girl.*

Are you saying I am a girl?

Are you implying that girls can't throw?

People do have different abilities, but that doesn't mean you have to be so mean.

- *You're such a dyke/fag!*

That type of language is not appropriate.

We don't use those words.

For more information about preventing bullying, homophobic teasing, and sexual harassment: Division of Violence Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/sexualviolence/resources.html>

Bullying in Abused Children

- Risks
- Recognition
- Prevention

What We Know about Bullying

- **Serious and lasting negative effects** on the mental health and overall well-being.
- Even youth who have observed but not participated in bullying behavior report significantly more **feelings of helplessness and less sense of connectedness** and support from responsible adults.
- **Negative outcomes of bullying** include depression, anxiety, involvement in interpersonal violence or sexual violence, substance abuse, poor social functioning, and poor school performance, including lower grade point averages, standardized test scores, and poor attendance.
- Youth who report frequently bullying others and youth who report being frequently bullied are at increased risk for **suicide-related behavior**.
- Youth who report both bullying others and being **bullied (bully-victims)** have the **highest risk for suicide related behavior** of any groups that report involvement in bullying.

Associations

- Kids who were bullied were 2.23 times as likely to think about killing themselves than kids that were not bullied.
- Being bullied in person increases the risk of suicidal ideation by a factor of 2.16, while being bullied via text, email or video raises the risk by a factor of 3.12.
- Cyberbullying/Bullying
 - Mental health
 - Breakfast skipping associated with bullying
 - ADHD
 - Suicide
 - Family dinners “ameliorate” effects (Elgar)

Van Geel M, Vedder P, Tanlon J. Relationship between peer victimization, cyberbullying, and suicide in children and adolescents: a meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2014 May;168(5):435-42. <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1940220>

Suicide and Bullying Vulnerability

- Emotional distress
- Exposure to violence
- Family conflict
- Relationship problems
- Lack of connectedness to school/sense of supportive school environment
- Alcohol and drug use
- Physical disabilities/learning differences
- Lack of access to resources/support

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Bullying Background

- Winner/loser
- Team/clique
- Manipulators
- Employer/teacher response grants impunity
- Retaliation
- Joy-stealing
- Related to domestic violence
- Not the same as rudeness or incivility
- Causes severe stress in victims
- Targets are often compassionate, successful, "threats" to the bully
- It is not a disagreement, but an ongoing "targeted" effort

<http://www.workplacebullying.org/individuals/problem/early-signs/>

Workplace Bullying

- Threatening, humiliating or intimidating behavior
- Work interference (sabotage)
- Verbal abuse
- Gossiping (clique behavior)
- Thrives in culture of fear

Illness and Bullying

- Eighteen elementary schools in the Netherland -- 1118 children aged 9 to 11 years.
- A self-administered questionnaire measured victimization from bullying, as well as symptoms -- depression, anxiety, bedwetting, headaches, sleeping problems, abdominal pain, poor appetite, and feelings of tension or tiredness.
- Victims of bullying had significantly higher chances of developing new psychosomatic and psychosocial problems compared with children who were not bullied.
- In contrast, some psychosocial, but not physical, health symptoms preceded bullying victimization.
- Children with depressive symptoms had a significantly higher chance of being newly victimized, as did children with anxiety.

Fekkes M, Pijpers F, Fredriks AM, Vogels T, Verloove-Vanhorick SP. Do bullied children get ill, or do ill children get bullied? A prospective cohort study on the relationship between bullying and health-related symptoms. *Pediatrics*. 2006; 117:1568-1574.

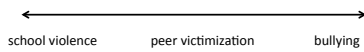
Polyvictimization

- Telephone interviews conducted between January 2008 and May 2008 with a nationally representative sample of 4053 children aged 2-17 years and their caregivers.
- Exposure to multiple forms of victimization was common.
 - Almost 66% of the sample was exposed to more than one type of victimization
 - 30% experienced five or more types
 - 10% experienced 11 or more different forms of victimization in their lifetimes.
- Poly-victimization is more highly related to trauma symptoms than experiencing repeated victimizations of a single type and explains a large part of the associations between individual forms of victimization and symptom levels.

