



PREFACE

Dear Readers,
In our 24 years of experience in the academic world, we have seen a dramatic increase in bullying in schools in the last 4-5 years. And bullying is only going to get worse with the advancement of social media. Bullying can create damage to the children being bullied, their families and even to kids who bully. It can also put the school's reputation at stake as we have witnessed last year for a school in Kolkata. Researches reveal that 30% children are involved in bullying, as victims or bullies and often we are not able to differentiate bullying from other behavioural issues. As Teachers, we have the duty to understand bullying to keep children safe and provide a secured environment. This month, our cover story on 'Bullying' is an endeavour to create an awareness and help teachers with strategies to keep bullies in check. Also included in this issue an article on Self Esteem, and its direct impact on learning.

Enjoy Reading!

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Know Bullying, No Bullying

Reducing violence in schools is a major concern of educators and parents. Violence manifests itself in numerous ways, and there is growing evidence that low level or underlying forms of violence have a profound effect on the learning environment of the school. (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002). Bullying is the most prevalent form of low-level violence in schools today, and if left unchecked can lead to more serious forms of violence.

About Bullying:

Bullying is the unprovoked physical or psychological abuse of an individual by one student or a group of students over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse. (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Hoover, Oliver & Thomson, 1993; Olweus, 1991). Bullying can be either direct (for example, verbal and physical aggression) or indirect (for example, threats, insults, name calling, spreading rumors, writing hurtful graffiti, or encouraging others not to play with a particular child). (Olweus, 1978, 1991, 1993; Rivers & Smith, 1994; Roland, 1989). It typically involves subtle methods of coercion such as intimidation.

Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience:

Depression and anxiety, lower self-esteem, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. These issues may persist into adulthood.

Health complaints.

Decreased academic achievement and school participation. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.

A very small number of bullied children might retaliate through extremely violent measures.

Kids who bully others can also engage in violent and other risky behaviors into adulthood and may also experience social and emotional problems. They are more likely to:

Abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults

Get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school

Engage in early sexual activity

Have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults

Be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults

Signs To Look For:

There are warning signs for everyone involved in bullying. Whether a child is being bullied, doing the bullying, or witnessing it, there are signs to look for. Parents and teachers should always look out for the signs in the children.

Signs That a Child Is Being Bullied:

- Unexplainable injuries.
- Lost or destroyed clothing.
- Change in eating habits.
- Declining grades.
- Continuous school absences.
- Self-injury.

Signs That a Child Is Bullying Others:

- Getting into physical or verbal fights.
- Getting sent to the principal's office frequently.
- Having friends who bully others.
- Having extra money and new belongings that cannot be explained.
- Is quick in blaming others.
- Becoming increasingly aggressive in normal day activities.



Know Bullying, No Bullying

Teachers' Guide to Handle Bullying:



Teachers and parents of both the bullied and the bullies can play a crucial role in preventing, identifying, and stopping bullying. Creating safe, stress-free environments at home and at school can help prevent the tension and anxiety that can lead to bullying.

Communication: Teachers should always keep the lines of communication open. Teachers should make the students feel that they are available and ready to listen and help them, whenever required. The teacher should model effective communication techniques. In order to gain the trust of the bully, it is probably best to begin the conversation with: 1) the identification of the bullying behavior and 2) the consequence for this behavior. A straightforward delivery assures the student that you are fair. Inform the bully that other teachers and school staff will be made aware of the incident to prevent such behaviors from occurring in the future.

Awareness: Organize classroom activities and raise awareness about bullying. Hold class meetings where children can discuss about bullying and peer relations. Create a culture and system in the classroom that enables children to report bullying incidents without feeling that they are 'telling' and possibly making the situation worse. Help your class identify bullying in books, TV shows and movies, and discuss the impact of that bullying and how it was/could be resolved. Hold class meetings in which students can talk about bullying and peer relations.

Set Consequences: Teachers should make sure that students must understand that bullying, on any level, will not be tolerated and that the consequences will apply across the board. These consequences should be agreed upon throughout the school and be clearly posted. If a child, who is being bullied, knows that there are clear consequences for bullying, can feel a sense of relief that his teachers and school are supporting him by creating a healthy environment.

