

The negative side of defending behaviour: Examining the association between defending and psychosocial difficulties

Angela Mazzone & James O' Higgins Norman

National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre, Dublin City University, Ireland



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School bullying

Sustained and repeated aggressive behaviour (physical, verbal, indirect) perpetrated by one or more students against a **vulnerable peer**, who is unable to defend.

- Intentionality
- Repetition
- Unbalance of power

Pupil praised for his anti-bullying art
By JUAN ANTONIO LEZAMA
RICHMOND—Third-grader Christopher Oliver put up to stay home from school 17 days morning.
He fell from a tree, except for the night he fell over the attendants would receive at his Cook Elementary School in Henrico County for winning the Name-Calling Week. He was nervous about stage to receive his children's book author award.

Study shows patterns in 'bullying'
A new study by the National Education Research Institute (NERI) recently released a report titled "From Learning to Earn: A Profile of School Climate in Florida," which provides a rare look into student experiences with bullying and harassment.
The results are based on incidents in Florida from 2004 to 2006.

National No Name-Calling Week
More than 100 schools across the country are participating in the annual No Name-Calling Week. The week of education...

January is Bullying Awareness Month
Third-grader is recognized for artful call to anti-bullying.

Anti-Bully Haiku Levels
will take place January 22-26

PEOPLE WATCH
Name-Callers Anonymous

New cyber-bullying weapon: Mobile phones
Widespread use of handsets make youths an easy target

POLYTECHNIC student also (not her real name) got a shock in November last year, when she realized that a female classmate had stolen her mobile phone. She then used the phone to send a text message to her friend about it. Although embarrassed, she ignored the bully.

Stoner or later, bullies will get bored and switch targets," she said. "Some might, the bully stopped taunting Alice last December. Her case reflects an emerging form of cyber-bullying through the use of mobile phones among youths here, social workers said.

A spokesman for the Coalition Against Bullying for Children and Youth said that there are now more mobile phones than there were four or five years ago, although the number of children using them is still low.

Sparks, a cyberbullying education specialist, said she has found that it is not uncommon to hear of youths using mobile phones to engage in cyber-bullying, said its manager, Mr. John Chubb.

Traditionally, cyber-bullying has mostly involved the Internet, social workers said.

But mobile phones are becoming an increasingly common weapon, because more young people now have them, they added.

Families have to be more vigilant when addressing such issues with their children, she added.

Check it out, write to my paper recently, to urge schools to take action to reduce bullying. So, that they would not use these devices to intimidate or harass students.

Asked if mobile phones should be banned in schools, an Education Ministry spokesman said: "Schools are empowered to make policies regarding disciplinary matters to best fit their school situation."

COMMUNICATING PEAK: Though cyber-bullying cases involving mobile phones have gone up, phone bullying may be hard to spot. 2010-2011

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY DEVI SIVANAYATO

14 NEWS

Our bullied kids being left behind
BRIGID O'CONNELL
CHILDREN who are bullied weekly at school are more likely to suffer academically, and the effect is stronger for girls.
And suffering regular physical bullying can affect all aspects of school work, leaving victims up to nine months academically behind classmates, a new study by Monash Children Research Institute of almost 100 Victorian grade 3 students has found that one in three boys and one in four girls aged eight to nine are frequently victims of bullying.
The study compared self-reports of bullying to the child's NAPLAN results, to quantify for the first time the impact of peer victimization on academic performance.
It found boys bullied physically do not well in maths, and are academically behind peers by more than six months. Boys who experienced physical and verbal victimization scored lower in reading tasks. There was no measurable effect from just verbal bullying.

Girls who are physically bullied are six to nine months behind classmates across all academic performance, while those verbally bullied were typically six months behind in writing skills.
Lead author MCRRI research fellow Dr Lisa Mansly said while the study did not prove that bullying caused poor academic performance, the results were important because the mid-primary school years were crucial to long-term academic and mental health outcomes.
"That is a time when bullying starts to really peak, and it's a time where children can start to disengage if they feel school isn't for them," Dr Mansly said.
"This is very positive if they drop out or do well in school later on. Given those children are in grade 3, it's a fairly significant delay compared with their classmates."
The children, now in year 8, have been followed up by researchers each year since the original study to look at the long-term effect of bullying on academic performance.

Investigation has been launched into school district where a 13-year-old boy committed suicide after allegedly being bullied by classmates because he was gay.
The probe was launched after a complaint by the mother of Seth Walsh that Tenaha High School District employees failed to deal with years of bullying that preceded her son's death on September 28.
Wendy Walsh said Department of Education investigators spent two days last week interviewing students, teachers and administrators after she contacted them when her son, who hanged himself from a tree on September 19, was still hospitalized in a coma.
She said: "They put this on their very important list, their priority list."
"Obviously, there must be a big problem that needs to be addressed, and it isn't just around Seth, it's the whole nation."

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY DEVI SIVANAYATO

Probe into suicide of 13-year-old boy bullied by classmates for being gay
DAILY MAIL REPORTER
it updated at 11:36 AM on 22nd December 2010

Comments (11) **As to My Stories**

Tragic: Seth Walsh, 13, hanged himself from a tree in his back yard after suffering years of bullying because he was gay.



