

# Bullying vs. Teen Dating Violence

## Bullying

*Unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.<sup>1</sup>*

### The Bully's Goal: *Abjection*

To psychologically, emotionally, and physically damage the victim.

The bully often has little personal or emotional attachment to the victim, and as a result, there are generally few instances in which the bully will have positive interactions with the victim. Also, because there are mostly negative feelings toward the victim, the aim isn't necessarily to dominate and control, but to harm.

## Teen Dating Violence

*Occurs when one partner uses violence or threats of violence to gain and maintain power and control over the other. The behaviors are repeated and intentional over time.<sup>2</sup>*

The perpetrator and victim typically have a close, intimate relationship, and as a result, there are instances in which the perpetrator will have positive interactions with the victim, making the abuse more difficult to pinpoint and define. The aim is not necessarily to cause harm, but rather to assert dominance and control.

The Perpetrator's Goal: *Subjection*  
To subordinate and control the victim.

*Although there are notable contrasts between bullying and TDV, it is also important to understand how they are interrelated.*

## Bullying and TDV Overlap

Violence against peers and early antisocial behavior and aggression have been correlated with using sexual and physical violence in dating relationships. Similarly, students who reported bullying their peers also reported more violence victimization in their dating relationships (both physical and social) than non-bullies. Bullying and TDV often co-occur.

## Development of Bullying and TDV from Childhood through Adolescence

Risk factors for TDV perpetration include exposure to trauma, abuse, and/or violence as well as family conflict and/or aggression in early life. These risk factors may lead to deviancy and bullying when students are developing personal identity in grades 6-8. As these students develop sexual identity and attitudes, they become more susceptible to TDV, sexual harassment, and health risk behavior (i.e. substance abuse and risky sex) in grades 9-11.

### References

<sup>1</sup>"Bullying Definition." (n.d.). <http://1.usa.gov/19f4a02>; Roberts, S. (2001). <sup>2</sup>*Bullying and dating violence: Effective intervention and prevention in Multnomah County.* (n.d.). <http://bit.ly/173xt30>; Sercombe, H. and Donnelly, B. (2013). Bullying and agency: Definition, intervention and ethics. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16(4), 491-502.; Espelage et al., L. (2013). Relation between bully and teen dating violence perpetration across early to late adolescence. <http://bit.ly/1F5Z8jz>

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