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Bullying in schools : understanding and interventions

Abstract

Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the right of the students to learn in a safe environment without fear (Banks, 1997). Bullying can also have negative lifelong consequences, both for students who bully and for their victims. Although much of the formal research on bullying has taken place in the Scandinavian countries, Great Britain, and Japan, the problems associated with bullying have been noted and discussed wherever formal schooling environments exist (Banks, 1997). Olweus (1993) reported that one child out of every seven is either a bully or a victim of bullying. Mulrine (1999, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001) noted that 43% of the children surveyed in a nationwide study indicated they were afraid to go to the bathroom during school because they feared being harassed. The National School Safety Center considered bullying to be the most enduring and underrated problem in U. S. schools (Mulrine, 1999, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001).

BULLYING IN SCHOOLS: UNDERSTANDING AND INTERVENTIONS

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Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the right of the students to learn in a safe environment without fear (Banks, 1997). Bullying can also have negative lifelong consequences, both for students who bully and for their victims. Although much of the formal research on bullying has taken place in the Scandinavian countries, Great Britain, and Japan, the problems associated with bullying have been noted and discussed wherever formal schooling environments exist (Banks, 1997). Olweus (1993) reported that one child out of every seven is either a bully or a victim of bullying. Mulrine (1999, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001) noted that 43% of the children surveyed in a nationwide study indicated they were afraid to go to the bathroom during school because they feared being harassed. The National School Safety Center considered bullying to be the most enduring and underrated problem in U. S. schools (Mulrine, 1999, as cited in Beale & Scott, 2001).

Spivak and Prothrow-Stith (2001) stated that the shooting of students in schools across the nation over the past several years demonstrated that the spread of youth violence has increased in terms of age, geography, and sex to include all populations. Shootings in Pennsylvania involving a teenaged female as both victim and assailant, a shooting in California involving a teenaged male assailant wounding or killing a dozen teenagers, and the teenagers at Colorado's Columbine High School who shot their classmates are all victims of bullying.

Researchers have reported that the majority of American schools are plagued with youth crime, including aggressive behavior. Violations range from breaking school rules to the use of weapons in school (Shanker, 1995; Goldstein & Conoley, 1997). Classroom

teachers have expressed that they have been observing more school violence today than yesterday, but violence in a different form – bullying (Holmes & Bradenburg-Ayers, 1998).

Bullying appears to be a pervasive and growing problem throughout the schools. Hawkins (1996) found school bullying to be on the rise and increasing throughout school systems, including high school, middle school, elementary and preschool. According to Hazler (1996), this type of behavior (bullying) has caused more fear, suffering, school dropouts, suicides and murder among youth than any other behavior in school. Meanwhile, Lane (1989) noted that school bullying was rarely on the school agenda and had received little attention from the national or the local authorities, including the teacher's union.

Bullying in schools needs greater attention than it has received in the past. When bullying is practiced in a forceful manner, it could develop into a critical issue at any grade level. Such behaviors usually appear before a student becomes involved in a gang, thus showing that bullying could be the initial stage to involvement in antisocial behavior and other delinquent acts. Wilson and Petersilia (1995) saw such behavior leading to more serious youth violence.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the various issues related to the phenomena of bullying behaviors among school children, along with the characteristics and common features of both the bully and the victim. Various measures or interventions for the reduction of bullying in schools will also be addressed. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part includes the definition of the term 'bullying' and characteristics of the bully and the victim, along with types of bullies, gender differences and factors

affecting bully and victims. In the second part, the researcher will talk about some specific interventions, and in the third part, the researcher will discuss the role of the counselor in curtailing the acts of bullying in school so that the school environment is a safe place where children can learn without fear.

Definition of Bullying

Although there are many definitions of bullying, Olweus' (1993) definition is the one used most often. Olweus (1993) defined bullying in the following manner: "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students.... It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort on another" (p.9). Olweus noted in his definition that bullying is characterized by three criteria: (a) It is aggressive behavior or intentional "harmdoing" (b) that is carried out repeatedly and over time (c) in an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power (p.9-10).

