Bullying is a significant problem in today's society because it is very prevalent and has serious psychological effects on its victims (Hert, Donato, & Wright, 2013). Some people argue that bullying is not serious and that the victims of bullying just need to "toughen up" and some people argue that it is serious and leads to serious psychological problems. There is more research supporting that bullying is a serious problem as compare to bullying is not a serious problem; thus, making one viewpoint more valid than others. According to Bradley (2013) bullying is so common in school age children and has very serious effects that it has become a public health concern. Annually around 20% and 56% of young people are involved in bullying either as a victim, perpetrator or both, so in the classroom of 30 students around 6 and 17 students are involved in bullying (Hert et al., 2013). According to one study conducted by World Health Organization, Canada is in 6th place out of 38 countries included in the study for the highest rate of bullying (Bradley, 2013). According to Canadian Institute of Health Research, 1 in 3 adolescent being reported were being bullied (Bradley, 2013).

Abstract

Bullying is a problem in today's society because it is very prevalent and has serious psychological effects on its victims (Hert, Donato, & Wright, 2013). Some people argue that bullying is not serious and that the victims of bullying just need to "toughen up," and some people argue that it is serious and leads to serious psychological problems. There is more research supporting that bullying is a serious problem as compared to bullying is not a serious problem; thus, making one viewpoint more valid than others. According to Bradley (2013), bullying is so common in school-age children and has very serious effects that it has become a public health concern. Annually around 20% and 56% of young people are involved in bullying either as a victim, perpetrator, or both, so in the classroom of 30 students around 6 and 17 students are involved in bullying (Hert et al., 2013). According to one study conducted by World Health Organization, Canada is in 6th place out of 38 countries included in the study for the highest rate of bullying (Bradley, 2013). According to Canadian Institute of Health Research, 1 in 3 adolescent being reported were being bullied (Bradley, 2013).

Psychological Effects of Bullying On Students

Research has shown that people who are victims of bullying are more likely to experience depression and suicidal ideations as compare to those who are not the victims of bullying (Tural, Mesard, & Emran, 2018). Adults often see bullying as something not so serious and not worth worrying about. (Tural et al., 2018). If bullying is a “joke” or a “child play” it would not have any psychological effects; but, according to research provided it does have serious psychological effects. Furthermore, there is no valid research that suggests otherwise. Therefore, bullying must be taken seriously and not as a “joke” or a “child play” because of its detrimental effects. (Tural et al., 2018)

Key Findings

Bullying leads to social anxiety and low self-esteem.

It is proven by research that there is a relationship between social anxiety and bullying. According to one study, a high level of social anxiety is associated with the victimization of bullying (Coyte & Malecki, 2013). Researchers have also been able to link social anxiety to bullying, and they have been able to make some interesting findings. For example, they have found that students who are bullying are more likely to experience higher rates of social anxiety as compared to those who are not bullied (Rigby, 2003).

According to Rigby (2003) there are number of studies done in the past that concluded that being a victim of bullying is related to low self-esteem. If bullying builds confidence and increases one’s self-esteem, then, it builds character. Evidence provided above suggests that bullying does not build character as it leads to low self-esteem and social anxiety. (Rigby, 2003).

According to Coyte, Malecki, & Emmons (2019) bullying leads to social anxiety and low self-esteem as compare to those who are not bullied. According to Coyte, Malecki, & Emmons (2019) studies done in the past and this recent study found that victims of bullying are more likely to experience higher rates of social anxiety as compared to those who are not bullied. If bullying was a building block then it would not make its victim anxious in public; rather, it would make them more confident and increase their self-esteem. However, there is no valid evidence that suggests that bullying builds confidence and increases one’s self-esteem; thus, it builds character.

Evidence provided above suggests that bullying does not build character as it leads to low self-esteem and social anxiety. (Rigby, 2003). If bullying builds character then it would not have any negative impact on one’s self-esteem; but, instead it will increase one’s self-esteem. However, evidence suggests otherwise.

