

Young People & Bullying

-By Ashleigh Smith

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of bullying in young people throughout the developed world (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 2015). Bullying can have profound impacts on social and emotional development, and the health and wellbeing of young individuals (Rothon, Head, Klineberg & Sransfeld, 2011).

Research Question

What is the impact of bullying on young peoples' health and wellbeing, and how will this knowledge impact nursing practice?

The Impact

The developing brain experiences bullying in a similar way to physical pain. Peer victimization is strongly linked to dysregulation of the neuroendocrine response to stress. The experiences of peer victimization become biologically embedded in the physiology of the developing person. Young people that experience bullying are four times more likely to experience a mental health related illness, such as anxiety, depression and low self esteem (National Institute of Mental Health, 2013; Vaillancourt et al., 2013).

There is also strong evidence linking bullying to alcohol, substance abuse and lower education outcomes for young people (Litwiller & Brausch, 2013). Further research from Litwiller & Brausch (2013) showed the effects of bullying and peer victimization on suicidal thinking, suicidal planning and suicidal attempts were often mediated by other influences. These included history of neglect, alcohol and substance abuse and mental illness, such as depression and anxiety.

Comprehensive research undertaken by Sticks 'n Stones (2017) shows that 48% of 11-18-year olds ignored bullying when it occurred and hoped it would go away. Young people not access the appropriate support following being harmed by bullying is a significant concern as it can lead to all of the impacts mentioned above.

Implications for Nursing Practice

Bullying is a social determinant of physical and mental health. Nurses. As the largest and one of the most trusted health care professions in New Zealand, have an unique opportunity to support young people harmed by bullying. Nurses must understand the impact bullying can have on young people and what support services are available to address this (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2013; Olshansky, 2011).

Nurses must provide non-judgmental care, supporting them to form therapeutic relationships with young people impacted by bullying. Nurses can utilise skills such as validation, eye contact, appropriate tone of voice and use of empathy (Dempsey et al., 2014; Mims Today, 2016).

Recommendations

1. Primary prevention of bullying. There needs to be an increase in funding and availability of bullying prevention programs across NZ. To prevent bullying there needs to be an increased focus on developing empathy, acceptance and respect. Also more education is required for young people to positively respond to bullying and not just keep the experiences to themselves (Sticks 'n Stones 2017) .
2. More bullying literature and research from New Zealand. There is a gap in New Zealand based research relating to how nurses and other health professionals can prevent bullying and address it correctly when it occurs. While literature relating to young people and bullying from other developing countries is somewhat sufficient to inform professional practice, literature and research from New Zealand will provide more accurate information relative, to the specific needs of New Zealand young people (City University of London, 2018).

Conclusion

Bullying has a profound impact on New Zealand young people. Nurses and health professionals work in a position of trust with young people every day. This gives nurses the opportunity to support young people experiencing bullying and help lessen its impact.

Adopting the recommendations above will work to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people and support them to reach their full potential



PECOT Model

Category	Information	Explanation
POPULATION	Young people in New Zealand between the ages of 10 & 24	Statistics show New Zealand has one of the highest rates of youth bullying in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 2015). World Health Organisation, (2018) defines young people as between the ages of 10 and 24.
EXPOSURE (environment)	Young people in New Zealand that identify as having been bullied	To gain an understanding of the impact bullying has on young people
CONTROL (Comparison)	Young people in New Zealand that don't identify as being bullied	We are examining the impacts of bullying on young people that have experienced it. Therefore, the control group are young people in New Zealand that don't identify as having experienced bullying.
OUTCOME	To understand the effects of bullying on young people and how nurses can provide support	Nurses are the largest health care workforce and one of the most trusted professions in New Zealand (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2013: Olshansky, 2011). Many RN's work with young people every day in numerous environments, hence they have the potential to address the impacts of bullying in young people. To do so nurses must understand the impact of bullying and their role in addressing it.
TIME	N/A	N/A

Summary

Presenting these findings in the form of a poster allows me to capture an audience's attention by presenting the summarised information in a visually-appealing way. Research has proven that posters are a useful way to increase an audience's knowledge about a topic, especially when accompanied by an oral presentation. I worked with a colour scheme to make the poster visually appealing and catch an audiences eye. The poster provides an opportunity to share the main points of my research without overloading the reader with large amounts of writing (Ilic, & Rowe, 2013).

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