Bullying behavior involves a range of behaviors including name calling, intimidation, extortion or fighting (Mooney, Creaser, & Bletchford, 1991), writing hurtful statements, intentional exclusion, stealing and defacing personal property (Beale & Scott, 2001) and an unprovoked and deliberate intention to hurt with repeated negative assaults (Slee, 1993).

Stone (2000) stated that many bullies do not portray all of the behavior mentioned in the various definitions. Some bullies may daily tease, constantly humiliate, or repeatedly attack their victims, whereas other bullies may use a combination of all the above behaviors, with or without violence. Whatever methods or degree of intensity

bullies may practice, any type or style of bullying should be considered inappropriate behavior both in and out of school.

Types of Bullies

According to Newman, Horne, and Bartolomucci (2000), there are four types of bullies typically present in most schools: physical bullies, verbal bullies, relational bullies, and reactive bullies.

Physical Bullies

Physical bullies are action oriented. This type of bullying includes hitting or kicking the victim or taking or damaging the victim's property. It is easy to identify and is not very complicated. As they grow older, their attacks usually become more aggressive. Their aggressive characteristics continue to manifest themselves as bullies become adults.

Verbal Bullies

Verbal bullies use words to hurt or humiliate another person. Verbal bullying includes name-calling, insulting, making comments about race, and constant teasing. This type of bullying is easiest to cause pain on other children. It is quick and to the point. It can occur in the shortest amount of time available, and its effects can be more harmful in some ways than physical bullying because there are no visible scars.

Relational Bullies

Relational bullies try to convince their peers to exclude or reject a certain person or people and cut the victims off from their social connections. This type of bullying is linked to verbal bullying and usually occurs when children spread nasty rumors about others or exclude an ex-friend from the peer group. The most dreadful effect with this

type of bullying is the rejection by the peer group at a time when children most need their social connections.

Reactive Bullies

Reactive bullies are on both sides of being a bully and victim. This type is often most difficult to pin point because at first look they appear to be targets for other bullies. However, reactive bullies often taunt others and bully people themselves. Most of the incidents are physical in nature. These victims are impulsive and react quickly to intentional and unintentional physical encounters.

Common Features of Bullies

According to Hoover and Hazler (1991), one distinct common feature of bullies is the constant use of aggressive behaviors towards others. This type of behavior could be verbal, which may include teasing, name-calling, cursing and racial name-calling. The behavior could also be physical, such as fighting, taking another's property, and/or physically harassing another, usually with violence.

Another common feature of bullies is the strong need to rule over others (Olweus, 1993). Bullies appear to have little feelings for their victims and will often do whatever it takes to suppress the victim to get their dominance. Still another feature among bullies is their strong need to control others and situations (Slee, 1993). These are children who always have to be first in line and in the games they play. They usually tell everyone else what part they will play and they usually make up the rules to see that they will win. Bullies will demand control through constant verbal and physical abuse, which often includes intimidation, harassment and hitting. Webster (1991, as cited in Stone, 2000) noted that bullies who used abusive means of controlling others were venting their own

feelings of insufficiency, insecurities, and/or poor self-esteem. However, other research has not supported this later point of view, but rather has shown results that pointed in the opposite direction (Olweus, 1993).

Lastly, a common feature among bullies seems to be their ability to stalk and track their victim before becoming involved in bullying behavior. They carefully follow the student who is physically weak, has low self-esteem, is isolated from others, or attends special classes (Hanish & Guerra, 2000). They also seek out the student who is either overweight, has red hair, or wears glasses (Olweus, 1993).

