

BULLYING LEADS TO VIOLENCE

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Though bullying statistics do not tell every story, they do create a picture of bullying in the US. Bullying is the most common type of violence in contemporary US society. A culture that is fascinated with winning, power, and violence suggests that it is unrealistic to expect that people will not be influenced to seek power through violence in their own lives. The high rate of domestic violence means that many young people grow up expecting that violence is an acceptable way to get what one wants. Bullying leads to violence and society needs to grasp the reasons, prevent bullying, and put an end to bullying.¹

There can be a fine line in the difference of bullying and violence. Bullying is often considered a form of physical or psychological violence. Bullying has some different root causes than other types of violence, and also may require different prevention strategies.² It usually occurs when one person or group of people singles out another person with the intent of being mean through name calling, teasing, pushing, hitting, threatening, spreading rumors, playing mean practical jokes, and social exclusion.²

Close to 10 percent of children are bullied repeatedly and this is a large number.³ Bullying behavior is usually repeated over a period of time until it becomes a pattern. Violence is generally seen as an unacceptable type of behavior, but more people accept bullying as a normal part of life. Victims often feel helpless and unable to fight back or defend themselves. Some common factors that may contribute to bullying and violence

are severe physical punishments used at home, lack of parental involvement, and lack of knowledge about positive ways to deal with problems.²

In *People v. Gonzalez*, 51 Cal. 3d 1179 (1990)⁴, the defendant in 1966 was claimed to be defending his brother from school yard bullying, in 1969 involvement and charges of attempted murder dropped, and in 1989 he was convicted on murder of a peace officer and sentenced to death penalty. In *People v. Bloom*, 48 Cal. 3d. 1194 (1989)⁵, stated constant bullying and berated by his father Bloom, Sr. and defendant could never satisfy or please Bloom, Sr. Defendant was guilty of premeditated and deliberate murder of his family and sentenced to death penalty. In *People v. Schlichter*, 2012 Cal. App. Unpub. Lexis 2541⁶, Life is like a playground when you're a kid. Some people get picked on and some people are the bullies." He also nodded his head and said, "Yes," when asked him if defendant was a bully. This is enough evidence from which the jury could reasonably conclude that defendant had bullied victim. Defendant was charged and sentenced to jail for one felony and three misdemeanor charges resulting from his actions in bullying two elderly neighbors. In *People v. Sheldon*, 48 Cal. 3d 935 (1989)⁷, Defendant's convictions for first-degree murder, accompanied by three felony-murder special-circumstances findings, and for robbery, vehicle theft, kidnapping for ransom and extortion, residential burglary, burglary, and assault with a firearm with no death penalty. Defendant's background and character evidence was given by defendant's mother, aunt and grandmother, and by a clinical psychologist, Dr. Rath. Defendant had a troubled childhood, and was regularly bullied and taunted by his stepfather and classmates, who made fun of his clumsiness, hyperactivity and dyslexia. Defendant was described as a poor student, but was hardworking and loving toward his family. In *Smith v. Harrington*,

2013 U.S. Dist. Lexis 41988⁸, Mr. Smith's minor daughter has Tourette Syndrome and disabilities. Mr. Smith claims that daughter was a victim of bullying at the hands of her classmates based upon her disability. His daughter was very disturbed by the bullying and nothing was being done about it. Mr. Smith alleged numerous complaints reported about the ongoing bullying and harassment being done to his daughter. Mr. Smith at no time mentioned her special education needs and he only mentioned the ongoing bullying and harassing due to the disability, in which the school district obtained a temporary restraining order on Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith's third amended complaint alleged violation of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, and the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment. Mr. Smith alleges that the District failed to train its employees about how to prevent students from bullying students with disabilities and how to address bullying once it occurs and that this resulted in CPS taking his daughter from him. Every complaint and amended complaints have been dismissed without prejudice.

