

SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF BULLYING: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGGRESSIVENESS AND SCHOOL ANXIETY

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: Bullying is considered as a form of aggression. As opposed to accidental quarrel or fight, bullying is intentional aggressive behaviour demonstrated regularly. Aggressive actions that teenagers below the age of criminal responsibility take at school cause a public outcry. At the same time, developmental psychologists point out problems of self-esteem and forming self-concept typical of modern 5th and 6th graders. We analyze the relationship between the content of teenagers' fears, anxiety and aggressiveness.

Methodology: The methodological basis of the research lies both in the concepts of the Buss-Perry psychology of aggression and the psychology of anxiety by A. M. Prikhodzhan. Anxiety scale for schoolchildren aged 10—12. Buss-Perry method BPAQ. Perfectionism questionnaire – the Russian version of the APS-R scale.

Principal Findings: We identified highly isolated students in each class. According to the data of participant observation and teachers' expert evaluations, they become victims of aggressors as well as those of “observers” who take the position of passive aggressors. The “outcasts” are usually overanxious, demonstrate a high level of hostility and tend to be aggressive in their behaviour. There are good reasons to suppose that they'll turn into aggressors in the future.

Applications of this study: We developed, tested and implemented a psychological support programme for adolescents and preadolescents. The psychological support programme is aimed at working with both victims and aggressors. Similarly essential is the work with “observers” who take the position of passive aggressors.

Novelty of this study: According to the results of the research, all members of a social group participate in bullying to different extents. Fears of bullies are related to confirmation of their relatively high status in the social group. Concerns of victims are connected with the financial position of their families.

Keywords: *Bullying, Legitimization of Aggression, Hostility, Self-esteem, Anxiety, Maladaptive Perfectionism.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, psychologists and sociologists note the increasing number of bullying cases such as hooliganism, fights, school bullying among adolescents (Sobkin, & Markina, 2009). Bullying rates vary from 15% to 25% in the USA, England, Austria, Finland and Australia (Olweus, 1991). An estimated 20% of youth have been bullied on school property, and 16% have been bullied electronically (Stephens et al., 2018). Increasing teenager aggressiveness and brutality is observed in small, prosperous countries such as Switzerland and Germany (Walter et al., 2012). Young people are spending increasing amounts of time using digital technology and, as such, are at great risk of being involved in cyberbullying as a victim, bully, or bully/victim (Betts et al., 2017; Charalampous et al., 2018; Hemphill et al., 2015; Tesler et al., 2019; Uludasdemir et al., 2019; Wachs et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2019). Adolescents engage in bullying and sexual harassment perpetration both in-person and online (Leemis et al., 2019). As opposed to an accidental quarrel or fight, bullying is intentional aggressive behaviour demonstrated regularly. Aggressive actions that teenagers below the age of criminal responsibility take at school cause a public outcry. Three criteria are relevant to define aggressive behaviour as bullying: repetition, intentionality and an imbalance of power. Given these characteristics, bullying is often defined as systematic abuse of power by peers. It is recognised globally as a complex and serious problem (Menesini et al., 2017). Bullying is classified as aggression: physical, emotional, sexual, verbal; direct or indirect. Indirect bullying implies manipulation of social relationship leading to the social isolation of the victim. In psychological studies, bullying is usually considered as a complex of social, psychological and pedagogical problems; thus, bullying is not a specific separate phenomenon characteristic of school or army. Even though bullying is registered in rather stable social groups, it embraces a wide range of social behaviour (Busch et al., 2017; Fiabane et al., 2015; Limber et al., 2018; López-Pérez et al., 2017; Nikolaou, 2017; Peters et al., 2017; Rettew et al., 2016; Riese et al., 2015; Ybarra et al., 2019; Zaborskis et al., 2019). In teenagers, risk factors for becoming a victim of bullying include being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender; having a disability or medical condition such as asthma, diabetes mellitus, a skin condition, or food allergy; or being an outlier in weight and stature.