Group activity: Plan and organize group activities so that the children can learn to work together, co-operate with each other and get to interact with one another. This will promote inclusive classrooms and encourage healthy interactions among students. For example introducing role play such as Compile a list of students' names and divide the children into three groups: bullies, victims, or bystanders. Alternately, group children into the behavioral categories of aggressive, assertive, and passive. After students have been identified as bullies or victims, they can be targeted for individual intervention efforts.

Development of Skills: Teachers should teach and encourage positive ideas and peer relations, appropriate social skills to the students that will encourage in building self-esteem. They should also acknowledge positive behavior of the students. Teachers should explicitly teach the difference between good vs. bad (manipulative) relationships and reward pro-social behaviors.

Help to make friends: Friendships provide the unpopular student with a support network to ease the emotional pain of low social status. Teachers can promote victims' self-esteem through helping these students identify their personal strengths that might attract peers as potential friends. Victimized students are often realistically pessimistic about their chances of success in developing friendships. Thus, victimized students often need encouragement to engage in the necessary risk-taking efforts to establish social connections. Teachers can ask victimized students to think about who seems to want or need a friend, explaining that since popular students have many friends, they may not have enough time for another relationship.

Immediate Action: Teachers should take immediate action and report any act of bullying. Failure to act provides tacit approval of the behavior and can cause it to spread.

Advice Parents: Teachers should advise parents to communicate with their children regularly. Parents should also be advised to model effective communication techniques and to spend quality time with children, create and maintain anti-bullying habits at home, for example, coach children as early as possible on "what to do" and "what not to do" in school. Encourage children to share a healthy relationship with siblings and other family members.

Bullying is an enormous problem, and we must all do our part to impact it. Little things can make a big difference. Simple and genuine gestures, such as regularly greeting students, talking to students, and addressing students by name, help to make students feel connected.

Word Power

*Power to influence
Perception*

Every problem related to behavior and psychology of a child does not mean a mental problem or abnormality. Therefore words like 'Slow', 'Retarded' should not be used generically, they have a specific meaning to it. 'Slow' or 'Problem Child' terms have strong manifestation. People diagnosed with psychological disorder will be better off being referred as children with special needs.

Idea – *An idea that can change your teaching*

Boosting Self-esteem Equal To Improving Learning

Self-esteem is the sum and substance of one's feelings and thoughts about who we are and as such is of great importance. One of the goals of education and parenting is to help children lead productive lives. Helping children feel good about themselves is a reasonable educational objective. Educators hope that school experiences will help children develop a sense of personal competency, self-esteem and children will express positive feelings and ideas about themselves as they move through childhood into adulthood.

Self-esteem is critical for individuals to think about and be able to take advantage of strengths and for learning from mistakes (meta-cognition). A dynamic relationship exists between self-esteem and skill development. It is a relationship wherein one side of the equation increases at a parallel rate to the other side. As a child improves in self-esteem, his academic competence increases and as that competence increases, his self-esteem improves. The caring and concerned caregiver must come to realize that positive self-esteem is both a **prerequisite** and a **consequence** of academic success.

Healthy self-esteem is an essential component for learning. Regardless of age, the self-esteem of a learner facilitates or inhibits learning. (Solomon 1992). Learning is growth - intellectual, physical, psychological, social, spiritual and combinations of those. In every aspect of this learning process there is the potential to damage, maintain or increase self-esteem. Self-esteem in most students 'mirrors' the appraisals of others, in particular parents and teachers. Teachers views clearly affect learners achievements. Positive appraisals over an extended time tend to increase the level of learning. Prolonged or consistent negative appraisals tend to lower learning achievement. Students tend to perform in accordance with teacher expectations and treatment - self-fulfilling prophecy (Loomans & Loomans 1994). Because self-esteem is a feeling - not a skill - it can only be measured by observing the way in which a person acts or behaves. Teachers must become keen and insightful observers of children in order to assess their self-esteem.

