

STOP VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS!

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

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A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF VIOLENCE AND ITS PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT ON CHILDREN

1. The causal link between violence and its negative consequences on the psychosocial wellbeing of children has been well and truly established (*Sebre, Sprugevica, Navotni, & Bonevski, 2004*).
2. Many child victims of violence display various forms of maladaptive behavior later on in life and also are more likely to develop psychological problems.
3. Child victims of violence are more likely to develop issues with anger later in life (*Harper & Arias, 2004*).
4. Child victims of violence have a higher risk of developing psychological disorders (*Frabotta, 2003*) including eating disorders (*Hund & Espelage, 2006*), depression (*Harper & Arias, 2004*) and post-traumatic stress disorder (*Sebre, Sprugevica, Navotni, & Bonevski, 2004*).
5. Research also indicates that victims of violence may develop personality disorders including borderline, masochistic and antisocial tendencies (*Haller & Miles, 2004*).
6. Victims of violence tend to indulge in sexual relations earlier in life and are more at risk of teenage pregnancies (*Hillis, Anda, Dube & Felliti, 2004*).
7. Studies have also shown that child victims of psychological and verbal abuse are more likely to display behavioral problems, disciplinary issues and have problems adapting socially (*Moore & Pepler, 2006*).

THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING

1. Victims of bullying often experience self doubt and a drop in self esteem (*Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, & Kernic, 2005*).
2. Many victims blame themselves for the bullying behavior, believing that it is their inherent weakness or incompetence that contributes to them being picked on by the bullies (*Sullivan, Cleary & Sullivan, 2004*).
3. Self perceived weakness and low-worth can become self fulfilling prophecies that are further reinforced by bullying behavior (*Sullivan, Cleary & Sullivan, 2004*).
4. Some victims of bullying harbor intense anger and bitterness towards bullies and the social cliques that condone and support bullying behavior. This anger, if unresolved, may lead to victims becoming bullies themselves with younger children, and are classified as bully-victims (*Rigby, 1996*).

5. When a victim has suffered for a prolonged period of time, the anger that has built up may manifest itself in violent acts of vengeance against the bullies.
6. Research has indicated that there is link between bullying and thoughts of killing oneself, that is suicide ideation (*Rigby, 1996*).
7. Bullying behavior also can affect a child's learning experience. For meaningful education to occur, children must be given an environment that is perceived to be safe, physically, emotionally and intellectually. When children feel that they are under constant threat of being hurt and humiliated, they cannot fully realise their academic potential.
8. Socially, children who are victims of bullying tend to be isolated from their peers (*Rigby 1996*). This could be due to the fact that their low self esteem may lead to a lack of confidence in making friends and socialising.
9. In many cases, children who are bullied may lack the social skills to relate comfortably with other children (*Rigby, 1996*). Often victims of bullying are socially awkward to begin with, and this unease is made worse when they suffer from bullying.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON BULLIES

1. Evidence suggests that children who bully are more likely than those who don't bully to skip school and drop out of school.
2. They are also more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and get into fights. Students (particularly boys) who bully others have a high risk to engage in other delinquent behaviours, such as vandalism, drug abuse, and truancy (*Olweus, 1993*).
3. Research has further revealed that former school bullies have a fourfold increase in the level of relatively serious, official crime records.