

Defining the Relationship Between Bullying and Mental Health

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Over the last decade bullying has become an increasingly prominent issue for children and adolescence, and the methods that bullies inflict on their victims continue to grow more serious over time. Contrary to popular belief, bullying is not just about school-yard brawls or teasing, but in fact encompasses a range of populations and behaviours. Bullying can be physical, sexual or verbal, although the latter is more commonly used and can include a variety of behaviours such as teasing, name-calling, rumors, social isolation and threats. Bullying can be found in any elementary, middle or high school. However, it can also be found among adults in university, college and the work place; a fact that is often overlooked. Where bullying was once solely a direct and personalized form of interaction, it can now follow individuals wherever they go due to the increased accessibility of technology. For example, cell phones and social media websites have become popular modes of harassment and are available to children at a very early age. Unfortunately, this means that there is virtually no escape for a victim of bullying. Bullying can have a severe impact on an individual's ability to function, including mental health, social interaction, peer relationships and self-esteem, and is often long lasting. Through this comprehensive literature review, I will explore and describe the impact that bullying can have during childhood and adolescence, and how these experiences can translate into mental health problems during adulthood.