All members of the social group with this problem can be described as participants of bullying. The role structure consists of three central positions: bullies (aggressors), victims and observers. Petrosyants (2011) defines the following central positions: offenders, victims and witnesses. Bullying leads to short- and long-term physical and psychological damage to both the victims and the bullies (Agervold, 2009; Fisher et al., 2017; Jackson et al., 2019; Jochman et al., 2017; Wylie et al., 2018). Bullying can result in emotional distress, depression, anxiety, social isolation, low self-esteem,

school avoidance/refusal, and substance abuse for the victim and the bully. Offenders are characterized by high success rate, positive attitude to aggression, lack of empathy, high need in dominance, inflated self-esteem, relatively high sociometric status. Victims are characterized by social disconnection, sensitivity, physical weakness, heightened anxiety level, the inclination to depression, negative self-attitude, high/low aggression level, and a small degree of social support. Characteristics of the victim, for example, lack of self-confidence, otherness, low social status, is widespread, but not the only reason for bullying. Other causes may include xenophobia, persecutors' need to dominate, acceptance of bullying as a norm by observers ([Guseynova, & Enikolopov, 2014](#)). Researches have shown the negative consequences of bullying for victims. It is highly probable that these people will become aggressors in the future. Besides, victims of bullying face increased risk of being prone to anxiety and depression ([Craig W.M., 1998](#)). Moderately and aggressively victimized students had greater probabilities of feeling like an outsider, experiencing anxiety, depressed moods, engaging in suicidal ideation and drinking when compared to non-victimized students ([Ashrafi et al., 2020](#)). Students with higher involvement in bullying victimization have more severe mental health problems ([Bannink et al., 2014](#); [Chan et al., 2019](#); [Fales et al., 2018](#); [Heerde et al., 2019](#); [Lee et al., 2018](#); [Marco et al., 2018](#); [Niu et al., 2020](#); [Priesman et al., 2018](#); [Trompeter et al., 2018](#); [Zhang et al., 2020](#)).

At the same time, developmental psychologists point out problems of self-esteem and forming self-concept typical of modern 5th and 6th graders. The news presented in the media (reports on terrorist attacks, disasters, accidents) may hurt the mental health and the character of adults' and children's fears and anxiety. Over the last decade, the students of comprehensive schools have listed war, physical abuse, stranger attack, robbery, parents' dismissal or death, poverty, misfortunes and failures among their fears ([Prikhozhan, 2009](#)).

Our objective is to analyze the relationship between aggressiveness and the content of fears and anxiety as substantial aspects of bullying. Today aggression is commonly defined as any type of behaviour which is aimed at causing damage or harm, contradicts norms and rules of human communities, arouses negative emotions, fear and depression. Aggressiveness is considered as one's constant readiness for aggressive actions in various situations. Whether it is physical or emotional aggression demonstrated by a person or a group of people, it is essential that the victim can't protect him-/herself. The participants of bullying differ in physical force and social power and want to confirm it. Hostility is a person's negative attitude towards another person. It is expressed in a negative evaluation of the victim and implies readiness to demonstrate the negative evaluation verbally or in any other way. Hostility and aggressiveness are the factors of the propensity for aggressive behaviour which can manifest itself in different ways: physically, verbally, indirectly. At the same time, anger is an emotional state engendered by internal physiological reactions and, or unfavourable events. Thoughts and memories contribute to the emergence of violence, too. Rage doesn't "launch" aggression directly but, as a rule, accompanies the incentive to attack the victim.

Contemporary society faces the problem of legitimization of aggression. In other words, the aggressors are convinced that attack is an acceptable way of conflict resolution; i.e., it is a behavioural norm. Sometimes teenagers even tell the teacher: "I have the right to break chairs, my parents will pay for them". Rudeness towards the teacher is a widespread phenomenon at today's school. Even a class teacher can become an instigator. Using "the Pygmalion effect", the teacher can encourage children's responsibility, kindness and other positive qualities as well as motivate and provoke aggression.

