Bias-Based Bullying

What is Bias-Based Bullying?

Bias-based bullying, also known as stigma- or identity-based bullying, is defined as bullying that is motivated by a victim's actual or perceived social group.[1] Bias-based bullying may focus on race, color, ethnicity, religion, culture, ancestry, national origin, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability status, family status, or any other characteristic that may be identified by others.[1] Acts of bias-based bullying may take the form of offensive jokes, stereotypes, insensitive comments, and hate crimes. Bias-based bullying can be physical, verbal, social, or cyber-based, and is characterized by its intention, frequency, and power imbalance. [2] Approximately 40% of bullying targets a marginalized identity.[3]

Bias-based bullying is associated with...
- Greater negative effects than non-bias-based bullying. In fact, students who are targeted for multiple forms of their identity (e.g., gender and race) experience the highest level of negative outcomes.[4]
- Greater levels of fear related to being attacked or harmed, again with students targeted on multiple identities reporting the worst outcomes. [4]
- Greater levels of school-avoidance.[4]

Bias-based bullying can be addressed by...
- Schools implementing interventions that target prejudice and biased behaviors.[4]
- Getting teachers and staff involved in attending to issues of prejudice and bias.[4]
- Adopting policies to document instances of bias-based bullying.[4]

Effects of Bias-Based Bullying

Bias-based bullying is associated with the following negative outcomes[2]:
- Depressive symptoms
- Decreased quality of life
- Anxiety
- Decreased self-esteem
- Conduct disorders
- Substance use[3]
- Poor academic performance[3]

How to Intervene

People can become a target for bias-based bullying due to several identifying factors, and research shows that bias-based bullying is associated with a greater degree of negative outcomes than non-bias-based bullying.[3] Some helpful steps in addressing bias-based bullying in school can include[5]:
- Set high expectations, make the most of teachable moments, and speak up
- Put safety first
- Denounce the act
- Investigate
- Involve others, work with the media where necessary
- Provide accurate information and dispel misinformation
- Support targeted students
- Seek justice and promote healing

REFERENCES

[1] Rigby, K. (2002). *New perspectives on bullying*. Philadelphia: Kingsley

[2] Mulvey, K. L., Hoffman, A. J., Gönültaş, S., Hope, E. C., & Cooper, S. M. (2018). Understanding experiences with bullying and bias-based bullying: What matters and for whom? *Psychology of Violence, 8*(6), 702.

[3] Russell, S. T., Sinclair, K. O., Poteat, V. P., & Koenig, B. W. (2012). Adolescent health and harassment based on discriminatory bias. *American Journal of Public Health, 102*(3), 493-495.

[4] Walton, L. M. (2018). The Effects of "Bias based bullying"(BBB) on health, education, and cognitive–social–emotional outcomes in children with minority backgrounds: Proposed comprehensive public health intervention solutions. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health, 20*(2), 492-496.

[5] Teaching Tolerance (2017*). Responding to hate and bias at school. A guide for administrators, counselors, and teachers.* Retrieved from https://www.tolerance.org/

Additional Resources

Stopbullying.gov:
stopbullying.gov/resources/get-help-now

Human Rights Campaign:
hrc.org/news/six-steps-you-can-take-to-prevent-bias-based-bullying

Teaching Tolerance:
tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/TT-Speak-Up-Guide.pdf
AND
http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Responding%20to%20Hate%20at%20School%20ONLINE_3.pdf

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports:
https://www.pbis.org/resource/pbis-cultural-responsiveness-field-guide-resources-for-trainers-and-coaches