Cyber bullying affects many adolescents and teens on a daily basis. Cyber bullying involves using technology, like cell phones and the Internet, to bully or harass another person. Sending mean messages or threats to a person's email account or cell phone. Cyber bullying takes on many forms, such as spreading rumors online or through texts, posting hurtful or threatening messages on social networking sites or web pages, stealing a person's account information to break into their account and send damaging messages, pretending to be someone else online to hurt another person, taking unflattering pictures of a person and spreading them through cell phones or the Internet, and sexting, or circulating sexually suggestive pictures or messages about a person. It can lead to anxiety, depression, and even suicide. Over 25% of adolescents and teens have

been bullied repeatedly through their cell phones or the Internet.⁹ It is important to help children and their friends understand that it is not acceptable to harm others, physically, emotionally, verbally or electronically as in cyberbullying.¹⁰

More than 40 states have some sort of law that makes bullying illegal, yet, as the statistics show, the harassment of young kids by their classmate's remains common.¹²

Addressing these problems with positive parenting and by teaching problem solving skills and anger management could help reduce violence and bullying among some teens. Adult bullies were often either bullies as children, or bullied as children.

School violence is often addressed by trying to reduce gang involvement, drug use, poor academic achievement, and anger management problems among students.

Bullying requires different strategies. Other students may think bullying is normal or not know how to stand up to bullies, so education is an important prevention strategy for bullying, as is taking bullying seriously and instituting a zero-tolerance policy.

Both bullies and their victims are more likely to engage in other violent behavior. Victims suffer from depression and low self-esteem and may lash out violently, while bullies are more likely than others to engage in violent criminal behavior.²

Researchers completed three studies. The first was a quantitative analysis of students that would support the development of a predictive model to explain the relationships among bullying, referred to in the study as peer victimization, school attendance, school engagement, and academic achievement. The second study was a qualitative study in which researchers interviewed victims about their experiences to gain insight into how bullying in school affects attendance. The third study was a qualitative analysis of teachers' experiences in working to bear the impact of bullying in schools.

The underlying premise of this 1st study was that truancy serves as a gateway to numerous negative outcomes for today's youth, such as dropping out of school, using drugs, engaging in criminal activity, and more. In the 2nd study, researchers found that if bullying results in the victim becoming less engaged in school that victim is more likely to cease attending and achieving. If the victim can remain or become engaged in school, his or her attendance and achievement will be less affected. In the 3rd study, researchers found that students observe how people misuse their power to dominate situations in the outside world, so they use bullying to seek a personal sense of power in their own lives. To create community, teachers recommended that students should be taught how to care. First, students should be engaged in schoolwork, extracurricular activities, and planning for their futures as a means to teach them how to care for themselves. Second, students should be taught how to care for others. Teachers should model caring behavior, and schools should offer opportunities for students to mentor other students. Finally, students should be taught how to care for their community. Community service projects are an excellent way to teach students how to care for the world around them. Students have to do something in their lives that makes them feel good.¹³

In conclusion, bullying leads to violence and society needs to grasp the reasons, prevent bullying, and put an end to bullying. Bullying is the most common type of violence in contemporary US society. The goal is to help teens, families, schools, and communities get the education and help they need to prevent being bullied. Learning about the causes of bullying can help each of us to prevent this type of abuse and can help communities be safer. Another one of the best ways to handle bullying and to help lower numbers reported in bullying statistics is open communication. Students and

children should be encouraged to tell a trusted adult, parent or teacher about any kind of bullying attack.¹¹

¹ <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/why-do-people-bully.html>

² <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/bullying-vs-violence.html>

³ <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/child-bullying.html>

⁴ *People v. Gonzalez*, 51 Cal. 3d 1179 (1990)

⁵ *People v. Bloom*, 48 Cal. 3d. 1194 (1989)

⁶ *People v. Schlichter*, 2012 Cal. App. Unpub. Lexis 2541

⁷ *People v. Sheldon*, 48 Cal. 3d 935 (1989)

⁸ *Smith v. Harrington*, 2013 U.S. Dist. Lexis 41988

⁹ <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/cyber-bullying.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/dealing-with-bullying.html>

¹¹ <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/bullying-statistics.html>

¹² <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/answer-sheet/bullying/2010bullyvictimdata.html>

¹³ <http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/234205.pdf>