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**BULLYING AND MENTAL HEALTH  
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# BULLYING - DEFINITION 1

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- Bullying is generally defined as an intentional act that causes harm to others, and may involve verbal harassment, verbal or non-verbal threats, physical assault, stalking, or other methods of coercion such as manipulation, blackmail, or extortion. It is aggressive behavior that intends to hurt, threaten or frighten another person. An imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim is often involved. Bullying occurs in a variety of contexts, such as schools, workplaces, political or military settings, and others.

*Uslegal.com*

# BULLYING – DEFINITION 2

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- Bullying, like other types of abuse, involves the intentional harming of another person. Bullying can be verbal, physical, psychological, or sexual in nature and may occur in person or via telephone, the internet, or other technology. According to Olweus (1993), “a person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself”.
- *Olweus, D. (1993). BULLYING AT SCHOOL: WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT WE CAN DO. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. ED 384 437.*

# BULLYING BEHAVIORS

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- Harassment
- Threats
- Assaults
- Stalking
- Coercion
- Manipulation, Blackmail
- Theft
- Humiliation
- Teasing
- An imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim is often involved.
- Bullying occurs in a variety of contexts, such as schools, workplaces, political or military settings, and others.

# BULLYING - STATISTICS

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- 1/3 teens report being bullied at school
- 20% were made fun of by bully
- 18% had rumors or gossip spread about them
- 11% physically abused; shoved, tripped, spit on
- 6% threatened
- 5% excluded from wanted activities
- 4% coerced into unwanted activity
- 4% personal belongings destroyed
- 4% victims were cyber bullied

# STATISTICS - CONTINUED

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- Most bullying occurred inside the school
- Less outside school on grounds, on bus on way to school, outside school
- 2 out of 3 victims bullied once or twice a year
- 1 out of 5 bullied once or twice per month
- 1 in 10 bullied daily or several times per week
- Only a third of bullying cases were ever reported

*National Crime Center, Dept of Health and Human Services 2009*

# STATISTICS - CONTINUED

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- 44% in middle schools, 20% elementary and high schools reported bullying
- Violence more likely among middle school and younger teens than older teens
- Students with disabilities are more likely to be victims of bullying
- Females most frequent victims; males get verbally or physically bullied, females more often socially and psychologically bullied

# STATISTICS - CONTINUED

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- Cyber bullying
  - 1 of 3 have experienced cyber threats online
  - 1 of 10 report to anyone such as parent
    - 1 of 5 report incident to police
  - 1 of 10 have embarrassing or damaging pictures often without permission
  - 1 of 5 sexually suggestive or nude pictures of selves to others
  - Girls more likely than boys to be victims
  - Phone is common medium of cyber bullying