Students with **high self-esteem** will:

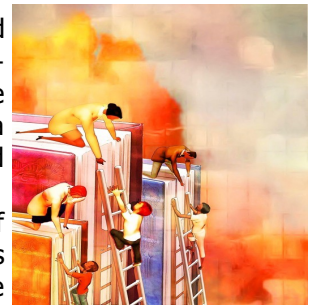
- Feel capable of influencing another's opinions or behaviors in a positive way.
- Be able to communicate feelings and emotions in a variety of situations.
- Approach new situations in a positive and confident manner.
- Exhibit a high level of frustration tolerance.
- Accept responsibility.
- Keep situations (positive and negative) in proper perspective.
- Communicate positive feelings about themselves.

Possess an internal locus of control (belief that whatever happens to them is the result of their own behavior and actions).

Conversely, students with **low self-esteem** will:

- Consistently communicate self-derogatory statements.
- Exhibit learned helplessness.
- Not volunteer.
- Practice perfectionism.
- Be overly dependent.
- Demonstrate an excessive need for acceptance: a great desire to please authority figures.
- Have difficulty making decisions.
- Exhibit low frustration tolerance.
- Become easily defensive.
- Have little faith in their own judgment and be highly vulnerable to peer pressure.

A student lacking in self-confidence who receives a low mark for an assignment may think, "What else could I expect? I'm stupid, this proves it, and I might as well leave." While a student with healthy self-esteem who receives a low mark may think, "I wonder where I went wrong? I'll find out so that I can do better next time." Although this student may feel disappointed, s/he does not feel diminished as the first student, by the low mark.



Humour At Work

Communication is the key to success in teaching and clarity of instruction is the base of it all. Read below to realize;

TEACHER: Rahul, how do you spell "crocodile"?

RAHUL: "K-R-O-K-O - D - A - I - L"

TEACHER: No, that's wrong

RAHUL: Maybe it's wrong, but you asked me how I spell it!

TEACHER: What is the chemical formula for water?

MEGHNA: "H I J K L M N O"!!

TEACHER: What are you talking about?

MEGHNA: Yesterday you said it's H to O!

Boosting Self-esteem Equal To Improving Learning

If a student has little self-confidence then the 'low mark' scenario may trigger memories of similar events in the past and then lead to a cycle of negative thinking in the form of self-critical put-downs. This thought going to affect his or her farther ability to learn. This is how students intensify and perpetuate a lack confidence. When students feel low like this their expectations about the future tend to be negative and this discourages them from really trying. Then they experience another disappointing result and feel negative about themselves again.

How does a child acquire a healthy sense of self? How can teachers help youngsters develop self-esteem? Perhaps these two are most crucial questions in this present scenario.

Helping children develop self-esteem is a matter of helping them gather evidence that they are competent and capable. When teachers create opportunities for children to take risks and experience success, they are helping them develop a sense of self-worth. When children make mistakes, they need supportive teachers who do not rescue them from the consequences but teach them to solve problems and express confidence that they will do better next time. Overall, children need to know that they are cared for and valued.

Dreamers are Believers

Believers are Achievers

Amitabh Mohan

Teachers' tips for boosting up self esteem

Share the good feelings.

When you feel good about your child, mention it to him or her.

Establish a positive atmosphere.

Displays positive attitude and positive tone when talking to students in class.

Set realistic expectations.

Teachers should tailor what they expect to the level of each student's ability.

Applaud the activity, not the child.

Praising students is important, because it helps to build a child's awareness of themselves as competent but teachers should make the praise specific to an activity and not about the child.

Create cooperative learning situations.

Group work will help students learn how to foster positive relationships.

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Use mistakes as learning opportunities.

Teachers can help kids do this by ensuring they understand that they can learn from mistakes.

Avoid direct criticism to the child.

Avoid criticism that takes the form of ridicule or shame.

Listen to children.

Teachers should listen carefully to the students experiences and opinions.



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We invite our readers to be contributors. Write to us an idea or approach that you have tried and worked for our Idea column.

