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Case study of a high school or lyceum student who systematically engages in school bullying (bully): Intervention techniques - memorandum of understanding between the educator and the student

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Abstract

In this paper, we attempt to present a student profile, referred to as "P" for anonymity reasons. P is a 19-year-old student attending the first year of high school, as he has already lost several years due to unjustified absences. P is a student of Albanian descent and has been accused of multiple instances of bullying within the school environment. To provide a comprehensive profile of P as a perpetrator of school bullying, it is deemed necessary to present the definition of the relevant phenomenon and what it entails.

Keywords: Bullying; Intervention Program; Empathy; Cyberbullying; Teasing; discrimination; Blackmailing; Intervention.

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been significant discussion, and experts express considerable concern about school bullying or, as it is widely known, bullying. There is a substantial escalation of this phenomenon, and efforts are being made to prevent its widespread occurrence through education aimed at both students and parents. Additionally, various intervention and prevention techniques are employed.

According to an online encyclopedia, school bullying is defined as "a phenomenon of juvenile delinquency... (that) refers to the use of violence among students or peers with the aim of causing fear, pain, or disturbance." The same source lists various forms that bullying can take within the school context, including "verbal bullying (teasing, discrimination, hurtful comments), social bullying (spreading rumors, personal property destruction, isolation from the group), physical bullying (hitting, pushing, kicking), and cyberbullying (blackmailing via the Internet and email, through mobile phone messages)" (Wikipedia, n.d.).

2. Characteristics and Clinical Profile of a Student-Bully

The next step in analyzing this phenomenon is to record the behavioral patterns of the student, as well as the characteristics of their behavior that make them a typical example of a student with bullying behavior towards others, as understood from the study of the relevant literature. Initially, P. is a muscular, large-built boy who stands out from his classmates. As mentioned earlier, there is an age difference of 3-4 years from the rest of his class, as he has missed several years due to unjustified absences. His academic performance is quite poor, and he shows a strong indifference towards the curriculum and the teaching staff. At this point, it should be noted that there have been instances where teachers, unable to control his offensive and inappropriate behavior, have either removed him from the classroom or referred him to the school principal. The principal has imposed at least three suspensions since the beginning of this

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school year, but without any result. On the contrary, in such cases, "dealing with problems in an aggressive or strictly punitive manner within the school and family context usually increases internal tensions and feelings of anger or revenge..., further undermining the bonds with adults and increasing the chances of worsening aggressive expressions" (Weisberg & Greenberg, 1988, as cited in Karkoutas, 2007)

His violent and aggressive behavior is not limited to teachers or the classroom but also extends to his classmates. There have been numerous instances where he has directed sexist, derogatory, and offensive comments towards his female classmates. In other cases, he targets a specific student who is smaller and more timid, verbally abusing and stealing from them. The culmination of these behaviors was a case in which P. used violence to put a smaller student into a trash bin and locked him inside. This incident does not seem to have been reported to any teacher, and even the school principal appears to be unaware of it. However, what was reported and documented was the incident in which P. brought a brass knuckle to school, threatening another student from a different class, leading to one of his suspensions from the school premises.

These incidents are typical examples of problematic behavior, as they manifest as "persistent patterns of provocative, antisocial, and aggressive behavior towards others (peers, parents, teachers, etc.)" (Burke et al., 2002· Frick, 1998· Hinshaw & Anderson, 1996· Mash & Wolfe, 2001, as cited in Kourkoutas, 2007). P.'s social interactions do not paint the picture of a particularly popular individual. Most of the time, if not always, he sits alone at a considerable distance from others, as individuals who exhibit such outbursts of violence also display a "lack of willingness for social approach and positive interaction, limited positive interpersonal skills, and an inability for empathy" (Skaloubakas, n.d.). He does not seem to have friends in the class, and in bullying incidents, he acts alone without the support of other classmates. As described by Kourkoutas (2007), "aggressive or reactive interaction patterns with others, limited positive interpersonal skills" are reproduced in the specific case of this student.

3. Intervention Programme

As evident from the clinical profile of P., he is a student in the role of the aggressor in many school bullying incidents, which require immediate intervention and addressing, as they meet all three criteria to be considered problematic (Stasinós, 2016). According to Stasinós (2016), the three criteria include the characteristics of severity, duration, and non-acceptability based on social norms of behavior. In conjunction with the unsuccessful efforts of educators and the principal to limit the problem, designing an intervention program becomes necessary.

For an intervention program targeting violent outbursts to be successful, it should involve the elimination of any form of violence or marginalization towards the student, either from his family or his school environment. To address social isolation and the marginalization of the student, experts recommend exercises in empathy (Bazelon, 2014), the use of group work, and the cultivation of a climate of cooperation and social relationships among students.

