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PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING IN THE ADOLESCENT ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract. The article examines the psychological consequences of bullying in the adolescent environment. Particular attention is paid to emotional disturbances, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, social isolation and behavioural changes. The psychological impact of bullying on victims, perpetrators and bystanders is analysed. The importance of early identification of negative consequences and comprehensive

Keywords: bullying, adolescence, psychological consequences, emotional well-being, anxiety, self-esteem, social isolation, psychological safety, cyberbullying, peer victimisation.

Bullying among adolescents is one of the pressing socio-psychological problems, as its consequences extend far beyond individual conflicts between peers. Systematic humiliation, intimidation, insults, social exclusion and other forms of aggressive

behaviour can negatively affect an individual's psychological state, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships and further personal development. This problem is particularly important during adolescence, a period characterised by the development of self-awareness, the formation of values, the search for personal identity and the desire for peer acceptance. Therefore, negative attitudes from a peer group, systematic rejection or humiliation may be perceived by adolescents as a threat to their self-worth and social status.

The purpose of the study is to identify the main psychological consequences of bullying in the adolescent environment, examine how they manifest themselves in different participants involved in bullying, and substantiate the need for timely psychological prevention.

Bullying should be understood as systematic aggressive behaviour characterised by repetition, an imbalance of power between participants and the intention to cause physical or psychological harm. Unlike ordinary conflicts, bullying involves a situation in which one party has an advantage and uses it to intimidate, control, humiliate or exclude another individual from the group.

The psychological consequences of bullying are not limited to immediate emotional experiences. They can gradually affect various aspects of an adolescent's life, including emotional, cognitive, behavioural and social functioning. The nature and severity of these consequences depend on the duration and intensity of bullying, individual personality characteristics, and the availability of support from family members and teachers.

1. Emotional consequences of bullying. One of the most common manifestations of the psychological impact of bullying is a deterioration in emotional well-being. Adolescents who regularly experience insults, threats or humiliation may remain in a state of constant psychological tension. This can lead to anxiety, fear of recurring negative experiences, shame, helplessness and emotional instability. Prolonged exposure to such conditions may result in low mood, loss of interest in usual activities, feelings of loneliness and depressive symptoms. Particularly concerning is the fact that negative emotions often remain hidden. Adolescents may avoid disclosing bullying incidents because they fear that the situation will worsen, distrust adults or believe that their experiences will not be taken seriously.

2. Changes in self-esteem and self-perception. Systematic humiliation can gradually change an adolescent's perception of themselves. Negative judgements, ridicule and offensive comments from peers may eventually be perceived as objective characteristics of their personality. As a result, adolescents may develop insecurity, low self-esteem and doubts about their abilities and appearance. It is important to note that bullying may lead not only to low self-esteem but also to unstable self-esteem. In some cases, adolescents attempt to compensate for their negative experiences through an excessive need for approval, dependence on others' opinions or demonstrative behaviour.

3. Socio-psychological consequences. Bullying negatively affects the ability to establish trusting relationships. Adolescents who experience systematic rejection may begin to avoid communication, withdraw from group activities and distance themselves

from their peers. Gradually, they may develop feelings of social isolation and the belief that other people are hostile or unsafe. Such experiences can also affect other social situations. In particular, individuals may subsequently experience difficulties in establishing close relationships, trusting others, asserting personal boundaries and resolving conflicts constructively.

4. Cognitive and behavioural consequences. Constantly anticipating aggression and negative evaluation can interfere with learning, reduce concentration and weaken academic motivation. Adolescents may lose interest in attending school and avoid certain lessons or situations involving interaction with particular peers. Behavioural responses may vary and include withdrawal, passivity, avoidance of social contact, irritability or, conversely, aggression. Some adolescents attempt to conceal their experiences through demonstrative behaviour, while others choose silence and social withdrawal.

5. Psychological consequences for other participants in bullying. It is important to consider the consequences of bullying not only for those who experience victimisation. Psychological changes may also occur in adolescents who engage in aggressive behaviour and those who witness such situations. Among adolescents who initiate bullying, the reinforcement of aggressive behaviour may be accompanied by reduced empathy, difficulties with emotional self-regulation and the development of a tendency to resolve problems through pressure and domination. If such behaviour is approved by peers or does not receive an appropriate response from adults, it may become established as an acceptable way of interacting with others.