Bullying is a group phenomenon

- Assistants (help the perpetrator)
- Reinforces (laugh when bullying happens)
- Outsiders or passive bystanders (shy away; do not take sides)
- Defenders (help the target)



Bullying as a Group Process: Participant Roles and Their Relations to Social Status Within the Group

Christina Salmivalli, Kirsti Lagerspetz, Kaj Björkqvist, Karin Österman, and Ari Kaukiainen

Department of Psychology, University of Turku, Turku (C.S., K.L., A.K.) and Department of Psychology, Åbo Akademi University, Vasa (K.B., K.Ö.), Finland

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Bullying was investigated as a group process, a social phenomenon taking place in a school setting among 573 Finnish sixth-grade children (286 girls, 287 boys) aged 12–13 years. Different Participant Roles taken by individual children in the bullying process were examined and related to a) self-estimated behavior in bullying situations, b) social acceptance and social rejection, and c) belongingness to one of the five sociometric status groups (popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, and average). The Participant Roles assigned to the subjects were Victim, Bully, Reinforcer of the bully, Assistant of the bully, Defender of the victim, and Outsider. There were significant sex differences in the distribution of Participant Roles. Boys were more frequently in the roles of Bully, Reinforcer and Assistant, while the most frequent roles of the girls were those of Defender and Outsider. The subjects were moderately well aware of their Participant Roles, although they underestimated their participation in active bullying behavior and emphasized that they acted as Defenders and Outsiders. The sociometric status of the children was found to be connected to their Participant Roles. © 1996 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

Defending Behaviour

☐ Features of defending behaviour

- Prosocial behaviour
- High levels of empathic concern
- High likeability

☐ Risk of defending:

- Social status
- Becoming the next target of bullying



The **dark side** of defending

Association between defending and:

- Psychosomatic complaints
- Anger
- Academic difficulties

□ **Aims of this study**

- To investigate the association between defending behaviour and various problem behaviours (e.g., emotional symptoms; conduct problems; etc.)



Method

Sample

- 208 Italian early adolescents (50% girls)
- $M_{age} = 12.28$; $sd = .92$ (age range 11-15)

Design

- Cross-sectional design
- Quantitative data



Peer nominations

- 4 items assessing defending behaviour

☐ *Sample items:*

“In your class, who is more often helping and consoling the classmates who are excluded and left out?”

“In your class, who is more often defending the classmates who are beaten up or attacked?”



Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

S 11-17

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain or the item seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of how things have been for you over the last six months.

Your Name

Male/Female

Date of Birth.....

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
I try to be nice to other people. I care about their feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am restless, I cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get a lot of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I usually share with others (food, games, pens etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get very angry and often lose my temper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am usually on my own. I generally play alone or keep to myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I usually do as I am told	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I worry a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have one good friend or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I fight a lot. I can make other people do what I want	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other people my age generally like me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am easily distracted, I find it difficult to concentrate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am nervous in new situations. I easily lose confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am kind to younger children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am often accused of lying or cheating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other children or young people pick on me or bully me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often volunteer to help others (parents, teachers, children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think before I do things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I take things that are not mine from home, school or elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get on better with adults than with people my own age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have many fears, I am easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I finish the work I'm doing. My attention is good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any other comments or concerns?

- 25 items self-rated – 11-17 years-old version
- FIVE SUBSCALES:
 - Prosocial behaviour - “I am helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill”
 - Conduct problems - “I fight a lot. I can make other people do what I want”
 - Hyperactivity - “I am easily distracted, I find it difficult to concentrate”
 - Emotional Symptoms - “I get a lot of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness”
 - Peer problems - “I am usually on my own. I generally play alone or keep to myself”

1. Not true - 2. Somewhat true - 3. Certainly true

Results₁

Correlations							
Variable	M (sd)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Defending	.16(.14)	-	.33***	-.24**	-.14	.12	-.14*
2. Prosocial Behaviour	2.57(.35)			-.32***	-.31***	.06	-.03
3. Conduct problems	1.44(.33)				.57***	.34***	.30***
4. Hyperact.	1.68(.46)					.39***	.26***
5. Emotional symptoms	1.53(.44)						.37***
6. Peer problems	1.37(.36)						-

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$;

Results₂

Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Defending behaviour			
Predictors	R ²	β	95% CI
<i>Step 1</i>	.26**		
Gender		.26***	[.04, .12]
Age		.01	[-.02, .02]
<i>Step 2</i>	.46***		
Gender		.17*	[.01, .09]
Age		.07	[-.01, .03]
Prosocial behaviour		.24**	[.04, .16]
Conduct problems		-.22	[-.17, -.02]
Hyperactivity		.03	[-.04, .06]
Emotional Symptoms		.19*	[.01, .12]
Peer problems		-.12	[-.11, .01]

Boy=1; Girl= 2; *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$;

Discussion

- ❑ Defending → prosocial behaviour, which comes with an emotional cost
- ❑ Bullying as an interpersonal traumatic event → Emotional symptoms
- ❑ Longitudinal studies to establish causal relationships



Intervention programs

- ❑ Intervene on school climate and change peer group norms → defending should not be an heroic act
- ❑ Support students who defend their peers
- ❑ Italy: National Action Plan for the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying at school → specific action against bullying (e.g., national day against bullying), but NO national anti-bullying program



Thank you!



angela.mazzone@dcu.ie