

How to Overcome Bullying at School? – The Adult Survivors’ Perspective

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Abstract

Bullying is a phenomenon that concerns many people, not just the victim and the bully. In this study, the focus is on the perceptions and experiences of victims of bullying. The purpose of this research is to find out—from the adult survivors’ perspective—how victims of bullying have survived and what kinds of coping methods they have used. A qualitative research approach was selected to study this serious phenomenon and to acquire survivors’ perceptions and experiences. The data were collected from open internet forums where people can write anonymously. Altogether, the data consisted of 190 messages written by 142 pseudonyms. The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. Coping methods and strategies were eventually categorized into the following categories: Cognitive, Emotional, Social, Creative, Physiological, and Spiritual coping methods. The perspective researchers took on bullying was fundamentally a phenomenon of bullying at school and was discussed by grounding on the ideas derived from positive psychology. The fundamental question is how to make school a positive institution that would not only prevent bullying but also increase children’s well-being.

Keywords: Bullying, Coping, Positive coping strategies, Positive psychology

Introduction

Bullying is an unfortunate part of humanity: it occurs in the human relationships and therefore, also at school. Bullying is a subtype of aggressive behavior, in which an individual or a group of individuals repeatedly attacks, humiliates, and/or excludes a relatively powerless person (Salmivalli, 2010). Bullying as a phenomenon is widely studied in a variety of disciplines during the past few decades (see Arseneault et al., 2006; Dake, Price, & Telljohan, 2003; Merrell et al., 2008; Salmivalli, 2010). More and more expressions of violence and malaise take place in schools and youth camps (see also Horsthemke, 2009; Leary et al., 2003)—even in the form of ultimate violence, massacre, as happened for example in Norway (July 2011) and Finland (November 2007) traditionally considered as “lands of milk and honey”. In Finland, bullying at

school has drawn increasing attention since the massacres as bullying was found as one of the background factors in these events. There are differences in the prevalence of bullying within countries (Dake, Price, & Telljohan, 2003); yet, between 8–54% of school-age children become victims of bullying according to international studies (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010; von Mares & Petermann, 2010).

There are numerous interventions and methods to prevent and stop bullying at school (e.g. Merrell et al., 2008) but still the number of victims is countless. In this study, the focus is on the victims' perception on their coping methods. Particularly, researchers will study adult ex-victims' experiences. Bullying may destroy its victim's life but there are also success stories about people who have survived and even succeeded in their life after being bullied at school.

Therefore, the perspective researchers take on bullying is fundamentally positive and will discuss the phenomenon of bullying at school grounding on the ideas from positive psychology (Brown Kirschman et al., 2009; Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2009). Why do some people survive better than others and how do they cope with bullying? The only way of revealing such positive coping strategies is, according to the principles of positive psychology (Lyubomirsky, 2001; Chafouleas & Bray, 2004), to study people who have survived and are willing to discuss their experiences.

Perspectives on Bullying

Many researchers have defined the concept of bullying. Norwegian Dan Olweus (1992), who is considered as a pioneer of bullying research (see Dake, Price, & Telljohan, 2003), emphasized the repetitive nature of bullying. According to a Finnish researcher Christina Salmivalli (2010), the concept of bullying is used for referring to peer-to-peer bullying among school-aged children and youth, when not otherwise mentioned. The key features of bullying include the intent to harm, the repeated aspect of the harmful acts, and the power imbalance between bully and victims (Merrell et al., 2008).

Furthermore, victims of bullying can be defined in a variety of ways. Victims of bullying can be classified into subgroups for example according to whether or not they bully others as well: pure victims are children who are solely victims of bullies, and bully/victims are children who are simultaneously victims of bullies and bully (Arseneault, 2006). In addition to the bully and victim, bullying process involves students who take on other roles (called participant roles): assistants of the bully, reinforcers of the bully, defenders of the victim, and outsiders (see Dake, Price, & Telljohan, 2003; see also Salmivalli, 1999). Indeed, Swedish Researcher Anatol Pikas considered bullying as group violence because it is an attack against an individual (Pikas, 1990). However, it is crucial to understand that bullying is a subjective experience. Everyone experiences it in a personal way: while someone can interpret bullying as a playful teasing, some other could consider the same kind of behavior quite defamatory bullying (Harjunoski & Harjunoski, 1994; Unnever & Cornell, 2004; Boulton, Smith, & Cowie, 2010).