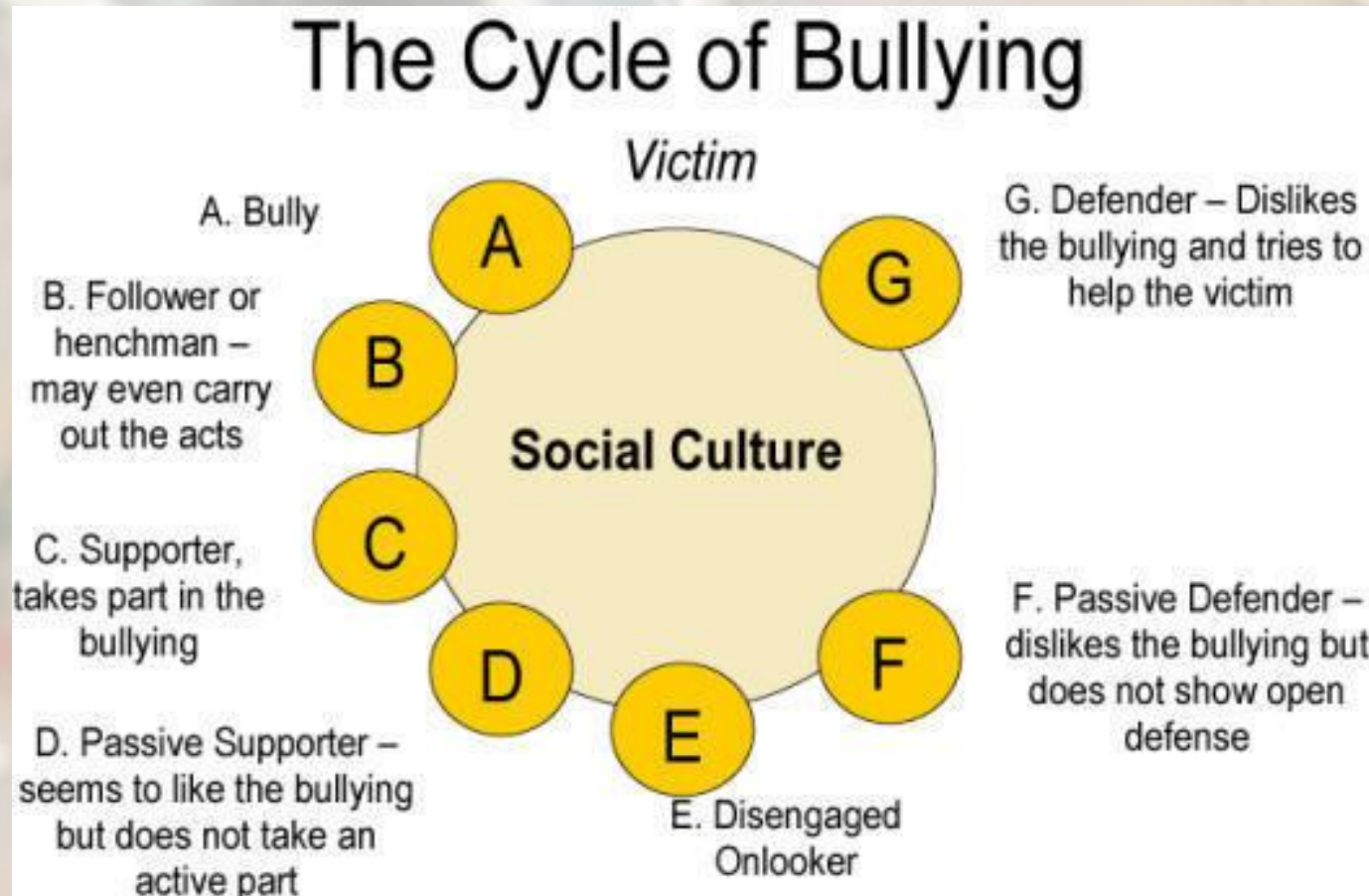


# STATISTICS - CONTINUED

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- 8% of students miss a day of class monthly due to being bullied (160,000 daily)
- Victimized children are more likely to report headaches and stomach aches, more anxiety and depressive s/s
- 1 of 5 victims or more that were bullied become bullies
- 43% fear harrassment in the school bathroom
- 28% have witnessed violence in their home
- Every seven minutes a child is bullied; Adult intervention 4%, peer intervention 11%, no intervention 85%
- 100,000 carry weapons to school

# BULLYING – THE CYCLE



Bullying also affects those observing

# BULLYING – SEMANTICS AND PARALLELS

- Minimalization – Bullying vs: assault, abuse, terrorization, stalking and other behaviors
- Denial/rationalization- sticks and stones, they'll get through it, be a man, ignore it
- Parallels to sexual abuse, rape, crime victims, domestic violence others
  - Power and control
- Can be subtle

# BULLYING - EFFECTS

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- Lowered self worth
- Anxiety
- Becoming bully
- Violent response
- Suicide
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Increased mental health problems in both sexes (stats note girls especially)

# DSM V: POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

*(Proposed criteria on APA website)*

- A. Person was exposed to one or more of following effects; death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, [actual or threatened sexual violation] in one or more of following ways:
1. Experiencing the event him/herself
  2. Witnessing the event done to others
  3. Learning that the event occurred to a close friend
  4. Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of events (not through electronic media unless work related)

# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

- A. Intrusion Symptoms after event (1 or more)
  1. Spontaneous or cued recurrent involuntary and intrusive distressing memory of event (c- rep. play)
  2. Recurrent distressing dreams in which the content or affect of dream is related to event, (children - frightening dreams w/out content)
  3. Dissociative reactions (e.g. flashbacks) as if it were recurring, on continuum to full loss of awareness(c- trauma specific reaction in play)

# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

- 4) Intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
  - 5) Marked physiological reactions to reminders of event
- c. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic event (1 or more of the following)
- 1) Avoids internal reminder that arouse recollections (thoughts, feelings, physical sensations)
  - 2) Avoids external reminders of event (people, places, conversations, objects, sensations that arouse recollection of events)

# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

- D. Negative alterations in cognitions or mood associated with the event that either began or worsened after event ( 3 or more of the following)
1. Inability to remember important aspect of event (dissociative amnesia)
  2. Persistent and exaggerated negative expectations about oneself, others and the world (“I’m bad”, “no one can be trusted”)
  3. Persistent distorted blame of self or others about cause or consequences of event
  4. Pervasive negative emotional state – fear, horror, guilt, SHAME



# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

- 5) Markedly diminished interest or participation in activities
  - 6) Feeling of detachment or estrangement
  - 7) Persistent inability to experience positive emotions (unable to have loving feelings, psychic numbing , anhedonia)
- E. Alterations in arousal and reactivity cause or worsened from the event (3 or more)
- 1) Irritable or aggressive behavior
  - 2) Reckless or self destructive behavior

# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

- 3) Hypervigilance
  - 4) Exaggerated startle response
  - 5) Problems with concentration
  - 6) Sleep disturbance
- F. Duration of disturbance (b-e) is at least one month
- G. Disturbance causes clinically significant distress in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning
- H. Disturbance is not due to direct physical effects of a substance or general medical condition

# DSM IV VERSION OF PTSD

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- Similar to DSM IV but limited to those events with actual or threatened death or serious injury or threat to the physical integrity of self or others
- Focus is on single life-threatening event, but PTSD also arises from an accumulation of small incidents such as repeated exposure to car crashes, fires, verbal, physical abuse, domestic violence. Controversy regarding the definition has been present for years.

# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

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- Anxiety, panic attacks
- Depression
- Self harm, suicide, SIB, addictive behaviors (substance abuse, gambling, eating disorders (+,-))

# BULLYING - INTERVENTION

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- Ignoring doesn't work. Adult intervention is required, may need to be reported to more than one person
- Fighting doesn't work and may make bullying worse
- Discussions at home
- Intervention by/at school
- Intervention by authorities
- Counseling at school
- Counseling with therapist knowledgeable about PTSD &/or bullying
- Victims and witnesses may need treatment