Bystanders also experience psychological pressure. They may fear becoming the next target, feel guilty about their inaction or experience an internal conflict between the desire to help and the fear of losing acceptance within the group. Prolonged exposure to an atmosphere of aggression gradually undermines the sense of psychological safety within the entire peer group. Thus, bullying is not merely an individual problem but also a factor affecting the socio-psychological climate of an adolescent group.

6. Long-term psychological consequences of bullying. Particularly concerning are consequences that may persist even after bullying has stopped. Experiences of systematic humiliation can sometimes affect further personality development, relationships and attitudes towards oneself and others.

Researchers identify the following potential long-term consequences: persistent anxiety and increased sensitivity to criticism; reduced self-confidence; difficulties in establishing trusting interpersonal relationships; a tendency towards social avoidance; depressive symptoms and emotional exhaustion; an increased risk of self-harming behaviour and suicidal thoughts.

At the same time, these consequences should not be regarded as inevitable. Their manifestation depends on the adolescent's individual characteristics, the duration of negative experiences, the social environment and access to psychological support.

Cyberbullying also deserves particular attention. Unlike bullying that occurs directly in an educational setting, digital aggression can continue after the school day

has ended. Offensive messages, the distribution of humiliating photographs, public ridicule and exclusion from online groups deprive adolescents of the opportunity to feel safe even at home. This increases psychological distress and makes it more difficult to overcome negative experiences.

The findings of contemporary research confirm the relationship between bullying, reduced self-esteem and deteriorating psychological well-being. In particular, a meta-analysis by V. Mullan et al. (2023), which included 16 studies involving 35,032 participants, demonstrated an association between peer victimisation, lower self-esteem and higher levels of internalising problems [1]. Another meta-analysis by Z. Ye et al. (2023), which synthesised the results of 31 studies involving 133,688 participants, identified a significant association between involvement in bullying and depressive symptoms [2].

The relevance of this problem is also confirmed by the results of the international Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study, conducted with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO). According to the findings, in 2021–2022, approximately 15% of adolescents experienced cyberbullying, while around 11% reported experiencing bullying in an educational setting [3]. In Ukraine, the 2022–2023 HBSC study involved 23,612 adolescents aged 11–17. Its findings demonstrated that bullying remains a relevant problem, with approximately one in five students experiencing it [4].

These findings provide grounds for asserting that bullying prevention should involve not only stopping aggressive behaviour but also addressing the psychological consequences for all participants. Important areas of such work include developing emotional competence, promoting non-violent communication skills, strengthening self-esteem, teaching constructive conflict resolution and creating a safe psychological environment.

Thus, bullying in the adolescent environment has a complex psychological impact that affects the emotional, cognitive, behavioural and social dimensions of an individual's life. Its potential consequences include anxiety, depressive symptoms, reduced self-esteem, social isolation, difficulties in establishing interpersonal relationships and impaired psychological well-being.

At the same time, the psychological consequences of bullying affect not only those who experience victimisation but also those who engage in bullying and those who witness it. This provides grounds for considering bullying as a group-based socio-psychological phenomenon that negatively affects the atmosphere within an adolescent peer group.

In our view, effective bullying prevention should be based on a comprehensive approach combining individual psychological support, work with peer groups, and the involvement of parents and teachers. Particular importance should be attached to the timely identification of hidden psychological consequences, which are not always evident from an adolescent's external behaviour.

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ПСИХОЛОГІЧНИЙ СТАН І СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНА АДАПТАЦІЯ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ВИМУШЕНО ПЕРЕМІЩЕНИХ ОСІБ У НІМЕЧЧИНІ: ПОРІВНЯЛЬНЕ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

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Анотація. Представлено результати порівняльного дослідження психологічного стану 40 українських вимушено переміщених осіб, які проживають у Німеччині. Проаналізовано відмінності сприйманого стресу, тривожної симптоматики, соціальної підтримки та соціокультурної адаптації залежно від тривалості проживання. Встановлено статистично значущі міжгрупові відмінності за стресом, тривожністю та адаптацією; соціальна підтримка позитивно корелювала з адаптацією. Окреслено напрями практичної допомоги та обмеження інтерпретації отриманих даних.

Ключові слова: вимушена міграція, українці в Німеччині, стрес, тривожність, соціальна підтримка, соціокультурна адаптація.

Вступ. Повномасштабна війна створила для українців ситуацію вимушеного переїзду, пов’язану одночасно з переживанням небезпеки, втратою