One of the possible explanations is that the process of school student's development and growing-up is getting more complicated because of scientific and technological progress. Without the emotional contact, which there is no time for, it is impossible to transmit moral values from one person to another. The cult of material well-being at all costs is accompanied by an insatiable neurotic need for external approval, for keeping up with other people. This way of living is imposed by the mass media using "aggressive technologies". That's why we prefer the humanistic direction in psychological support. The atmosphere of confidence creates a nutrient medium for the personal development of each member of the group. However, like any other method, using the elements of art for a psychological-counselling purpose has some disadvantages, too. It is hard to say which aspect of the technique causes changes: the very process of drawing, the final product of the creative work or the relationships among the participants of the training.

Having considered bullying as a form of aggression, we sought to analyze the relationship between the content of teenagers' fears and aggressiveness. The research was focused on the correlation between the teenager's (the participant of bullying) position and the level of his/her aggressiveness and anxiety, including perfectionist's fear. However, it is well-known that the characteristics of self-esteem and self-concept are hard to evaluate quantitatively. It should be taken into account that the adolescent's self-concept is still forming. Self-esteem and self-concept issues are usually accompanied by a high level of self-esteem and social anxiety. These types of stress can be evaluated quantitatively and therefore, can serve as markers of self-concept development problems. The following samples of stress were analyzed: school, self-esteem, interpersonal, magical stress, and anxiety caused by discrepancies between personal high standards and their achievement. It is important to note that "in the case of particular anxiety being the form of expression of general anxiety a certain 'spillover of anxiety' can be seen: anxiety eliminated in one sphere may 'pop up' in another sphere on the recurrent basis" ([Prikhozhan, 2009, p. 102](#)). T. B. Dmitrieva's words about the importance of mental health opines "Healthy person is the protection of the state, its military capability... Thus, health should be considered as a part of national security" ([Kekelidze, & Makushkin, 2011, p. 172](#)). We suggested that hostility is stably connected with

school, self-esteem, interpersonal and magical anxiety of adolescents and that victims of bullying are stably overanxious, demonstrate a high level of hatred and are prone to aggression in their behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of the research lies both in the concepts of the Buss-Perry psychology of aggression and the psychology of anxiety by A. M. Prikhodzhan which sees concern through the prism of adaptation. In our research, we have used methods to measure several psychological indices to evaluate aggressiveness and anxiety. We used the following methods. Anxiety scale for school students aged 10—12 (A. M. Prikhodzhan). Buss-Perry method – the Russian version of BPAQ (A. Buss, & M. Perry).

Perfectionism questionnaire – the Russian version of the APS-R scale. The APS-R range is based on R. Slaney's model. The scales of the Russian version of the questionnaire can be divided into measuring healthy (adaptive) perfectionism and the maladaptive one which can be a risk factor for neurotic personality development (Yasnaya, & Enikolopov, 2013). The questionnaire scales may be technically divided into those measuring healthy, adaptive perfectionism and maladaptive, neurotic perfectionism that can be a risk factor for several mental disorders.

Adaptive perfectionism (leads to self-complacency and boosts self-esteem):

1. Standards – measures one's pursuit of high personal standards in activities and life.
2. Order – reflects a tendency to maintain order, be accurate, organized.
3. Maladaptive perfectionism:
4. Discrepancy (key factor according to Slaney) – feeling of being unable to adhere to self-established high unrealistic standards. The scale measures distress caused by a discrepancy between high standards and their achievement.
5. Relationship – difficulties in an interpersonal relationship (as a consequence of too high standards and constant distress).
6. Procrastination/Anxiety. Procrastination – a propensity for delays, inability to start doing something. In this case, anxiety is caused by an inability or fear to conform to predefined high unrealistic standards. The factor reveals such personal traits as emotional instability, dependency, anxiety and propensity to delay things.

Sociometric test adapted by A.Ya. Kaplan. Participant observation, psychological conversation.

Class teachers reported cases of unusual behaviour (when it was a student's behaviour, not his/her cognitive skills, that attracted their attention). There are some examples of abnormal behaviour: the student often raises his/her hand but then can't answer the question, walks around the class during the lesson and doesn't react to teacher's rebukes. Besides, class teachers ranged students' aggression towards the others (including pedagogical staff and other adults) as well as symbolic actions: breaking chairs, kicking bags, etc. The teachers evaluated the unusualness of behaviour and the aggression towards the others using a three-point scale.

