

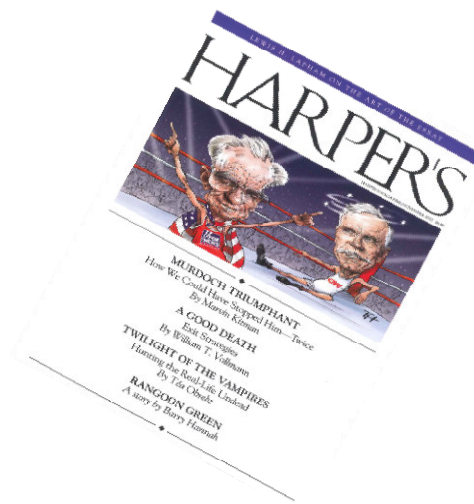
WHY DO KIDS BULLY OTHERS?

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Briefing Note 4

Let's ask the bullies...

BULLIES TEND TO CHOOSE UNPOPULAR KIDS SO THEY CAN KEEP THEIR STATUS WHILE NOT LOSING THE AFFECTION OF THE IN-GROUP, A NEW STUDY FINDS.

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Why do kids bully others?

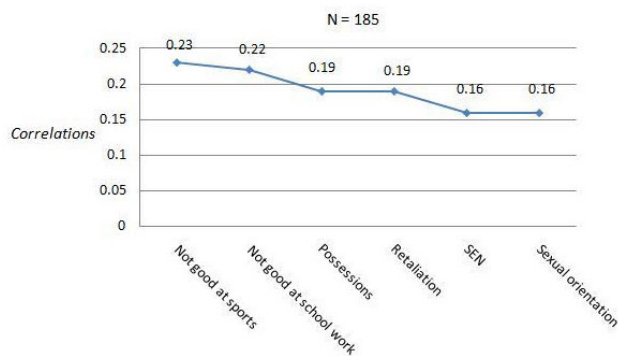
LET'S ASK THE BULLIES.

Why do bullies bully?

In over forty years of research on bullying, we have never asked young people who bully others to tell us why they do it.

A series of studies conducted by Ian Rivers and his colleagues on a sample of 2,002 British school children (mean age 13.6 years) have shown that levels of hostility among 185 children who self identified as 'bullies' are significantly related to certain characteristics of victims (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: WHAT MAKES BULLIES ANGRY



Rivers and colleagues¹ found that bullies were most angered by peers who were *NOT GOOD AT SPORTS*, and those who *WERE NOT SO GOOD AT SCHOOL WORK*. Pupils' responses also suggested that *AVARICE*, and *RETALIATION* were also high on the list of reasons why they bullied others.

Students with *SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS* and students were perceived to be *LESBIAN OR GAY* were also found to anger bullies.

Predictors of Bias and Non-Bias Bullying

According to Rivers and colleagues *BOYS* who engage in *NON-BIAS* bullying were *LESS LIKELY TO UNDERSTAND THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS*, *MORE LIKELY TO REPORT DEPRESSION* and symptoms of *PARANOIA*. *GIRLS*, on the other hand, were found to report symptoms of *PHOBIC ANXIETY*. In terms of *BIAS* bullying, where victims may have *SEN*, or be lesbian or gay, or disabled, boys were also found to be *LESS LIKELY TO UNDERSTAND THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS*, were *MORE LIKELY TO REPORT DEPRESSION* and symptoms of *PARANOID IDEATION*. Girls reported symptoms of *OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER*, *PHOBIC ANXIETY* and also *PARANOID IDEATION*. Thus, an *IRRATIONAL FEAR OR ANXIETY* surrounding the presence of others seems to underpin bullying behaviour.

REFERENCES

1. Rivers, I. et al. (2011). Perpetration of bias-related victimization: Intersections with perceived sexual orientation at school. Presented at the 119th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., USA, 6th August.