

STOP VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS!

THE SCOPE AND IMPACT OF BULLYING

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. It occurs across all geographic, racial and socioeconomic boundaries.

Bullying occurs when a student is subjected to negative behavior, repeated over a period of time, by another student or group of students.

TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Direct Bullying:** teasing, verbal attacks, shoving, assaults, extortion, destruction of property.
- **Indirect Bullying:** shunning, spreading rumors, malicious practical jokes, and similar verbal and social behavior.
- **Cyber-Bullying:** use of Internet technology, including social websites, text messaging and e-mails.

Verbal bullying is the most common type of bullying experienced by both boys and girls. Boys are more likely to be physically bullied by their peers (*Olweus, 1993; Nansel et al., 2001*); girls are more likely to report being targets of rumorspreading and sexual comments (*Nansel et al., 2001*). Girls are also more likely than boys to bully each other using social exclusion (*Olweus, 2002*).

HOW COMMON IS BULLYING

80% of primary school students have been bullied, and the majority happen in the classroom ¹

CHILDREN WHO BULLY

Children who bully tend to have average or above average self-esteem. Other characteristics may include:

- Impulsive, hot-headed personalities
- Lack of empathy
- Difficulty conforming to rules
- Positive attitudes toward violence (*Olweus, 1993*)

¹ Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Cognitive Science and Human Development Faculty Dean; STAR, 9 & 15 February 2004

EFFECTS OF BULLYING

The Effect on the Victim: Students who are the victims of bullying suffer behavioral consequences, including:

- Loss of an interest in schoolwork.
- Reluctance to attend school; poor attendance.
- Lower grades.
- Limited social contact with peers.
- Mood swings, especially toward depression, irritability, unhappiness, outbursts of anger.
- Report headaches, stomach pains (frequently in the morning before leaving for school), poor appetite, loss of sleep.
- Visible cuts, scratches, bruises.
- Loss of personal property because of theft or extortion.

The Effect on the Bully: Students who bully others also suffer behavioral consequences, including:

- Lower grades.
- Anti-social behaviors, including use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and engaging in vandalism.
- Be truant from school.
- Drop out of school.
- Oppositional behavior and defiance directed at adults, including adult authority figures.
- More likely to be convicted of criminal behavior in a court of law.

The Effect on the Bystander / Witness: Students who witness bullying may also suffer behavioral consequences, including:

- Feelings of anger and helplessness for not knowing what to do.
- Nightmares about being the next target.
- Guilt for not taking action.
- Fear of certain areas in school.