The research was carried out in a Moscow school with advanced study of English. The sample included 70 6th grade (then 7th grade) students. The students did the tasks of psychological tests individually. They also completed a sociometric test within their social group (class). By the moment we've got the results of four sequential measurements on the following subscales of the anxiety technique: school, self-esteem, interpersonal and magical anxiety. The measurements were taken first in October and then in April of the same academic year. The Buss-Perry questionnaire was used twice in April, in spring. Working with the 7th graders, we also used the perfectionism questionnaire.

RESULTS / FINDINGS

The relationship between aggressiveness and school anxiety

Hostility, anger and partially physical aggression among children increases with the current heightened level of the school, interpersonal, self-esteem and magical anxiety. Self-esteem anxiety becomes the most critical factor.

In the course of the research, we found significant correlations among the 6 graders (Like Table 1).

Table 1: *The results of the correlation analysis of the aggression questionnaire and the anxiety test scores. The 6 grade*

Scales	Spearman's rank correlation coefficients			
	School anxiety	Self-esteem anxiety	Interpersonal anxiety	Magical anxiety
	r	r	r	r
Physical aggression	n.s.	0.32**	n.s.	n.s.
Anger	0.42***	0.41***	0.37**	0.28*
Hostility	0.45***	0.36**	0.47***	0.29*

n.s.: non-significant value; the levels of significance are marked with symbols: *: $p < 0,05$; **: $p < 0,01$; ***: $p < 0,001$.

The data on the average values of physical aggression, anger and hostility are given below in Table 2.

Table 2: Data on different values of aggression

Scales	Values		
	Average	Median	Standard deviation
Physical aggression	20.7	20	6.2
Anger	17.1	17	5.0
Hostility	16.8	16	6.4

As we see in Table 1, teenagers' hostility and anger are associated with school, interpersonal, self-esteem and magical anxiety. The connections between hostility and anxiety are stable over time. When surveying the same teenagers in a year, we found significant correlations among the 7 graders, too (Like Table 3).

Table 3: The results of the correlation analysis of the aggression questionnaire and the anxiety test scores. The 7 grade

Scales	Spearman's rank correlation coefficients			
	School anxiety	Self-esteem anxiety	Interpersonal anxiety	Magical anxiety
	r	r	r	r
Anger	n.s.	.33**	n.s.	n.s.
Hostility	.38**	.42**	.46***	.41**

We decided to find out what are the differences between the groups of hostile and unhostile teenagers. To identify the group of hostile teenagers, we divided students into two contrast groups based on the scale "Hostility": those scoring more and less than 17 points. Then we analyzed the differences between the groups of hostile (above 17 points) and unhostile (below 17 points) students using the Mann-Whitney U-criterion. More hostile students are more anxious ($p < 0,05$).

Besides, we decided to find out what are the differences between the groups of physically aggressive and physically non-aggressive teenagers. More physically aggressive students are more anxious ($p < 0,05$). We can see that the anxiety rates are somewhat similar.

We also revealed gender differences in students' aggressive behaviour. As expected, teenage boys turned out to be more inclined to physical aggression than teenage girls ($p < 0,05$). The girls are more inclined to hostility ($p < 0,06$).

Anxiety and maladaptive perfectionism

Thus, we have shown the connection between anxiety, hostility and students' aggressive behaviour. But how stable are the anxiety rates during secondary school? We surveyed students in dynamics the beginning and at the end of the 6 and then the 7 grades using the anxiety scale. For each subscale we distinguished the following levels of anxiety: 1-2 sthenes – low-anxious (the "excessive tranquillity" can function as psychological protection); more than two but less than nine sthenes – normal level of anxiety; 9-10 sthenes – overanxious, marked as a risk group (Prikhodzhan, 2009, Appendix 1). It should be noted that teenagers' interpersonal anxiety is strongly associated with self-esteem ($r = 0,81$, $p < 0,001$), school ($r = 0,68$, $p < 0,001$) and magical ($r = 0,42$, $p < 0,001$) types. The most numerous risk group was detected according to the interpersonal anxiety subscale: it permanently includes about 20% of teenagers during two years at secondary school. It is less than at primary school. According to the results of longitudinal research of younger schoolchildren's anxiety, the risk group at primary school includes 35% of children. However, such difference corresponds with the data of other authors (Prikhodzhan, 2009).