Any attempt to address the problem should be done discreetly without labeling or singling out the specific student involved. It should also be under continuous discreet supervision to prevent any future unpleasant incidents. However, in the event that an incident occurs again, the educator should intervene immediately by separating the two students involved and placing them in different areas, allowing the feelings of anger to subside. Afterwards, once the crisis period has passed, it is advisable for the educator to approach both students, ask questions, and try to understand exactly what happened and what triggered P.'s violent outburst. Subsequently, the educator should discuss with P. the sources of his anger and suggest ways to channel these negative emotions without victimizing other students. For example, the educator may recommend engaging in vigorous physical exercise, or even if P. feels the need to release tension during class, he should have the option to request a brief break from the classroom. This strategy aligns with what Stasinós (2016) defines as "teaching skills for self-control, self-regulation, and self-management."

Certainly, the most effective approach to addressing this specific issue is to establish a close collaboration between the educator and the student-perpetrator. In other words, the educator should make every effort to approach P. as much as possible, engage in discussions with him, and encourage him to share his feelings, thoughts, and any concerns, building a closer relationship based on sincerity and trust. This approach avoids "self-fulfilling prophecies" and strives to create "positive expectations" towards the student (Stasinós, 2016).

Another way to approach a student with behavioral issues is to design a comprehensive program or modify the existing one to meet the educational needs of the student who may lag behind others in terms of language skills due to his different background. Within this comprehensive program, the use of "smart techniques... such as the establishment of a mnemonic agreement" is also suggested (Stasinós, 2016). Through mnemonic agreement, the school rules and

acceptable behavior boundaries should be made clear, emphasizing the school's policy of not tolerating any form of disruptive or offensive behavior (Mathews, 2013).

4. Memorandum of Understanding

The mnemonic encounter takes the form of a contract and explicitly defines which behaviors are acceptable within the school framework, as signed by the educator, but also sets the penalties in case of violation. It is very important for the mnemonic to include the student's perspective, giving them the opportunity to express what elements bother them and what they would like to be different, within reasonable boundaries. As a strategy, the mnemonic encounter is considered quite effective, as it not only defines permissible behaviors but also places the student at the center, allowing them to choose how the situation will unfold, facing their responsibilities. It is crucial because it keeps the lines of communication open (Rigby, 2010). Experts often point out that this contract is useful both between the specialist and the student, as well as between the student and the parent (Smith & Sharp, 1994). Such a contract in the present case of the student could take the following form, as shown below:

5. Model Contract between Educator and Student

The educator would like Student to:

Not display aggressive behavior, both physical and verbal, towards classmates or other educators.

Not express his anger in a way that bothers others or damages objects.

3. Try to participate in group activities or class activities in general.

P. would like the educator to:

1) Not force him to participate in activities that put him in a difficult position due to his limited abilities in the Greek language.

2) When he has a difficult day, allow him to leave the classroom to decompress in the courtyard without being abused.

3) Not pressure him to answer questions in front of the whole class.

Both agree that:

A. the terms of the contract are these and will not change unless both parties agree.

B. the successful adherence to the contract will be rewarded with one-quarter of free outdoor activity, for example, a walk within the schoolyard, or the opportunity to listen to music quietly without disturbing others.

C. failure to meet any of the terms will result in penalties, such as P. having to assist in cleaning the classroom after the end of the school day, and if the teacher violates any of the terms, P. may not take one of the regular exams.

Signatures: Educator..... Student.

6. The role of ICTs

In conclusion, we stress the importance of all digital technologies in the field of education and in anti-bullying training. These technologies are highly effective and productive and facilitate and improve assessment, intervention, and educational procedures through mobile devices that bring educational activities anywhere [10-13], various ICTs applications that are the main supporters of education [14-33], and AI, STEM, Games and ROBOTICS that raise educational procedures to new performance levels [34-41]. Furthermore, the development and integration of ICTs with theories and models of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation, and the development of emotional intelligence [42-70], accelerates and improves educational practices and results more than those, particularly in anti-bullying training and empathy development.

7. Conclusion

The phenomenon of school bullying is a major issue in the school environment and, according to research, has seen significant escalation in recent decades. The specific example of a student chosen for this assignment is a typical case of a student-bully. From observing P.'s behavior, it appears that the problem is of considerable intensity and requires immediate intervention. To achieve the best possible results, it would be advisable to collaborate with the corresponding specialist, such as a school psychologist, to structure an effective intervention program. On the part of

the educator, the use of various techniques, as defined in the relevant literature, is essential. Prominent among them are the mnemonic agreement, teaching exercises for anger and negative emotion self-management, and the cultivation of a sense of empathy.

For the effectiveness of the program, the application of these techniques in the student's home environment is also deemed necessary, with close involvement and communication with the educator. Sensitizing and properly training educators to address such phenomena will significantly limit the problem, offering a positive educational experience for all students, which is a fundamental goal of holistic education.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The Authors proclaim no conflict of interest.

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