Turner, H., Finkelhor, D., & Ormrod, R. Poly-victimization in a national sample of children and youth. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2010; 38: 323-330.

What We Do Not Know

- How many abused children are also being bullied at schools or communities?
- What risk factors for abuse intersect with risk factors for bullying?
- How is the disclosure of abuse (for example a sexual assault disclosure) related subsequent bullying?
- What can we do to protect abused children from polyvictimization?
- What is the relationship between school violence, peer victimization and bullying?



Bullying and Sexual Abuse

- <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/new-details-revealed-audrie-pott-cyber-bullying-suicide-article-1.1459904>

In the News

- Savannah Dietrich (Louisville, Kentucky, 2011)
- Rahtaeh Parsons (Nova Scotia, Canada 2011)
- Juliet Macur and Nate Schweber (Stebenville, Ohio, 2012)
- Daisy Coleman (Kansas City, Missouri, 2012)
- “Jada” (Houston, Texas, 2014)

Rape Culture: Harmful

- Rape is normalized as an inevitable occurrence in the course of human affairs (Boux, 2015)
- Stereotypes about rape and rape victims
- “Real” rape vs. “simple” rape
- Womens’ impaired judgment is used by the defense

Social Media

Messaging Apps

- Kik
- Beejive
- Telegram
- WhatsApp Messenger
- Viber
- Tox
- Imo
- Signal
- Empathy
- NimBuzz
- IM+
- Yahoo Messenger
- Apple Messenger
- Zulip
- Others

“Standard” Social Media

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Youtube
- Instagram
- Snapchat

“Criminals cannot resist bragging about their handiwork” (Boux, 2015)

Definition of Social Media

“A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.”

Kaplan AM, Haenlein M. Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*. 2010; 53(1): 59-68.

“What goes online, stays online”

Neil Patel, Blogger

Another Way of Putting It...

- “Treading through the World Wide Web (you) leave behind a “footprint” that may have unintended negative consequences for (you) and the profession at large.”
- Think globally, act locally.

<http://www.pewinternet.org>

Cyberbullying: Bullying that Takes Place Using Electronic Technology

Bullying

Face – to – face

Can find a safe space or escape

Limited to onlookers

Bully can be identified

Can see facial and body reaction of target and onlookers

Cyberbullying

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days/year

No safe space – hard to escape

Shared by a wide audience – can go viral in a matter of seconds

Bully can be anonymous

Harder to empathize with target

No geographical limitations

The target can easily become a bully

<http://www.genesiscenternow.com/cyber-bullying.html>

Cyberbullying

- Flaming and trolling
- Happy-slapping
- Identity theft/impersonation
- Photoshopping
- Physical threats
- Rumor spreading

<http://beyondthebully.com/bullying/cyberbullying/>

Other Websites about Cyberbullying

- <https://sites.google.com/a/cypanthers.org/cease-cyber-bullying/real-life-examples-of-cyber-bullying>
- <http://www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org>

Why This Happens

- Cyberbullying can be hidden from parents or others.
- Bullying is “normalized” in some settings and even more so in the electronic world.
- Children/teens may have other risk factors that create a victim cycle.
- Interventions that may be effective in face-to-face bullying may not be online.
- Risks of suicide and ongoing mental health are not appreciated in electronic media.
- Other?

Suggested Guidelines

- Ask all suspected victims of child abuse about potential bullying, face-to-face and online.
- Recommend parents stay involved and monitor electronic devices.
- Provide resources.
- Contact school officials.
- Include bullying and the known effects of bullying in “impact” statements.
- Other?

Summary

- Child abuse, including sexual abuse, is a risk factor for bullying.
- Medical providers may provide a key role in identifying this form of victimization.
- Strategies for better identification and treatment of abused children that are also bullied need research and development.