We also got interesting results using a sociometric test. We found a correlation (not high but significant) between student's interpersonal anxiety level and the values of the sociometric index "Frustration" ($r = 0,31$, $p < 0,05$). Besides, in each of four classes that participated in the survey, there were teenagers isolated from their social group (class). The highly isolated students can be described as follows: overanxious (10 sthenes), distinguished by a high level of hostility and, according to teachers' expert evaluation, inclined to aggressive behaviour. They also have the highest values of the sociometric index "Frustration" in their classes. We tested the highly isolated teenagers using the incomplete sentences method. There are examples of sentences completed by these students: "Most of all, I wish called me names", "I think most classmates don't respect me", "If I could become invisible, I would steal money from the government and give equal shares to the poor", "My three wishes are: to enter Oxford, to become the president of Gazprom, to become a powerful man". We should add that other students pester the "outcasts" with mercantile mocking: "You're wearing the same shirt today like yesterday", "You are a moron, you don't have a 50 thousand rubles bag".

Bullies (aggressors), according to the results of the research, demonstrate fears, too. These fears are associated with the situations where they have to confirm their relatively high (neither stars nor outcasts) status in the group. There are examples of sentences completed by these students: "Most of all, I wish I were clever, so my classmates didn't offend

me”; “Most of all, I wish I had a 120 thousand rubles watch. I am afraid I’ll never have friends”. Therefore, we added the perfectionism questionnaire for the 7 graders (see “Methods of research” section).

We found significant correlations between anxiety and the scores of maladaptive perfectionism (Like Table 4).

Table 4: The results of the correlation analysis of the perfectionism questionnaire and the anxiety test scores

Scales	Spearman’s rank correlation coefficients			
	School anxiety	Self-esteem anxiety	Interpersonal anxiety	Magical anxiety
	r	r	r	r
Discrepancy	.49***	.39**	.50***	n.s.
Relationship	n.s.	n.s.	.34**	n.s.

Besides, we found a significant correlation between teenager’s level of anger and the “Discrepancy” scale scores ($r = 0,39$, $p < 0,01$). Hostility is associated with the inability to correspond to high standards that the individual sets for him-/herself ($r = 0,44$, $p < 0,001$) as well as with the difficulties in interpersonal relationships caused by unrealistic standards and the state of overanxiety ($r = 0,43$, $p < 0,001$).

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

We can draw a parallel between these data and the results of longitudinal research on anxiety at primary school. The students from the anxiety risk group are rather popular in their class and motivated for success. Although their position in the group, appearance, parents’ financial resources and academic achievements are rather good, they manifest diffuse anxiety. According to self-reports, the students are scared to lose their high status in their social group. The teachers point out that they are also afraid to make a mistake, mostly in public situations, when answering questions in class. Their conflict self-esteem makes them both strive for success and continuously doubt it. The maladaptive forms of perfectionism are caused by the phenomenon of “conditional acceptance” in the parent-child relationship. We should also mention the cult of success in modern society. B and A grade students get into the risk group as long as they are not psychologically ready to accept failures and imperfections and continuously feel anxious in “the race for success”. Real achievements are depreciated while the requirements set for oneself continuously grow, creating an endless way to self-improvement and a stable level of overanxiety. Besides, leaving no room for error and exhausting oneself by unrealistic expectations are connected with destructive tendencies ([Sokolova, & Tsygankova, 2011](#)). The risk of autoaggressive behaviour grows.

