



CHAPTER 2:

UNDERSTANDING THE BULLY AND THE VICTIM

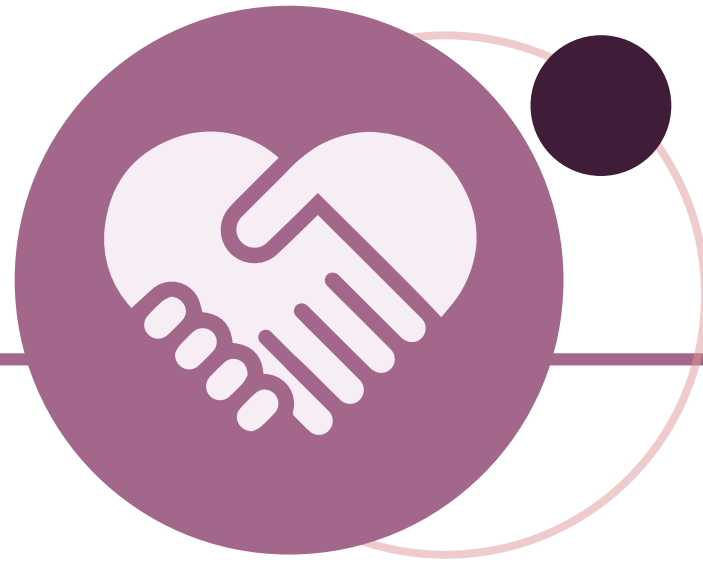
- THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A BULLY
- WHY PEOPLE BECOME BULLIES
- THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BULLIES
- THE EMOTIONAL WORLD OF THE VICTIM
- WHAT MAKES SOMEONE A TARGET?
- THE BULLY-VICTIM RELATIONSHIP
- THE ROLE OF EMPATHY IN UNDERSTANDING BOTH SIDES

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A BULLY

Bullying is a complex behavior that stems from a variety of psychological, social, and environmental factors. Understanding the psychology of a bully helps us identify the underlying causes of their actions and address the problem effectively.



Ayda Karayol-Teacher Gazi High School Ankara/Türkiye



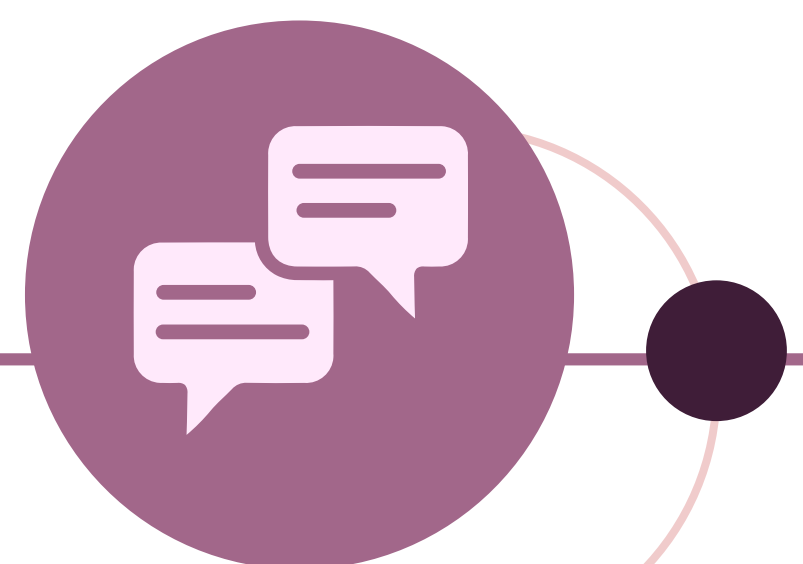
Many bullies have deep-seated insecurities. They may project their own fears and inadequacies onto others as a way to deflect attention from their vulnerabilities. By asserting dominance, they seek a sense of control or superiority to compensate for their own feelings of inadequacy.

