

Relational Aggression

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Introductions

Today's Goals

1. Define relational aggression and discuss how this behavior fits within the state definition of bullying
2. Discuss prevalence, risk factors, and negative outcomes associated with relational aggression
3. Identify the locations in which relational aggression most often occurs
4. Review how to address incidents of relational aggression

What is bullying?

- According to Kansas statute 72-8256
 - Intentional, negative actions intended to harm another person (i.e., aggression)
 - Severe, persistent or pervasive
- Experts also suggests that bullying involves an existing power differential between those who bully and those who are victimized



FORMS OF AGGRESSION/BULLYING

Physical Aggression



Tripping

Pushing

Tackling/Hazing

Poking

**Hitting/
Kicking**

**Tugging/tearing
Clothes**

Relational Aggression



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK5R6JrJP8c&list=PLAA6C1FCB240B3AA2>

Ostracism

Social exclusion

Gossip/"trash talking"/rumor spreading

**Nonverbal gestures such as
eye rolling
directed laughter
mimicking**

Cyberbullying

- Circulating Electronic Images or Videos
- Insulting Text Messages
- Harassment Through Online Games
- Harassment Through Social Media
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Instagram



Relational Vs. Cyber Aggression

- Both forms considered to be covert
 - Physical incidents are easier to identify thus these more covert forms of bullying are often overlooked by adults
 - Consequently covert actions are sometimes seen as less serious and less in need of an immediate response
- Both forms often target youths' personal relationships as the primary means to inflict harm; however, cyber aggression often includes threats to youths' safety

Relational Vs. Cyber Aggression

- Most youth who experience cybervictimization also tend to experience traditional forms of victimization, including relational aggression
- Some youth who engage in cyber aggression do not engage in face-to-face aggression
 - It is likely that not having to face their victims (e.g., seeing the fear in their victim's eyes, seeing the consequences of their actions firsthand) may reduce empathy and remorse, which are factors thought to lessen the likelihood of future acts of aggression

Prevalence Rates of Aggression

- Nationally approximately 19% of children engage in aggressive behavior
- Specifically to relational aggression among elementary school youth (teacher reports):

<u>Fall 2012</u>	<u>Fall 2013</u>	<u>Spring 2014</u>
26.2%	32.9%	39%

Both boys and girls engage
in relational aggression

Prevalence Rates of Victimization

- At least 60% of youth are victimized at least once at some point during their education
- Between 10 & 20% of youth are chronically victimized

Relational Victimization

Percent of children who have experienced some form of relational victimization according to student- and teacher-reports:

	<u>Fall 2012</u>	<u>Fall 2013</u>	<u>Spring 2014</u>
Student-Report	58.2%	55%	53%
Teacher-Report	20.1%	27.9%	32.8%

Risk Factors for Engaging in Relational Aggression

- Poor Family Management
- Parental psychological control
- Family conflict
- Low Commitment to school
- Delinquent Peer Affiliations
- Rebelliousness
- Favorable attitudes about aggression
- Sensation seeking
- Impulsivity
- Symptoms of Inattention/Concentration difficulties

Youth At-Risk for Being Victimized

- Children with disabilities
- Ethnic minorities
- English Language Learners
- Children who are “different” from other Children
- Gender or sexual Minorities
- Children with medical difficulties

Consequences of Relational Aggression

For the **AGGRESSOR**

- Borderline personality features
- Conduct/behavior difficulties
- Symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Peer rejection
- Academic difficulties

For the **VICTIM**

- Bodily complaints
- Poor social skills
- Symptoms of depression
- Low self-esteem
- Behavior difficulties
- Poor peer relationships
- Academic difficulties
- Suicidal ideation/
behavior

VICTIMIZATION LOCATIONS AT SCHOOL

	<u>Relational Victimization</u>	<u>Physical Victimization</u>	<u>Cybervictimization</u>
Lunchroom	9%	4.7%	2.8%
Hallway	5.8%	4.7%	2.8%
Bathroom	3.2%	6.2%	2.8%
Classroom	12.3%	9.3%	5.6%
Playground	61.9%	56.6%	11.1%
Bus	21.9%	18.6%	25%

VICTIMIZATION LOCATIONS AFTER SCHOOL

	<u>Relational Victimization</u>	<u>Physical Victimization</u>	<u>Cybervictimization</u>
Program/Club	11.6%	18.6%	11.1%
Sporting Activity	9%	7%	8.3%
Babysitter	3.9%	7.8%	2.8%
Home	25.2%	31%	52.8%
Friend's House	16.1%	17.1%	19.4%
Neighborhood	21.3%	20.9%	16.7%
Party	8.4%	6.2%	8.3%
Another fun activity	5.2%	6.2%	16.7%

How and When to Intervene?

- Factors to consider:
 - What is the entire story
 - For example, is there a reason for exclusion
 - How severe is the incident
 - Particularly from the victim's standpoint
 - Is there a pattern of behavior
 - Do they do this repeatedly to the same classmate and/or do they aggress against several classmates
- There is a need to track student behaviors and have a protocol for how to Investigate reported incidents



Tracking Acts of Aggression and Victimization

Research suggests that in order to effectively intervene with bullying schools should consider adopting consistent procedures to respond to aggressive acts (including non-physical), carefully document bullying incidents, and promote parental involvement

Reporting Form

Date when bullying was reported:

Person who was contacted first about the bullying:

Who reported the bullying?