Gender Differences in Bullying Behavior

Male bullies carry out their abuse in different ways than female bullies. Females tend to show aggression socially that is by exclusion and spreading rumors rather than physically (the males' chosen aggressive outlet). The only form of bullying reported more frequently by female victims than by male victims is behavior that involves social forms of intimidation (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Research has shown that male bullies are three to four times more likely to inflict physical assaults than girls (Carney & Merrell, 2001) and girls typically use more unnoticeable and indirect ways of harassment such as slander, spreading of rumors, intentional exclusion from the group, and manipulation of friendship relations, for example depriving a girl of her best friend (Nansel, Overpeck, Pillai, Ruan, Simon-Mortons & Scheidt, 2001).

Common Features Of Victims

Research has indicated that there are two known categories of victims – “passive” and “provocative” (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager & Shor-Camilli, 2000, p.13-14). According to Garrity et al., (2000), passive victims will not fight back, verbally or

physically. The passive victims give in to the demands of the bully and are often considered anxious, insecure, and lacking in social skills needed for getting along with other children. In addition, victims of bullying are generally rated low in popularity and peer acceptance because they have poor social skills (Greene, 2000; Nansel, et al., 2001). Hoover and Hazler (1991) noted these features among some students in special education classes who are also victims of bullies. They concluded that these victims lacked social skills due to their isolation in special education classes.

Stone (2000) stated that passive victims usually have their own way of coping with bullies. Some victims may cry easily when confronted by bullies, whereas other victims may isolate themselves or hide so as not to be confronted by bullies. Others may give into the bullies because of their inadequacies, physical weakness, or past abuse. These are the features that make the passive victims easy prey.

The other category of victims is often referred to as provocative victims because of their behavior (Garrity, et al., 2000). Their behavior may consist of deliberately causing trouble and inciting anger and causing agitation among other students, including bullies in the school. Unlike the passive victim, provocative victims will not isolate themselves, nor run in fear of the bullies. Instead, provocative victims will verbally and physically fight back when confronted, but they are no matches for the bully and will lose the fight as well as the power struggle.

Factors Affecting Bullies

There are numerous influential factors in determining whether or not a child becomes a bully. However, the focus in this paper is on two of them, namely the family

factor and cultural factor. The researcher acknowledges the importance of the other factors, but this is not discussed in this paper.

Family Factors

Several researchers, including Oliver, et al., (1994), Smith et al., (1999), Hazler and Carney (2000, as cited in Juvonen & Graham, 2001), identified characteristics of the family and child rearing conditions linked with bullying. Some attribute the bully's aggression to a compensatory behavior resulting from feeling inferior and inadequate (Hanish & Guerra, 2000). However, this does not generally seem to be the case. Instead, it has been reported that "the bully at school is often the victims at home, and this child has caretakers who use physical means of discipline, provide little supervision, are hostile, rejecting and not consistent in their parenting, lack effective problem-solving skills, and teach their children to strike back when provoked" (Newman, Horne, & Webster, 1999, p.322). Aggressive children tend to have family members who use ineffective discipline practices that include coercion, inconsistency, and harsh punishment (Hanish & Guerra, 2000). Junger-Tas (1999) also stated that bullies come from a troubled family situation and have parents who use erratic and harsh discipline methods.

Olweus (1993) identified additional characteristics found in the families of bullies. First, the parents are likely to display a lack of warmth or caring toward their children as well as a negative attitude toward parenting in general. Second, they often set inadequate limits for their children. Third, the family has a tendency to implement corporal punishment, physical responses such as hitting, and violent emotional outbursts. Olweus also identified a fourth characteristic – the temperament of the child. Children

with poor impulse control and who anger easily are more likely to develop bullying behavior than children who have more stable emotional reactions.

Newman et al., (1999) stated that the development of bullying behavior may also be influenced by a number of environmental and systemic factors. These include “parental pathology, antisocial behavior in the family, and inadequate family resources. In addition, marital conflict, single-parent households, and low - income may contribute to the development of bullying behavior”(p.323).

Minuchin (1988, as cited in Newman et al., 1999) stated that to keep a balance within the family structure in the home, children may learn to adopt the roles of “bully” and “victim” (p. 323). Bullies are likely endure hostility in their homes and fail to learn skills related to negotiating, making good decisions without physical force, and learning to empathize (Hoover & Hazler, 1991).

