

Creating Safer Schools: Evidence-Based Approaches to Bullying Prevention

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Abstract

Contemporary research highlights the decisive role of school climate in the emergence and prevention of bullying behavior. Bullying does not occur in isolation; it develops within an environment where aggression is permitted, overlooked, or implicitly reinforced. Evidence suggests that school culture is one of the strongest predictors of bullying, shaping both aggressive behavior and vulnerability to victimization.

Adolescents who experience elevated levels of stress within their school environment are at significantly higher risk of becoming victims. When students perceive their surroundings as threatening, they may develop physical, psychological, or social difficulties that increase their susceptibility to bullying. In contrast, a school culture grounded in clear communication norms, mutual respect, and consistent adherence to rules serves as a protective factor, reducing the likelihood of victimization.

Importantly, a sense of psychological well-being functions as a buffer against bullying. Even in contexts where aggressive behavior exists, students who feel emotionally secure and supported are less likely to become victims. These findings underscore the necessity of shifting from individual-focused interventions toward systemic, culture-oriented prevention strategies.

Based on these research insights, an effective anti-bullying program should be comprehensive and participatory, actively engaging students, teachers, and parents in fostering a safe, respectful, and supportive school environment.