- Victim (Name)
- Peer (Name)
- Victim's Parent(s) (Name(s))
- Teacher or other school staff member (Name)
- Other (Name & Role)

Describe the bullying incident. Provide concrete examples of the specific bullying behaviors (e.g., hitting, kicking, pushing, verbal taunts, gossip, rumors, cyber harassment through text messaging, social media sites, etc.).

How often has the bullying occurred?

How long has the bullying taken place?

Which students have been accused of being involved?

Based on the information above, is the incident?

- A conflict or fight between two children of equal status
- Hurt feelings because of a misunderstanding between friends or children of equal status
- A single incident of bullying
- Repeated bullying

Investigation: Yes/No

Investigating Bullying Incidents

Recommendations for talking with a victimized child

1. Talk with the victim to get the details of the incident
2. Determine if this is an isolated event or on-going
3. Follow up with the victim multiple times to make sure the bullying has stopped
 - If it has not stopped or gotten worse, further action with the bully or bullies is needed and further supports may be necessary for the victim

Investigating Bullying Incidents

Recommendations for talking with a victimized child

1. What kind of bullying has occurred? Was it physical, verbal, relational, or cyber bullying or a combination of these forms?
2. When and where has the bullying taken place?
3. How long has the bullying been going on?
4. How severe was the bullying? How often does it occur? How harshly has the victim been treated?
5. Has the nature of the bullying changed (i.e., is it getting worse? changing form?)?
6. How much does the victim say he/she has been harmed by the bullying?
7. Who was or were the perpetrators? Were there others present (bystanders)? What did these peers do (encourage the bullying, ignore the bullying, join in the bullying, defend the victim)?
8. What did the victim in response? Did he/she tell anyone else about (teachers, friends, etc.)? If so, what were their reactions? What did they do?

Investigating Bullying Incidents

Recommendations for talking with children accused of bullying

1. Talk with the 'accused' separately to get each person's story
2. Determine whether they view this incident as bullying
3. Discuss the incident with them as a teaching moment – do they understand the consequences of their behavior on the victim?

Investigation Status Report Form Template

Students who have actively taken part in the bullying (name, class)

What consequence(s) has the bully (or bullies) faced?

Has the classroom teacher been informed about the incident?

Have the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the victim been contacted?

Have the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the bully (bullies) been contacted?

Has the victim been followed up with to ensure that the bullying has stopped? It is recommended that the victim be contacted two-weeks following the reported incident.

If so, has the bullying...?

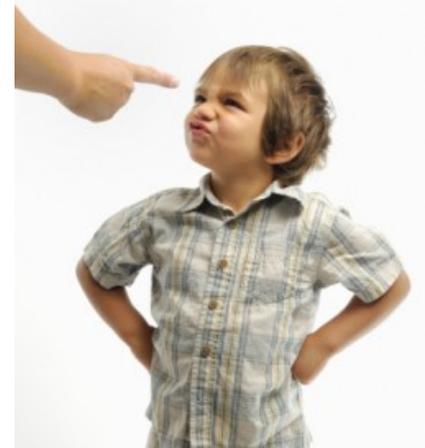
- stopped
- decreased
- remained the same
- increased

If the bullying has not stopped, what further steps will be taken?

Disciplinary Sanctions for Relational Aggression

Most schools have a clear plan of action for physical acts of aggression.

However, the disciplinary sanctions for relational and other forms of aggression are less clear for many schools.



Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions

- Effective disciplinary methods have been found to be one of the most important ingredients in effective anti-bullying programs.
- It is recommended that sanctions :
 - Involve contact with parents / caregivers
 - Increase in severity with each act of aggression
 - Be implemented consistently across students

Potential Disciplinary Actions for Acts of **Aggression**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• removal of privileges (sitting out of activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• staying near teacher during events or recess	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sitting in front of the class or beside the teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• visit to principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• in school suspension
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• out of school suspension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• alternative school placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• expulsion

Scenario #1

During project time you overhear a child say to another, 'If you don't let me have the purple marker I won't invite you to my birthday party.' It is not the first time you have heard him say this type of thing.

1. Is this relational bullying?
2. How serious is this incident?
3. How would you respond?

Scenario #2

Madeline has been receiving hurtful e-mails for the past few weeks from an address she doesn't recognize. At first they just included insults about being fat, so she ignored them. But now they are coming more often and include threats to spread rumors about her engaging in sexual activity with other students from school.

Madeline starts to get worried but doesn't want to tell anyone because she is afraid of getting into trouble. You then overhear her telling her friend about these incidents during lunch.

1. Is this relational bullying?
2. How serious is this incident?
3. How would you respond?

Scenario #3

A group of friends who are the best students in the class and who everyone seems to get along with is sitting at a table during lunch. Another student walks over and asks to sit down. You then see this student run away with tears in her eyes as the group starts to laugh and point.

1. Is this relational bullying?
2. How serious is this incident?
3. How would you respond?

Questions



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