One way of analyzing the forms of bullying is to divide it into direct and indirect bullying. For example, hitting, kicking, pushing, tingling, and calling somebody names are direct bullying. Indirect bullying takes the form of ridiculing, social rejection, or spreading rumors of someone. The latter is usually difficult to detect but even when it is obvious it might be difficult to recognize (Salmivalli, 1999). In addition physical, verbal, and social types of bullying can be distinguished (Olweus, 1994). Various forms of bullying have been reported already at pre-school level (see e.g. Crick, Casa, & Ku, 1999; von Grünigen et al., 2010).

Along with advances in information technology, a new form of bullying has occurred: cyber bullying. Bullying by the internet and mobile phones may have countless bystanders because emails, pictures, and videos can easily be shared with millions of people. Through the internet, a bully can reach his or her victim at home and thus, bullying is not limited only at school or on school commutes but can take place 24/7 (Shariff, 2009; see also Kowalski & Limber, 2007).

The reasons for starting bullying often hark back to time before going to school (e.g. Perren & Alsaker, 2006). Nowadays, instead of personal matters, more attention is paid to peer-group qualities (Crick & Nelson, 2002). It has been noticed that bullying is likely to occur in groups that lack genuine sense of togetherness and cohesion as this kind of atmosphere makes the bully's aggressive and domineering behavior possible (Berger, 2007; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004).

Select Coping Theories

Crises and hardships in life can cause stress, a state of imbalance in mental, social, and/or physical life that one has to cope with (Uusitalo, 2006). Bullying at school represents such a situation. When people talk about coping or survival, they usually refer to surviving from something bad. In addition, survival is a personal experience of coping (Ikonen, 2000).

According to Furman (1997), people tend to perceive their past and suffering merely as a strength than a negative factor. Understanding enhances coping. If the victim understands and does not blame him or herself, he or she has the possibility to survive. A positive attitude certainly boosts the healing process (Lyubomirsky, 2001). According to Heiskanen (1997), the process of coping can be surprisingly long and that usually needs some kind of impetus to begin.

In this research, theory presented by Ayalon (1995) about coping is in the center. Every human being has his or her own kind or way of coping that includes typical habits and aptitudes in facing the challenges of life. Ayalon's theory consists of six dimensions that are beliefs and values, emotions, social interaction, imagination, cognitions, and the physiological dimension. Everyone possesses all these dimensions and uses them as a unique, personal combination in the coping process.

Cullberg (1991) distinguishes several phases in coping with traumatic events: the phase of shock, reaction, processing, and taking the new direction. Coping is regarded as a journey that does not necessarily pass all of the above-mentioned phases: a phase can be totally missed or

can occur simultaneously with some other phase. Cullberg's theory can be seen as a means for helping someone in crisis.

Bullying is a long-term phenomenon and continuous but single bullying events are sudden and unexpected that cause feelings similar to the phase of shock. The purpose of this phase is to protect human mind from unbearable information or experience, for example by denial (Cullberg, 1991; see also Saari, 2000). Some crises start by degrees so that one may not experience an actual shock. Bullying can represent such an event and the process of coping could start straight from the second phase; that is the phase of reaction. This phase usually arouses powerful emotions, such as anger and fear, when the dangerous situation is already over. In this phase, people tend to find a meaning for what happened and to discuss the experience. In the phase of processing the trauma, the victim of bullying starts to analyze the situation and, little by little, accepts it (Cullberg, 1991). The purpose of this phase is to work with negative feelings which can be enhanced by, for example, reading and writing (Saari, 2000). The final phase is to find the new direction. The victim begins to heal and see life without the pain caused by bullying. Forgiveness is a part of this phase. It is reasonable to talk about survival when bullying does not occupy one's mind constantly nor does thinking about it cause anxiety and fear. Instead, that phase of life can calmly be perceived as a part of oneself, an experience that one has gone through (Saari, 2000; Cullberg, 1991).

Method

Bullying is a phenomenon that concerns many people. The purpose of this research is to find out—from the adult survivors' perspective—how victims of bullying have survived and what kinds of coping methods they have used. The main research question is the following: What kinds of coping methods have the victims of bullying used to overcome bullying?