Thus, it is an integrated approach to studying a person’s destructive tendencies and aggressive behaviour which has good prospects in the context of modern interpretation of anxiety and aggressiveness. In the course of the research, we identified highly isolated students in each class. According to the data of participant observation and teachers’ expert evaluations, they become victims of aggressors as well as those of “observers” who take the position of passive aggressors. The “outcasts” are usually overanxious, demonstrate a high level of hostility and tend to be aggressive in their behaviour. There are good reasons to suppose that they’ll turn into aggressors in the future. Such an assumption corresponds with the findings of another research on bullying: the victims manifest high aggression and anxiety levels they are emotionally and behaviorally unstable. Let’s reformulate the classical frustration-aggression theory. An individual behaves aggressively when he/she thinks that he/she is treated mistreated or evaluates other people’s actions as directed against him/her or his/her significant others. As a consequence, he or she responds with aggression to maintain the status quo. Still, one’s objective and conscious attitude towards the inability to satisfy one’s own needs doesn’t always lead to aggression as the most probable reaction. Thus, one of the significant motives for aggressive actions may be the problems associated with self-esteem and the level of aspiration.

Another result of our study is the fact that hostility positively correlates with school, self-esteem, interpersonal and magical anxiety of an adolescent. Students’ self-esteem anxiety is connected with anger. However, the reasons underlying student’s aggressiveness require more thorough investigation and are related to the problems of teenager’s self-concept formation.

An Integrated Approach to the problem of aggression

The WHO proposes an integrated model of studying aggression and violence. Initially, this model was applied to investigating child abuse. There are four levels in this model. The first one is personal: it is focused on psychological and physiological risk factors for aggressive behaviour. For example, there is a so-called Type A personality which is characterized by reactive aggressiveness and high competitiveness. The second level is relationships: it deals with aggression in the family, lack of parental warmth, traumatic experience of parents’ breakup, etc. According to our counselling experience, parents often pay little constructive attention to children in outwardly respectable families. The third level of the ecological model is the socio-psychological one. Frequent home moves associated with life and health risks, non-availability of quality education, guns without gun safety, frustration as a reaction to bad attitude – these are risk factors of socio-psychological nature. Virtually, every act of bullying has social prehistory. And, finally, the fourth level deals with the cultural norms accepted in society. Those who watch “aggressive” films grow relatively indifferent

to aggression. Those who witness bullying become less capable of empathy. Dissemination of norms implying that assault and violence are acceptable ways to resolve conflicts and arguments increases attack in the society. However, increasing hostility is not the only effect. An attack can be redirected inwards, too.

In this regard, it is appropriate to mention the Marilyn Monroe Effect – a phenomenon that has been discussed in the USA since the 70-s of the 20th century. The death of the famous actress caused a 12% increase in suicide rates in the USA and 10% in Great Britain, as compared with standard statistics ([Berkowitz, 2001](#)). The same author describes a similar aspect of imitating aggressive actions towards other people if these actions are committed in public or widely covered by the media. The sociologists are familiar with the phenomenon of copycat crimes. In 1890 French sociologist G. Tarde wrote that people are susceptible to aggressive ideas and try to copy them. He thought that the sins of famous Jack the Ripper committed in London in 1888 had such an impact on people: “Less than in a year eight identical crimes were committed in this large city. Moreover, later the same crimes were repeated... the capital (and abroad). The epidemic of infectious disease spreads through the air or by the wind; epidemic of crimes is transmitted via telegraph lines” ([Tarde, 1912, p. 340—341](#)). It is well-known that adolescents are more conformist than adults, more dependent on the opinions of significant other people and have categoric maximalist attitudes, which increases both aggression and auto aggression risks. Over the last 6-7 years, the frequency of suicides among teenagers in Russia has been 19-20 cases per 100 000 teenagers while in the world the rate has been 7 cases per 100 000 ([Bizina et al., 2013](#)). Behind auto aggression, there are problems associated with self-concept formation, unstable children’s self-esteem, the self-image of “an outcast” or “a victim”. Suicidal intent can be a consequence of bullying ([Baldwin et al., 2019](#); [Chang et al., 2019](#); [Geoffroy et al., 2016](#); [John et al., 2018](#); [Kim et al., 2009](#); [Kim et al., 2019](#); [Klomek et al., 2009](#); [Klomek A., Sourander A., & Gould M., 2010](#); [Patchin, & Hinduja, 2010](#); [Patchin, & Hinduja, 2017](#); [Peng et al., 2019](#); [Sampasa-Kanyinga et al., 2014](#); [Van der Wal et al., 2003](#); [Williams et al., 2017](#); [Winsper et al., 2012](#); [Yen et al., 2015](#)). A 6th-grade girl who participated in our survey told us: “I tried. I saved 13 thousand rubles and spent it all so that they leave me alone. I can’t stand it any longer...” (The girl bought earphones for her offender, but in two weeks the classmates started teasing her again).