In contrast, victims’ families represent the opposite extreme from the aggressive families. These families tend to be over-involved and there are no clear boundaries between family members. This over involvement prevents children from discovering their own strengths, building confidence in their abilities, and becoming independent (Minuchin, 1988, as cited in Newman & et al., 1999).

Cultural Factors

Bullying is an international phenomena that occurs in most societies (Smith, et al.,1999). It has been recognized as a problem and studied in countries such as Scandinavia, the Netherlands, England, the United States, Canada, Australia, and Japan. Although bullying appears to exist across cultures, specific forms of bullying may differ

from society to society. The characteristics of physical strength and aggression, however, apply universally to bullying behavior (Hoover, Oliver & Hazler, 1992).

The cultural context influences the identification of certain behaviors as bullying. In America, societal norms are highly influential in bullying. To some extent, Americans express admiration for the bully who demonstrates strength, individualism, aggression, and risk taking. Common themes in American schools often reinforce the toleration of bullying: "Don't tattle. Don't turn anyone in. Stand up for yourself. Mind your own business" (Horne, Glaser, & Sayger, 1994, p.7). Many cultural messages focus on developing a role of aggression, among them "Don't tread on me," "When the going gets tough, the tough gets going," "I don't get mad, I get even." (Newman et al., 1999, p.324).

Long Term Effects of Bullying and Victimization

Rigby and Cox (1996, as cited in Sullivan, 2000) found that adolescents identified as bullies were likely to be involved in other forms of antisocial behavior such as shoplifting, truancy, damaging property, and getting involved into trouble with the police. Several researchers have found a strong relationship between bullying and criminal offending (Sullivan, 2000). In a follow up to Olweus's 1980s study in Norway, Olweus (1993) found that around 60% of boys considered as bullies in his Grade 6 to 9 cohorts had at least one criminal conviction by the time they were twenty-four and as many as 35 to 40% of former bullies had three or more convictions by this age, as compared with those who are not bullies. Olweus (1993) also found that while their criminal informants may have been bullies, they were just as likely to have been victims of bullying. Kristi and Eila (2000) found that children who are bully and victims at early ages not only have most concurrent psychiatric symptoms when compared to other

children but also have more psychiatric symptoms later in life. Their results support those of Olweus (1993).

Research indicated that those who have been bullied severely tend to suffer long term consequences (Sullivan, 2000). The isolation and exclusion that often accompany bullying not only deny children company, friendship, and social interaction, but also cause them to feel incompetent and unattractive. Those who have been bullied often have difficulty forming good relationships and tend to lead less successful lives. Even though they may be very capable, bullied children may appear to be incompetent and as a result suffer academically (Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

In a study of over 700 English students, Sharp (1995) found that 43% of the respondents had been bullied in the past year. Of this group, 20% said that they would truant to avoid bullying, 29 percent found it hard to concentrate on their schoolwork, 22% that after they had been bullied they felt physically sick, and 20% that they had sleeping difficulties. Rigby (2001) also found that frequently bullied students were more likely than others to suffer poor health.

Emotionally, victims of bullying may feel afraid, alienated, angry, ashamed, depressed, disempowered, hurt, sad, stupid, ugly and useless (Sullivan, 2000). Physically, the effects of bullying are often severe: broken bones, broken teeth, damaged eyes, permanent brain damage, bruises, cuts, gouges, and scratches. The worst effect of bullying is suicide (Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

Interventions

In this part of the paper the researcher will discuss some specific interventions to reduce bullying behavior. Although there is no doubt that the whole school approach to

eliminate or curtail bullying is effective, in this paper, the researcher will focus on some more specific interventions.