Not only does bullying affect one’s self-esteem; but, it also affects one’s self-esteem. In one study, it was stated that some previous studies have shown a relationship between bullying victimization and social anxiety (Coyte, Malecki, & Emmons, 2013).

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Evidence provided above suggests that bullying does not build character as it leads to low self-esteem and social anxiety. (Rigby, 2003). If bullying builds character then it would not have any negative impact on one’s self-esteem; but, instead it will increase one’s self-esteem. However, evidence suggests otherwise.

Misconception 1:

- There is a common misconception about bullying that bullying builds character (Graham, 2015). “Builds character” in this context means bullying makes an individual more confident and teaches them valuable life skills.

- Bullying does not build character; in fact, according to one study students who are bullied are significantly more likely to suffer from low self-esteem as compare to those who are not bullied (Rigby, 2003).

- According to Rigby (2003) there are number of studies done in the past that concluded that being a victim of bullying is related to low self-esteem.

- Bullying leads to social anxiety and low self-esteem. But, instead it will increase one’s self-esteem. However, evidence suggests otherwise.

Misconception 2:

- Also, bullying is often seen as “child play” or as “a joke” by adults and they fail to realize traumatic effects of bullying (Tural, Mesard, & Emran, 2018).

- Adults often see bullying as something not so serious and not worth worrying about. (Tural et al., 2018).

- This is not a valid point of view as bullying leads to depression, suicidal ideations, lower self-esteem and social anxiety.

- Consequently, it must be taken seriously if it has so many psychological effects.

- According to Tural et al. (2018) there is a higher rate of depression in victims of bullying as compared to those who were not the victims of bullying.

- Furthermore, studies found that suicidal ideations were significantly higher in those who were bullied as compare to those who were not bullied. (Ibid).

- According to Rigby (2003) there are number of studies done in the past that concluded that being a victim of bullying is related to low self-esteem. Similar to social anxiety, low self-esteem and bullying must also have a strong relationship in order for multiple studies to find the same results.

- Research has proven that people who are bullied are more likely to be more socially anxious and have low self-esteem than those who are not bullied.

Bullying Intervention

There are many intervention strategies that are put in place to minimize the incidents of bullying and its impact on students. It would be helpful to determine what the best intervention strategies are so schools and other institutions could focus more on those strategies. According to one study, 205 middle school students were surveyed to rate 25 common bullying intervention strategies (Crothers et al., 2006). According to the study results, students tended to prefer strategies in which teachers were involved as compared to strategies that did not involve teaching staff (Crothers et al., 2006). Students preferred strategies like anti-bullying curriculum (teachers educating students about bullying) and classroom management techniques (teachers must be aware of what is going on in their classroom at all times), not a strategy that encourages students to reach out to their parents or any other trusted adult (Crothers et al., 2006). They believed that involvement of teachers in bullying situations is most helpful (Crothers et al., 2006). Middle school students wish to see teachers involved in bullying but evidence suggest that many teachers do not interfere in bullying incidents occurring in their classrooms (Crothers et al., 2006). It is important for teachers to be involved in bullying incidents as that is what students want to see.

To conclude, students want to see teachers involved and taking action in bullying incidents. According to Carney & Merrell (2001) education and support are two very important components of effective intervention strategy. Students, and parents need to be educated as to what bullying is and what its impact and support must be available to students so they can have someone to talk to if they are being bullied (Carney & Merrell, 2001). Therefore, the best intervention strategy would be the one in which teachers educate their classes on bullying; what it is and its impact. Also, teachers encourage students to reach out to them if they are being victimized or see someone else being victimized and make it clear that they have support available to them if needed. An intervention strategy like this could reduce the numbers of bullying incidents (Carney & Merrell, 2001) and minimize its impact on its victims. Also, a public awareness campaign addressing and correcting misconceptions about bullying and educating people would also be very effective in minimizing the bullying incidents and its impact on its victims. It is because, as discussed earlier there are a lot of misconceptions about bullying and those misconceptions are very damaging to their victims. The best intervention strategy mentioned above is only applicable in an institutional (school) setting and mainly would aware students not parents. But, a public awareness campaign would aware everyone; so, it is equally important.

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