A qualitative research approach was selected to study this serious phenomenon and to acquire survivors' perceptions and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Thus, the purpose was not to draw any statistical conclusions but to understand adult survivors' coping strategies and ways as comprehensively as possible (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009).

The data for this research were collected from open Finnish internet forums where people can write about their experiences of bullying anonymously. Internet forums represent interactive social interaction and the messages in the forums are often characterized as written speech as they seemingly can be defined to be somewhere between speech and text. Internet forums are clearly products of the modern culture and numerous issues are discussed 24/7 (See Laukkanen, 2007).

Seven chains of messages were selected from three forums. The criterion for selection was based on either the title of the messages or the content of the first message in the chain. The longest chain consisted of 80 messages and the shortest of five messages. Altogether, the data consisted of 190 messages written by 142 pseudonyms.

Because of the pseudonyms, it is impossible to know who the actual people behind the writings are. However, based on the information and hints revealed in messages, it was possible to draw some kind of a picture, for example, about the participants' gender, age, and professions. The age of the writers could be interpreted from their comments on working life, retirement and grandchildren, their own children, and the form of pseudonym (e.g. Pirjo27 could refer to the writer's first name and age). Some of them revealed their age within the message text. Thirty-three were identified as women and eight as men. The rest of the writers did not mention their gender.

Table 1 illustrates the age distribution in this study

Table 1

The participants' ages

Age (years)	Number of pseudonyms (n)
11–20	4
21–30	14
31–40	12
41–50	5
Age undefinable	107
Total	142

Despite the above-mentioned deficiencies, internet forums provide a chance to express one's opinion in public and get feedback (Paunonen, 2004). Therefore, forums enable interaction with other people and can have an important impact in the lives of those people who participate in discussions. Because of anonymity, it is possible to discuss even the most difficult issues with other people. Therefore, people can reveal their most hidden feelings and talk about their dubious coping methods that they might have used. It is possible that this kind of information would not be revealed for example in interviews.

The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis which can be divided into theory-bound, theory-based, or data-based content analysis. The theory-based analysis is based on some certain theory, model, or idea and research follows this select model, first by describing the theory and then by using the core concepts as the theoretical framework. This research has features of both theory and data-based analyses. On the other hand, the data were analyzed by its content in order to find the most distinctive categories in it. However, the coping methods found in the data resemble Ayalon (1995) six-dimensional coping theory. Therefore, coping methods and strategies were eventually categorized (retelling Ayalon's theory) into the following categories:

- (1) Cognitive coping methods
- (2) Emotional coping methods
- (3) Social coping methods

- (4) Creative coping methods
- (5) Physiological coping methods
- (6) Spiritual coping methods

Results

In this data, coping was fundamentally perceived in two ways: either survival equaled the end of bullying or when the trauma caused by bullying was treated. In general, survival was seen as a desirable target and an ideal state. However, it is a process that may not necessarily become ever finished. The status of victim does not disappear and one has to go through all lost things that cause bitterness and hatred before healing can begin. Some people can heal quickly while others' healing processes lasts longer (Laitinen, 2004). Several coping methods were found in the messages written in the internet forums. The results are introduced according to the categories introduced in Method chapter.

1). Cognitive Coping Methods

One natural coping method is to defend oneself. It, however, requires boldness and self-confidence, features that long-term bullying is likely to extirpate from the victim sooner or later. Eventually, the victim of bullying may not know how or does not have the courage to defend any longer. When the victim finally manages to do so, this means was proven efficient.

"Many times I almost started crying. When I managed to spur myself so that I spoke out, these bullies became a little out of countenance; how come you have the courage to defend yourself all the sudden."

Many survivors reported that their agony had not ended before school finally ended. Changing one's school was also reported as one means of coping with bullying. However, it is somewhat absurd that it is the victim who had to change the school, not the bully. It is especially unfortunate if the victim decides to quit school because of bullying.

"I changed the school and went on with my life."

Some of the victims were able to close their minds to revenge and hatred and had forgiven their bullies hoping that they would eventually notice the bad they had done. Forgiveness is possible even if the bully did not apologize. Then, it merely represents amnesty (Ojanen, 2007).

"...and I forgave my bullies who had so diligently bullied me for nine years... I don't carry that burden anymore."