Individual Interventions

Listening. An important prerequisite to an effective work with bullies is having an “invitational” approach and owning the problem where the counselor makes it clear to the children that the problem is that he/she is responsible for everyone in the school (Roberts & Morotti, 2000). Newman and et al., (1999) suggested that the counselors might say something like the following:

Butch, we need to talk. I would like for you to talk with me about what’s going on between you and Willy. You see, I’ve got a problem, and that problem is I am responsible for everyone in the school, and the way you have been intimidating Willy cannot continue. We have to find a way to fix this. I would like you to come to talk with me about this now (p. 332).

According to Roberts & Coursol (1996), this approach requires firmness, commitment, and willingness to listen. Because bullies often feel they are being singled out and treated unfairly, you have to be able to communicate that fairness means allowing the bully to talk and share the perspective, but it also means that what happens has to be fair to all involved. Newman et al., (1999) commented that it often means explaining that “I like you, Butch, but this just can’t keep happening. It is important for us to develop a plan so that you can be okay and keep being a leader with your friends but not hurt other people in the process. You have to learn to understand that what you do hurts Willy” (p 332).

In the process of interacting with the bully, counselors should use a firm and controlled voice, have direct eye contact, and provide a way out of dilemma (Roberts & Coursol, 1996). Part of the discussion with bullies communicates that they are worth the time and energy and that the counselor is willing to work with them specifically because they are important and strong, but they are using their strength in the wrong way and the counselor believes that they have the capacity to learn to use it more effectively.

Perspective taking skills. Newman et al., (1999) stated that a number of programs have been developed to help bullies and victims learn more effective methods for managing anger and bullying behavior. The programs such as Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child, Skillstreaming the Adolescent, Aggression Replacement Training and The Prepare Curriculum, as cited in Newman et al., (1999) provide leaders with instruction on how to teach children self-control skills, decision-making skills, and social interaction procedures. A very important component for each program is helping bullies and other children with behavior problems to take the perspective of other children. One finding from the literature on attachment and bonding is that children who have failed to develop an attachment relationship with a parent or other significant adult are often aggressive and fail to develop empathy with other children. They lack the ability to see things from other children's point of view, to experience the world through other's eyes, and to appreciate the fear or pain experienced by others. Therefore, being in the other person's shoes is a very important component of treating bullies (Newman et al., 1999).

Counseling with the aggressive bully. Ross (1996) recommended looking at the aggressive bully's behavior within the context of Lazarus's (1966) theory. Lazarus (1966)

assigned the elements of the stress process to three categories that are constantly changing, with overlapping boundaries and variations in complexity. They are *daily hassles*, *chronic life strains* and *major life events*. According to Lazarus, daily hassles are defined as minor irritating and distressing demands of daily living such events as having to give a book report, having an immunization shot, and getting a stern scolding from teachers. Life strains are the more taxing day in and day out long term irritants, such as being a latchkey child after school. The major life events are one which have severe impact on the child such as the death or serious illness of a family member, family disruption by violence or divorce. Within Lazarus's (1966) theoretical formulation, two major sequential forms of appraisal unite to shape the meaning of events for children. The first is primary appraisal and the second is secondary appraisal. In the former, children assess the significance of the events in respect to their well-being. The children engage in the later appraisal when they perceive the events as threatening, as is often the case even for first-time bullying.

Stressors in the form of danger are everywhere. In fact, the bully views his world with a paranoid eye (Greenbaum, 1989 as cited in Ross, 1996). "Ambiguous actions by others, which most children would consider inconsequential, often are rapidly appraised by the bully as a stressors that are threatening and controllable, a combination that within the bully's frame of reference merits direct action" (Ross, 1996, p.45). In the case of aggressive bullies, the goal of counseling is to assist them in shifting from aggression-based appraisals to assertive ones. Thus, intervention should aim to alter both the speed and the content of their appraisals. Techniques such as punishment combined with rewards for non-aggressive responses are recommended (Ross, 1996).