Avdan-Avseqül-Orhan



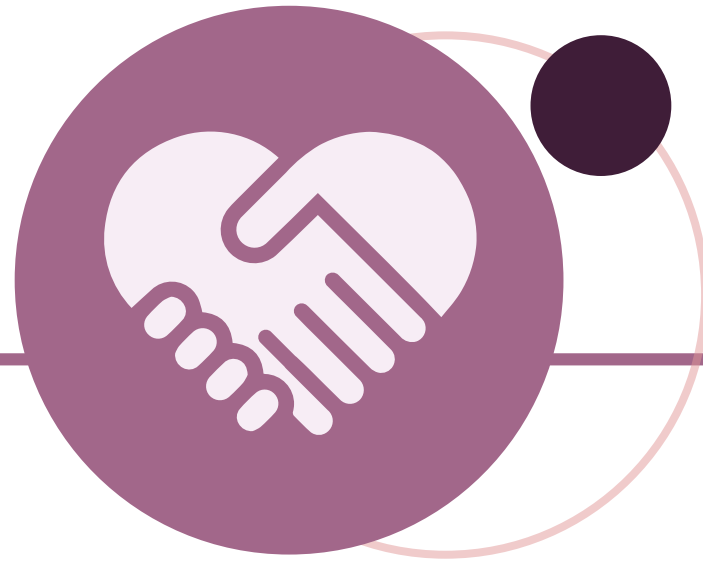
Bullies often crave power and use intimidation as a way to exert control over others. This behavior might stem from a lack of control in other areas of their lives, such as unstable home environments, strict authority figures, or personal failures.

Gazi High School

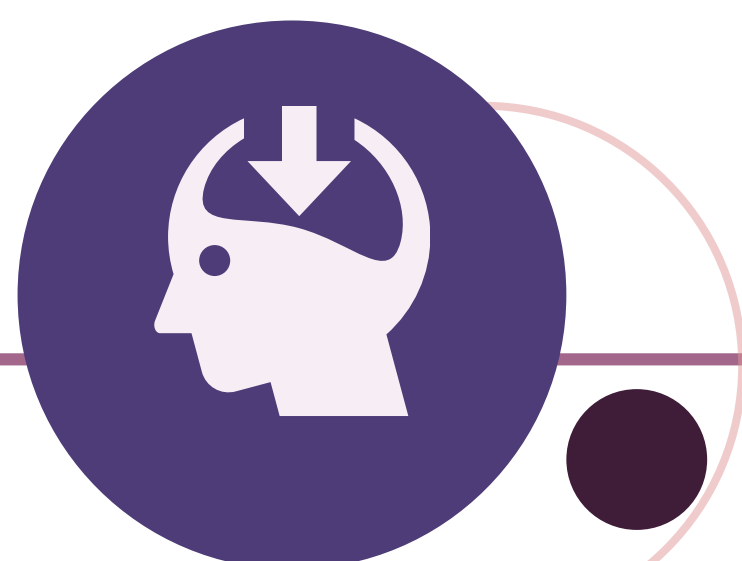


Bullying can be learned from observing and mimicking others, particularly influential figures like parents, siblings, or peers. If a child grows up in an environment where aggression or domination is normalized, they may adopt these behaviors as acceptable ways of interacting with others.