Forgiveness follows naturally the healing process but not always. It can be difficult to forgive and therefore, forgiveness is primarily considered an act, not a feeling. Changing one's feelings can take time and may resist forgiving forever but people can also decide to forgive and thus

consciously alter their emotions (Ojanen, 2007). Forgiveness has a healing power and it can promote well-being (Krause & Ellison, 2003).

Understanding that bullying was not the victim's fault helps in coping. As the victim understands the phenomenon in a new way, he or she is on the threshold of new direction, the process has moved on long enough and it is about to end in a situation where the victim can let go of the past. Bullying is not the victim's fault because there is not any reason justifying bullying.

"The point is that you have to understand that the viewpoint that you had when victimized, was skewed already because of your age... Now, as an adult, I realize many, many things in bullying that I wasn't able to see when I was young. It eases a lot the hard feelings related to those things."

2). Social Coping Methods

Social coping methods are means such as belonging to a group or society, adapting a certain role or task, and accepting or getting support. Basic motives of survival are social orientation and interaction (Ayalon, 1995). The victims of bullying used their family and friends as social coping methods. According to earlier research on bullying, even a few positive peer-relationships protect a child against the long-term effects of bullying (Salmivalli, 1999). The family and friends were also perceived as the source of security.

"No doubt, my coping was enhanced by the fact that, despite bullying, I had three friends who took care of me (although only one of them was in the same class with me). And at home, I always felt myself loved and accepted."

Social relationships also help later on when analyzing experiences. Indeed, social relationships are used for enhancing coping at every phase of the healing process. Starting one's own family was regarded as helpful in survival. One's own spouse and children provide the victim with acceptance and love that heal the wounds. In addition, a spouse's support in an intimate relationship functions as a protective measure against stress and anxiety (Määttä, 2000).

"But my life has been good: I have a wonderful husband, a dream job, good friends who really understand, and my firstborn will be born next summer."

3). Emotional Coping Methods

Anger in its various forms was strongly apparent in the victims' writings. Several writers told how they went on sustaining by the feelings of hate and the thoughts of revenge. The feeling of hate and anger can be considered to occur as the result of being the target of bullying. However, feeding the feeling of hatred may also be a means of protecting oneself against more unpleasant feelings and anxiety. Toying with the idea of revenge eases one's feelings to some extent but one should not realize the revenge. The victims also found malicious pleasure easing,

especially if the victims had succeeded better in life than their bullies. Doing well in life gives strength and strengthens self-esteem.

"...hate, hate, hate, bitterness, disappointment with your own powerlessness and that no one intervened."

"Most of my bullies have been in jail; and I suppose their life hasn't been a bed of roses otherwise either. I'm doing quite well. So, he who laughs last laughs longest."

It is natural to want to revenge if one is being mistreated. According to the data, the thoughts of revenge could be even quite cruel:

"...and that feeling of hate never goes away. All kinds of weird revenge plans occupy my mind quite often—how to hurt them or their family—and quite permanently. So that they could feel the same, even a little bit, the feeling that I have still in the age of 41."

Recent school shootings in Finland make an example of revenge that was actually realized. Research on massacres at school all over the world revealed that 90 % of the murderers were victims of bullying at school (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Bullying is not the only reason for these horrible events but it can be one factor that leads the way toward massacres. It seems that the risk is emphasized especially when the victim of bullying lacks support from school and home (Punamäki et al., 2011).

Hate and anger are powerful feelings that are related to the reaction phase of the crisis. It usually begins when the threat and danger situations are already over. This phase involves powerful feelings, such as hatred, guilt, fear, and sorrow. The reaction phase begins when one has to confront the situation and therefore one uses even the most primitive defense mechanism (Cullberg, 1991).

Another emotional coping method, a positive one, was positive attitude. It can be a crucial factor in the coping process (Furman, 1997):

"But maybe it's about your attitude: when you compare what your life was at some point, you won't start brooding over small issues, aches, and disappointments. They too belong to life, come and go. The most important thing is that the big picture is good."