Counseling with the passive bully. The problem for many passive bullies is that their admiration for aggressive bullies and their need to link with them prejudice their assessment of situations so that they, too, see danger that often did not exist (Ross, 1996). The passive bully needs to learn skills that will facilitate peer acceptance, increased confidence and self-esteem, social and friendship skills, improved academic and athletic performance, and assertiveness. Before attention can be directed toward implementing these changes, the passive bully's desire to associate with the aggressive bully must be minimized. Live and symbolic modeling procedures can be utilized to illustrate that the aggressive bully is not a favorable model (Ross, 1996). In addition, Studer (1996) felt that assertiveness training teaches victims to do something about problems rather than talk about them.

Group Interventions

Group interventions can help reduce bullying and using a small group format has several advantages (Garrity et al., 2000). Groups are more efficient in terms of time, and the format provides an increased possible for learning because several students are encouraged to share their experiences. When forming a group, it is important to keep in mind that a heterogenous group, one comprising both bullies and victims, will function more therapeutically than a group consisting solely of bullies. In a mixed group, the victims and bullies can learn to talk to each other. Furthermore, the mixed group may provide the bully with a chance to experience the victim's abuse firsthand through talk therapy as well as role-playing and other techniques. In contrast, a homogenous group is not recommended because bullies may function to reinforce one another, thus perpetuating the behavior. Also, because bullies are good at blaming others and pointing

out errors made by others, they are likely to confront one another within the group. This can be beneficial at times, but it may also escalate into a negative group process and contribute to the maintenance of the bullying behaviors.

However, it is acceptable to conduct a group for victims of bullies (Garrity et al., 2000). These individuals can share their experiences, thus allowing them to realize that their experiences are by no means unique. It is preferable to keep the group same gender because boys may be embarrassed about describing their failure to cope with bullying episodes and their feelings of despair. The goal of the group is to have the victims become capable in coping with the type of bullying they are experiencing. It is recommended that the group convene for at least 12 sessions, preferably 20, of approximately 1 hour each (Ross, 1996).

The main purpose of the support group for victims is to provide reassurance that the victims are not alone and that others share the same experiences. This is one of Corey's (1997) main therapeutic factors of group therapy - universality. The group experience provides children with the opportunity to disclose personal experiences and feelings while other group members let the child know that they understand how awful the victimization experience is because they too share the same feeling (Ross, 1996).

In addition to the empathic support provided, the group also serves as an educational force assisting the victims to change their behavior to decrease the likelihood of being bullied. Skills and strategies that should be taught include protective strategies such as how not to look like a victim, use of non-victim body language, assertiveness skills, and social skills (Ross, 1996). Leaders should keep in mind that a variety of teaching methods will best serve the needs of group members. Role-play and symbolic

modeling using videos and fictional accounts of bullying, together with discussions, are recommended to facilitate the sessions (Ross, 1996).

Bibliotherapy

A technique that is becoming prevalent in the classroom as well as in group or individual counseling is bibliotherapy. Having access to books that narrate stories of differing forms of bullying, social exclusion, extortion, racism, prejudice, sexual harassment, and so on can assist in encouraging discussion of these topics as well as reports of bullying that children have experienced (Ross, 1996). Bibliotherapy can help children in several ways. Children unable to verbalize their thoughts and feelings may find them expressed in books. From selected stories, children can learn alternative solutions to problems and new ways of behaving (Vernon, 1999).

When using bibliotherapy, counselors will want to discuss stories with the children who read them. Discussion focused around characters' behaviors, feelings, thoughts, relationships, and about causes and effects, will be more effective than just asking the child to relate to the story (Hoover & Hazler, 1996).

Role-Play

Role-play can be used in group or individual counseling to help children acquire an understanding of their behaviors as well as increase their capability to empathize with others. The role-play experience allows children to feel safe because it is a non-threatening situation, one step removed from real life instructions (Ross, 1996). Beale & Scott (2001) also reinforced the idea of role playing/drama as an engaging and powerful mode of modeling positive attitudes and teaching students new ways of behaving. Drama provides students the opportunity to engage in discussion and find alternative solutions to

the problems. Drama helps them to understand the problem from other person's point of view. It also serves as a powerful springboard for stimulating discussion because of its lifelikeness and its power to steer peer interaction and learning with minimum adult intervention. In a typical session, the counselor provides a bully and victim scenario and requests the bully to act as the victim while another student acts as the bully. By stepping into the role of the victim, the bully can experience the victimization first hand. This increased awareness may serve to sensitize the bully to the harmful effects inflicted on the victim. According to Roberts and Coursol (1996), role plays designed to educate individuals in methods to avoid intimidating confrontations are particularly effective and useful.