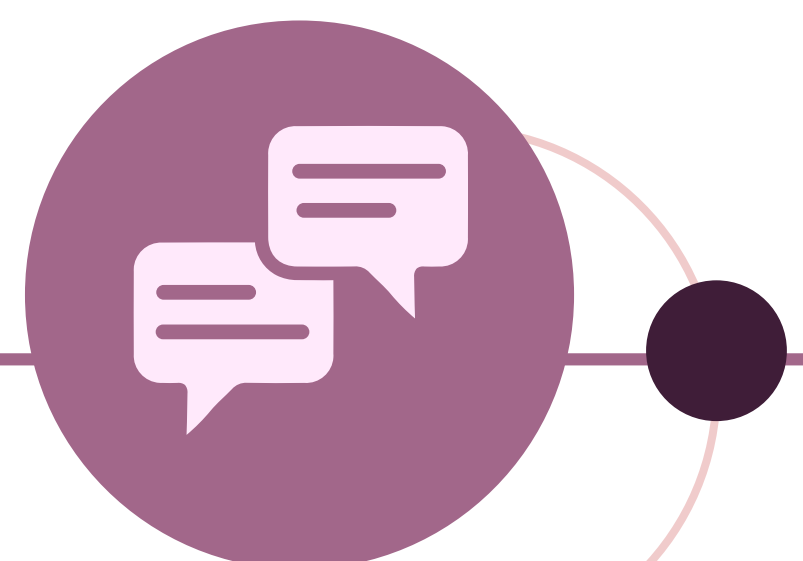
Student Team



Some bullies struggle to manage their emotions, leading to impulsive behaviors like lashing out at others. They may lack the emotional intelligence needed to express feelings of frustration, anger, or sadness in constructive ways.



Bullies often receive validation from their peers, either through active encouragement or passive acceptance. This reinforcement creates a cycle where bullying becomes a tool for gaining attention, popularity, or approval.



Bullying can be a coping mechanism for dealing with personal trauma, such as abuse, neglect, or loss. Acting out aggressively may provide a temporary escape from their own pain or a misguided attempt to regain control in their lives.

A lack of empathy is a common trait among bullies. They may struggle to understand or care about the impact of their actions on others. This disconnect can result from developmental issues, environmental factors, or even biological influences.



To address bullying effectively, it's crucial to focus on both the victims and the perpetrators. For bullies, interventions should include:

- Counseling to explore underlying issues and teach emotional regulation.
- Education on empathy, respect, and healthy social interactions.
- Creating supportive environments where positive behaviors are encouraged and rewarded.

Why People Become Bullies

Bullying behavior is rarely random. It often arises from a combination of personal, social, and environmental factors. Understanding these underlying causes can help in addressing the behavior and preventing its recurrence.





Bullies are most often:

- people who experienced violence in childhood,
- come from dysfunctional families,
- were emotionally neglected, have low self-esteem,
- or associate with bad company.

Petra S., Lara Ć

High school Ivana Lucića-Trogir, Croatia

Many bullies struggle with their own feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem. Bullying allows them to feel powerful or superior by putting others down. This external aggression may mask internal fears or vulnerabilities.

**Tudor,
RO**

Some individuals bully to gain a sense of power or control over others. This behavior may stem from experiences where they felt powerless, such as in unstable home environments, overly strict discipline, or personal failures.

**Sebi,
RO**

Bullying can be modeled behavior. Children who witness aggression, manipulation, or verbal abuse at home or in their community may come to see such actions as normal or effective ways of interacting with others.

**David,
RO**



The Different Types of Bullies

Bullying comes in various forms, and understanding the different types of bullies can help address and prevent bullying more effectively. Here are the main types of bullies:



Esra Saçlı, teacher, Şehit Erhan Dural KAIHL, Rize,

Physical Bullies

Behavior: Use physical force or intimidation, such as hitting, kicking, pushing, or other physical harm.

Targets: Often pick on physically weaker or smaller individuals.

Motivation: Seek to assert dominance or power.

Verbal Bullies

Behavior: Use words to demean, insult, or hurt others, including name-calling, teasing, or making threats.

Targets: Individuals perceived as different or vulnerable.

Motivation: Gain attention or assert superiority.
Valentina, RO

Relational (Social) Bullies

Behavior: Damage someone's social relationships or reputation through exclusion, gossiping, or spreading rumors.

Targets: Those who are socially vulnerable or reliant on peer approval.

Motivation: Feelings of jealousy, revenge, or the desire to elevate their social status.

Cyberbullies

Behavior: Use technology (social media, text messages, emails) to harass, embarrass, or intimidate others.

Targets: Often anonymous, making it hard for victims to defend themselves.