4). Creative Coping Methods

The role of imagination as the thrust of people's inner life, dreams, and intuitions represent creative coping methods. Imagination is used for avoiding unpleasant facts or finding new solutions (Ayalon, 1995). In this study, artistic hobbies and daydreaming were victims' creative coping methods. Artistic hobbies helped them to channel their anxiety in works of art and thus, their trauma had a sort of extrinsic repository in a work of art and helped to handle with

bullying (Sarid & Huss, 2010). Creative coping methods are often used in the processing phase of trauma (Saari, 2000).

“Because of bullying, I developed a strong inner world and had artistic expression as my hobby; that became the passion and strength of my life.”

The power of imagination was found helpful also in the forms of daydreaming and fantasizing. The victims fantasized either about a better future or returning to time when everything was still good:

“I dreamed my whole rough youth about the day I would be able to leave my childhood village. It helped me to cope.”

“I was happy then and have wanted to return to that time. I guess my weird dreams originate in that partly, how becoming small and fragile, physically a child, could help me to survive mentally.”

5). Physiological Coping Methods

The physical dimension of coping is based on the thought that human behavior could be explained with stimuli, impulses, reactions, reflexes, conditioning, and reinforcement (Ayalon, 1995). According to the data, victims of bullying had also physiological coping methods, such as sport and psychiatric medication:

“... new hobbies, kick-boxing, and other sports—all are means of coping with it!”

“Nowadays, I become depressed every now and then, luckily it’s mild and treatable with medication”

“I was prescribed psychopharmacology that stabilized my moods.”

6). Spiritual Coping Methods

Two of the writers told that they survived with the help of their spiritual conviction. The other reported that spirituality helped in the healing process, too. Also in Ayalon’s model, spirituality is one dimension. Belief in transcendent powers gives hopes and strength to move on (Ayalon, 1995).

“My self-esteem has improved since that time. Jesus has helped me in difficult situations and finally I can say that I am happy.”

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results, bullying at school and coping with it is not straightforward or axiomatic. Coping is a multidimensional process and coping methods appeared somewhat overlapping. Cullberg's (1991) theory of the phases of crisis is in line with the coping methods discovered in this research. Although Cullberg's theory is not the only theory that illustrates the phases of crises, it is important to know and understand what kinds of issues are related to the coping process and what one might expect. Moreover, this knowledge is important not only to victims of bullying but also to their loved ones and other helpers.

However, it is worth noticing that when long-term bullying ends, the pain and agony does not. The victim's life will be affected for a long time and he or she will need support in strengthening his or her self-esteem and position in the peer group. Without support, the victim can isolate from the society permanently even if bullying ends. Healing can be advanced by supporting the victim both at school and at home. The victim's experiences should be undermined. A child should be left alone but an adult must take the responsibility for solving the situation (Holmberg-Kalenius, 2008). The earlier bullying is intervened, the better the results will be. The results of this study are also in line with findings of Ojuri's (2004) who noted that coping does not mean perfect control over life but accepting the situation can also represent good coping.

Furthermore, coping is not just an upbeat success story but it can involve feelings of weakness and despair every now and then. Hopefulness, belief in change, and trustful attitude to future help moving forward. Coping includes features such as finding one's identity, liberation from guilt, and strengthening self-esteem—but on the other hand, it is holding out, acceptance, and giving up, as well (Ojuri, 2004).

Lyubomirsky (2001) lists numerous studies that show relatively greater well-being among people who, for example, derive positive meaning from negative events and who use positive attitude (humor, spirituality, etc.) to cope with adversity and who use social comparison in adaptive ways. Also Larsen et al. (2003) talk about instead of eliminating the negative, people should focus on accentuating the positive, which we understand as a positive attitude toward life events. All these strategies were evident among victims of bullying in this research.

Yet, some limitations of the results are worth addressing at this point. Collecting data from internet forums involves some problems. First, as was mentioned earlier, it is not possible to know for sure who the participants are. Second, there is no guarantee of the truthfulness of their stories. However, the forums are clearly aimed at the victims of bullying and therefore, the preliminary assumption is that people who have experienced bullying would participate in these forums. Anonymity makes it possible to write voluntarily and openly about experiences and get feedback and support from others with similar experiences. The public nature of the data also makes the researcher's task easier as there are not any difficulties in protecting the participants' anonymity: their writings are public and even the researcher does not know their identities. Third, there is the conceptual uncertainty: what is defined as bullying in these

forums. In this case, we lean on the definition that emphasize that bullying is a personal experience. Therefore, people behind the pseudonyms have interpreted the mistreatment, which they have experienced, as bullying and their opinion should be respected as well.