The No-Blame Approach To Bullying

The last intervention is The “No Blame Approach to Bullying” developed by Maines and Robinson (1992, as cited in Ross, 1996 p. 148). This counseling procedure is built on the assumption that “bullying is an interaction that demonstrates dominance and status at the expense of others; a change to more positive values on the part of the bullies is essential if the bullies are to abandon their antisocial behavior and coexist peacefully with the victim(s)” (Ross, 1996, p. 148). The critical components in carrying out this change in bullies consist of no blame or punishment of the perpetrators and no policing of the environment. Ross (1996) provided an outline of the “No Blame” procedure:

1. Sit down with the victim and listen carefully to his story. Take notes and use prompts as necessary. Be sure to get the facts about the bullying incident so that when you talk to the bullies, you can consider the disparities in the two accounts.

2. Pay particular attention to the victims' accounts of the effects of the bullying on him. Note these in detail, and encourage him to provide details, either in writing or by drawing pictures.
3. Set up a meeting of those involved in the bullying. The optimum numbers are six or eight students. If there are only one or two perpetrators, try to include some students who saw the bullying and did not intervene.
4. Explain to the group that the victim has a problem. Tell his story clearly and in enough detail so that the group understands why he is upset.
5. Do not blame anyone. Merely state firmly that the members of the group are responsible and can do something about the problem. If some of the group were witnesses, suggest that they must have some ideas about what can be done even though they were not directly involved.
6. Arrange a meeting with each member of the group in about a week to find out how things are going. Convey a certainty that action will be taken by the group to help the victim.
7. Throughout this procedure, try to convey that those involved are basically good people and that they will be kind to the victim (Ross, 1996, p.149).

Research revealed 100% success with this method with primary school children and 97% success with secondary school students (Maines & Robinson, 1992 as cited in Ross, 1996).

Role of the Counselor

School counselors have an important role to play in helping children deal with bullying. Roberts and Coursol (1996) stated that school counselor has a proactive role in

one's respective school to prevent bullying from occurring. Counselors can empower students towards greater success in dealing with the aftermath of bullying by being skilled listeners and providing the students with school wide, long term activities to enhance victim's and bullies' self-esteem, academic success, and peer relationship skills (Roberts & Coursol, 1996).

According to Beale & Scott (2001), it is important for the counselor to work with both bully and victim instead of just focusing on the bully to reduce the incidence of bullying behavior at school. The counselor should conduct group-counseling sessions where the counselor's role is to facilitate the flow of the communication among students instead of providing the answers.

Oliver, Oaks and Hoover (1994) recommended that to be a real help to the victims and bullies, the counselor must work with the family of the victims to get a better insight and perspective of the bullying behavior. Therefore, it is pivotal for the counselors to study the family dynamics of the victims and bullies to be more effective.

Clarke and Kesilica (1997) recommended that school counselors conduct in-service training designed to help all school personnel and also conduct the initial and ongoing assessments of bullying. They also stated that school counselors should intervene in any situation - the classroom, hallways, bathrooms, the schoolyard, and the cafeteria where bullying might occur.

Conclusion

The cruel reality of the bully/victim dyad is experienced by thousands of children every day in every school across the world (Smith, et al., 1999). Although it is unlikely that childhood bullying will be eliminated completely, there is a reason to believe that by

taking a proactive role, a counselor can definitely reduce this problem significantly. It is time for everyone to take responsibility as members of society to help create safe learning environments where students are comfortable, feel confident, and are able to express themselves and their individuality.

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