Motivation: Feelings of power, anonymity, or a lack of accountability.
Robert, RO.

Emotional Bullies

Behavior: Manipulate or control through emotional tactics, such as gaslighting, guilt-tripping, or withholding affection.

Targets: Those who are emotionally sensitive or dependent.

Motivation: Need for control or superiority.
Ioana, RO.

Reactive Bullies

Behavior: Act out in response to being bullied themselves, often shifting from victim to bully.

Targets: Perceived as weaker or easier to dominate.

Motivation: Vent frustrations or replicate learned behavior

Brandusa, RO.

Sexual Bullies

Behavior: Engage in unwanted sexual advances, harassment, or comments, often targeting a person's appearance or sexuality.

Targets: Vulnerable individuals or those who stand out in terms of appearance or behavior.

Motivation: Assert power or express unresolved issues around gender or sexuality.

Dragos, RO.

Group Bullies

Behavior: Bully as part of a group, often under peer pressure or for group acceptance.

Targets: Typically isolated or different individuals.

Motivation: Conformity to group norms or to avoid becoming a target themselves.

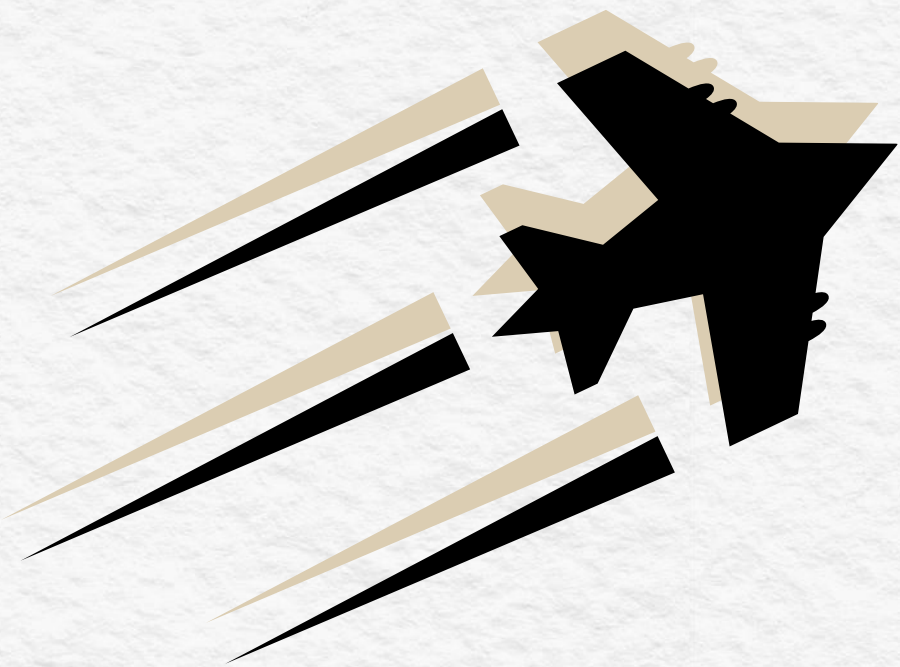
Situational Bully

- engage in bullying only in specific circumstances environments,
- could be caused by peer pressure or group dynamics

Lorena B., Antonija R., Ela B., High school Ivana
Lucića-Trogir, Croatia

Key Takeaway

Recognizing these types of bullies can guide effective interventions. For example:



- Physical and verbal bullying may need direct discipline.
- Relational and cyberbullying require education on empathy and consequences.
- Reactive bullying might call for counseling and support to address the root cause.

Promoting awareness and fostering environments of inclusion, empathy, and respect are vital to combating all forms of bullying.

The Emotional World of the Victim





The emotional world of a bullying victim is complex and deeply affected by the experience. Victims often carry the weight of the bullying long after the events themselves, influencing their self-esteem, relationships, and mental health. Here's an exploration of the emotional landscape of a victim:

**Esra Saçlı, teacher,
Şehit Erhan Dural (ŞED) KAİHL, Rize, Türkiye**

Feelings of Isolation

Emotions: Loneliness, alienation, and disconnection from peers or family.