To increase the reliability and validity of this study, excerpts from the data were added within the results. They were also supposed to convince that this data included a rich, manifold, and explicit description of bullying and coping and made a valuable contribution to the existing knowledge about the experiences of adult survivors of bullying.

Eventually, there is also one interesting point to discuss concerning the data of this research. Sharing one's story might as such represent a way of coping. It has been evidenced that people have an apparent need to share their experiences after a distressing event (Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2009). Writing about bullying experiences in the internet forum could be considered one way of sharing and coping with the healing process. Therefore, people who have already survived from bullying might not write in these kinds of forums. Yet, the forum is about peer support and it can be thought that people who want to support each other have at least begun their healing process.

While recognizing the problems of internet data, we want to highlight the potential that lies in the use of anonymous internet forums to discuss difficult life events, such as bullying. The potential value of translating emotional experiences into words is proved to be beneficial for coping:

“Putting upsetting experiences into words allows people to stop inhibiting their thoughts and feelings, to begin to organize their thoughts and perhaps find meaning in their traumas and to reintegrate into their social networks” (Niederhoffer and Pennebaker, 2009).

Therefore, more research on the usefulness of internet forums for coping with bullying is needed and especially, how this means would help victims when at school level, children who, at this very moment, are bullied, to overcome the trauma and process the range of emotions that bullying causes.

The phenomenon of bullying is not just a problem of an individual person or groups. Bullying is a part of a larger phenomenon in our society and to which adults are partly resigned themselves. Many actions are justified by bullying: the child will not have a unique name because there is the danger that he or she will be bullied at school; parents want to buy expensive clothes, provide expensive hobbies, and gear to their children for the same reason; and so on. Parents do not want to give bullies any reason to bully their children although, when doing so, they restrict their own life assuming that they prevent bullying. Yet, it seems that for example envy, that is one of the reasons behind bullying, is not prevented this way.

What makes bullying at school extremely harmful is that a child may not necessarily understand that bullying is not his or her fault and that it cannot be reasoned in any way. The ability to understand and see the good that results from bad events is possible to develop in adulthood

as many people report positive outcomes from adverse life events (Lechner, Tennen, & Affleck, 2009). Focusing on the positive sides, overcoming bullying, was a conscious choice through which our aim is to take a glance at positive strategies and increase awareness of this kind of positive behavior. According to Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2009) there might be a way to use these naturally occurring processes to help individuals cope with a wide range of traumatic experiences—bullying being one of them.

However, it is worth discussing strategies that enhance positive and accepting atmosphere at schools and how they could be promoted. One of the three overarching themes of positive psychology is positive institutions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Huebner et al. (2009) suggest that positive schools can move away from problem-centered approaches to wellness approaches focusing on maximizing children's chances to manifest and exploit their abilities and interests recognizing that "all" students have strengths. Unquestionably, childhood may be the optimal time to promote healthy attitudes, behavior, adjustment, and prevention of problems (Brown et al., 2009) and therefore, more research on creating healthy educational environments for children is needed. For example, in Andreou's (2001) study, bully/victims appeared as a distinct group in terms of their low levels of social acceptance and problem-solving ability. The most important perspective from the point of view of the present study is, especially, how to facilitate supportive teacher and peer relationships and how to maintain positive interactions among all participants at school (see also von Grünigen et al., 2010).

What makes the positive approach so particular? First, positive psychology is not just about non-existence of problems. Instead, it is about turning the look at well-being and factors that promote it. Dake, Price, and Telljohann (2003) do a good job in reviewing the nature and extent of bullying at school, and they even introduce numerous interventions that attempt to increase students' anti-bullying attitudes. Likewise, Merrell et al. (2008) point out that although anti-bullying interventions appear to be useful in increasing awareness, knowledge, and self-perceived competency in dealing with bullying, these interventions will not necessarily and dramatically influence the incidence of actual bullying or positively influence the targeted outcomes.

So, bullying exists and it seems difficult to get rid of the phenomenon. The question is therefore whether the goal is too low when it is set to enhancing anti-bullying attitudes: Should it be focused on increasing wellness-promoting attitudes (acceptance, recognition, tolerance) instead to make the real difference?

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