The relation between bullying at school and cyber bullying: risk and protective factors

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Abstract

Introduction: Bullying and victimization have long-term consequences on mental health. Cognitive interventions are among the recommended, but there is limited research investigating the effect of cognitive strategies on bullying and their reciprocal interactions. The aims of the study were to (a) test the extent to which adaptive and maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies (CERS) are used by adolescents who get involved in bullying incidents and (b) examine the bidirectional reciprocal effect between bullying, victimization and CERS using a cross-lagged design.

Methods: Five hundred sixty adolescents aged 15-18 from Cyprus participated in this longitudinal study with three time points over a year (every four months) and completed among other questionnaires, the Bullying Victimization Questionnaire Revised (BVQ-R) and the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ). The cross-lagged design allowed examination of the long-term reciprocal interactions between bullying and CERS, using Mplus 7.3

Conclusions: The findings supported the unidirectional effect of maladaptive CERS on long-term victimization and bullying. This supports that training on CERS and CBT informed challenging of cognitive distortions about self-blame could be protective, especially against long-term victimization.

Results: Results indicated that with regard to the frequency of CERS used, significant differences existed only for self-blame and catastrophizing (higher for victims), as well as others-blame (higher for bully/victims). The cross-lagged longitudinal model with continuous variables showed good fit, with $\chi2(230)=885.755$, $p<.001$, CFI=.962, TLI=.916, RMSEA=.062. Long-term victimization was consistently significantly predicted by the use of maladaptive CERS, with emphasis on self-blame, rumination and catastrophizing, whereas the reverse relationship was not supported. Long-term bullying at time three was significantly predicted by use of others-blame at time two, and again no reciprocal effect was detected.

Keywords: Victim, catastrophizing, Bullying

Biography:

Ifigenia Stylianou is a Licensed School Psychologist. She has a BA in Psychology and has completed a third-year MA degree in Applied School Psychology from the University of Cyprus. She is currently runs a private practice while at the same time she is a Doctoral candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Cyprus, where she is also employed part-time as an Instructor and a Research Scientist. She has experience in working with children, adolescents and young adults with psychosocial problems and behavioural difficulties. She also has expertise in developing and implementing prevention and intervention programs in schools and the corporate environment. These programs focus on developing basic skills such as self-regulation, stress management skills, effective goal setting, time management etc.). She is also an expert in implementing interventions that involve counselling, behaviour modification, and family therapy. She has published much of her Research in School and Clinical Psychology and she has presented her work in numerous international conferences.

Speaker Publications:

1.Comparing Oral Interviewing with Self-Administered Computerized Questionnaires An Experiment: Public opinion quarterly/ 2010/ 74(1): 154-167/ DOI: 10.1093/poq/nfp090

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