Cause: Social exclusion, relational bullying, or fear of reaching out for help.

Impact: Victims may feel like no one understands or cares about their pain, leading to withdrawal from social situations.

Nursena, ŞED KAİHL

Fear and Anxiety

Emotions: Persistent worry, panic, or dread.

Cause: Anticipation of future bullying, particularly with physical or verbal bullies.

Impact: This fear may manifest as physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomachaches, or difficulty sleeping.

Zeynep K., ŞED KAİHL

Shame and Guilt

Emotions:

Embarrassment, humiliation, or self-blame.

Cause: Internalizing the bully's insults or believing they are responsible for the bullying.

Impact: Victims may develop a distorted self-image, feeling "not good enough" or undeserving of kindness.

Elifnaz, ŞED KAİHL

Anger and Resentment

Emotions:

Suppressed anger or frustration.

Cause:

Powerlessness to retaliate or stop the bullying.

Impact: Anger may be turned inward (self-harm) or outward, leading to reactive bullying or strained relationships.

Giovanni, RO.

Beyzanur, ŞED KAİHL

Sadness and Depression

Emotions: Persistent low mood, hopelessness, or apathy.

Cause: Chronic exposure to bullying, particularly cyberbullying, which can feel inescapable.

Impact: Depression can interfere with daily activities, academic performance, and long-term emotional health.

**Kevser Serra, ŞED KAİHL
TR**

Loss of Trust

Emotions: Skepticism or wariness toward others.

Cause: Betrayal by peers, lack of intervention by authority figures.

Impact: Difficulty forming meaningful relationships, fearing rejection or harm.

**NecmiyeNur, ŞED KAİHL
TR**

Reduced Self-Worth

Emotions: Insecurity, inadequacy, or self-doubt.

Cause: Repeated criticism, insults, or comparison to others.

Impact: Victims may struggle with self-identity and confidence, leading to long-term effects on personal and professional life.

**Nevra, ŞED KAİHL
TR**

Desire for Escapism

Emotions: Yearning for relief from their situation.

Cause: Overwhelming emotional pain and lack of effective support.

Impact: This can manifest in unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse, or, in severe cases, suicidal thoughts.

**Zeynep D., ŞED KAİHL
TR**

A black silhouette of a person sitting on the ground with their head buried in their hands, crying. Three tears are shown falling from their face. A large, white, cloud-like thought bubble with a black outline extends from the person's head towards the right side of the image.

Victims are afraid of confrontation because they fear it will lead to even more bullying.

They begin to develop low self-esteem and start blaming themselves, thinking they are flawed.

They become increasingly lonely, isolating themselves from friends and family.

They lose interest in activities they once enjoyed.

Noa L., Lana E., Lana Z., Sara P
High school Ivana Lucića-Trogir, Croatia



Empathy and Understanding:

- Safe spaces where they feel heard and validated.
- Trusted adults or peers who offer non-judgmental support.



Empowerment:

- Strategies to assertively address bullying.
- Encouragement to rebuild self-esteem through achievements and positive relationships.



Intervention and Advocacy:

- Proactive involvement from teachers, counselors, and parents to address bullying at its roots.
- Clear communication that the bullying is not their fault.

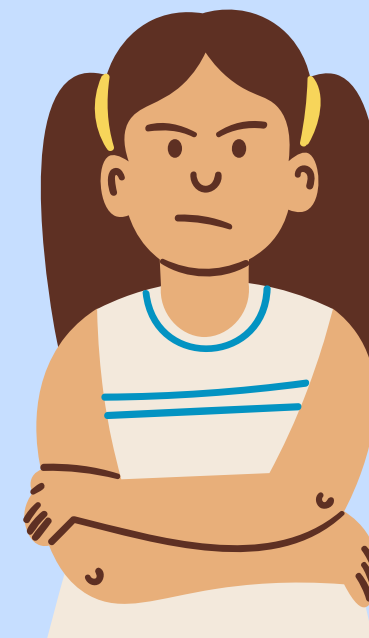


Healing and Recovery:

- Counseling or therapy to process trauma and rebuild a positive self-image.
- Activities that foster resilience, such as hobbies or support groups.