The problem can be solved with psychological methods. We developed, tested and implemented a psychological support programme for adolescents and preadolescents ([Tarasova, 2016](#)). It includes a discussion as well as non-verbal work on the following subjects: “my ordinary day”, “my desires”, “the person I like”, “the person I don’t like”, “real me – ideal me”, “me in the past, present and future”, “the person I am afraid of”, etc. There are also projective techniques such as “me in 10 years”, “my dream”, “my goal”. Creative work helps to resolve conflicts because one can redirect negative emotions from destructive track to the constructive one using art. Today practical psychology is represented by various scientific schools. A humanistic approach to art therapy is used both for unlocking one’s creative potential and for personal growth. Nevertheless, the scientific schools mentioned above don’t have apparent contradictions. The main thing is to develop personal responsibility, the ability to keep one’s word, to make choices and to answer for the consequences.

About 15 years ago we counselled a 13-year-old skinhead who lived in the South-Eastern district of Moscow. Working within the framework of causal psychotherapy, we found out that the reason for his aggressiveness was the parent-child relationship. The boy didn’t feel needed in his family. Some elements of art therapy were used. There was Hitler’s birthday coming up: this day skinheads usually go fighting. The psychologist suggested the teenager: “Ok, let’s draw and discuss how you will be fighting”. The boy made a detailed picture: grinders, bald heads, skulls, swastikas. When offered to name his drawing, the teenager asked: “How is it spelt: ‘fight’ or ‘fit’?” That time the boy didn’t go fighting. But to solve the problem of teenagers’ aggressive behaviour on the scale of the whole society, it is not enough to rely only on psychological techniques, even proposed by various scientific schools.

CONCLUSION

In the course of the research, we identified highly isolated students in each class. According to the data of participant observation and teachers’ expert evaluations, they become victims of aggressors as well as those of “observers” who take the position of passive aggressors. The “outcasts” are usually overanxious, demonstrate a high level of hostility and tend to be aggressive in their behaviour. There are good reasons to suppose that they’ll turn into aggressors in the future.

Another result of our study is the fact that hostility positively correlates with school, self-esteem, interpersonal and magical anxiety of an adolescent. Students’ self-esteem anxiety is connected with anger. However, the reasons underlying student’s aggressiveness require more thorough investigation and are related to the problems of teenager’s self-concept formation.

Aggression in general and bullying as a form of attack are the results of the association of individual, social, cultural and economic factors. Psychologists should work not with aggressors or victims only but with their social environment, too. Another influential factor is the state policies in the spheres of education and social and economic relations which contribute to the high level of social and economic inequality between different groups of society. Dissemination of norms implying that aggression and violence are acceptable ways to resolve conflicts and arguments increases attack in the community. It also raises the risk of autoaggressive behaviour. It is essential to maintain the cultural norms (using mass media, too) that regard violence as an inappropriate method of conflict resolution. It is also necessary to change the

attitude towards suicide that must be viewed not as one's personal choice but as an act of violence which can and must be prevented.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

As part of longitudinal research, 70 schoolchildren of the 6th and then 7th grade in a Moscow school underwent qualitatively and a quantitative test on aggressiveness and anxiety. The survey was completed in dynamics to confirm the stability or volatility of the results, thus enabling us to claim the findings as quite reliable. We plan to develop the theme of transformation of the victim into an aggressor.

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