What Victims Need

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE A TARGET?





Bullying often occurs when someone is perceived as different, vulnerable, or less able to defend themselves. While no one deserves to be bullied, certain factors can increase the likelihood of someone becoming a target. These factors can be situational, personal, or societal.

Necşoiu Mariana, Smaranda Apostoleanu
Secondary School, Bacau, Romania



Perceived Differences

- **Examples:**
 - Appearance: Weight, height, clothing, or physical disabilities.
 - Personality: Introversion, shyness, or being highly sensitive.
 - Interests: Uncommon hobbies, such as niche fandoms or intellectual pursuits.
- **Why it Matters:** Bullies often target those who stand out to assert dominance or fit in with a group.

Social Status

- **Examples:**
 - New students or those with fewer friends.
 - Kids from different socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **Why it Matters:** Social isolation makes it easier for bullies to attack without fear of retaliation.



Lack of Confidence

- **Examples:**
 - Low self-esteem or body image issues.
 - Difficulty asserting themselves in confrontations.
- **Why it Matters:** Bullies often seek out individuals who seem less likely to fight back.

Overachievers or Underachievers

- **Examples:**
 - Excelling in academics, sports, or other fields ("teacher's pet").
 - Struggling academically or socially, leading to frustration or envy from peers.
- **Why it Matters:** Success can provoke jealousy, while struggles can make someone seem vulnerable.




CULTURAL, ETHNIC, OR RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

EXAMPLES:

- Belonging to a minority group.
- Following different cultural practices or wearing traditional attire.

Why it Matters: Biases or ignorance can fuel bullying based on perceived "otherness."




GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Examples:

- Individuals often face bullying due to stereotypes or prejudice.
- Boys may be bullied for not conforming to traditional notions of masculinity; girls for standing out in male-dominated spaces.

Why it Matters: Gender norms and societal expectations can make non-conforming individuals a target.



DISABILITIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS

EXAMPLES:

- Physical disabilities, learning disabilities, or neurodiversity (e.g., autism, ADHD).

Why it Matters: Lack of understanding or inclusion can make these individuals feel isolated and vulnerable to bullying.

ENVY OR RESENTMENT

EXAMPLES:

- Being admired by peers, liked by teachers, or excelling in extracurricular activities.

Why it Matters: Bullies may target those they perceive as threats to their social standing or confidence.



INADVERTENT BEHAVIORS

EXAMPLES:

- Overreacting to teasing or appearing visibly upset.
- Being overly eager to please or fit in.

Why it Matters: Bullies often exploit behaviors that give them a sense of control over their victim.

LACK OF ADULT SUPERVISION

Examples:

- Spending time in unmonitored areas like hallways, playgrounds, or online platforms.

Why it Matters: Bullies thrive in environments where they can act without fear of repercussions.



"Success or being perceived as a threat
-such as being highly skilled or popular
- can make someone a target of
bullying by those who feel their own
status or position is at risk."

Perceived vulnerability, such as appearing
physically or emotionally weak, having low
self-confidence, being easily manipulated,
being isolated, or lacking social skills, can
make someone a target for bullying.

Being different — in religion,
race, origin, worldview, or
opinions on a specific topic.

Branka L., Vedran B., Mislav V., Leu B.
high school Ivana Lucića-Trogir, Croatia

Key Takeaway

While certain factors may increase the risk of being targeted, it's essential to understand that bullying is a choice made by the bully, not the victim's fault. Awareness, inclusive environments, and supportive interventions are crucial for preventing bullying and protecting potential targets.

