

The impact of bullying in schools on female adolescents' mental health: A case series

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ABSTRACT

Individuals who are bullied are at heightened risk of developing mental health problems. This case series delves into personal adolescents' experiences impacted by bullying and its subsequent effects on their mental well-being. Case 1 "Girl's Rival" describing a 17-year-old girl faced physical and emotional bullying at 14 years old at a boarding school due to an argument with a fellow female student. The bully was the boyfriend of the other girl and his friends. Despite wanting to change schools, she was persuaded by her parents to stay until completing her form 3 exams, which prolonged the bullying. After switching to an ordinary school in form 4 and living with her stable family, her anxiety persisted and worsened, affecting her studies and daily life. She sought help during form 5 and was diagnosed as having generalized anxiety disorder. With psychotherapy and antidepressant treatment, she managed to achieve 2 As in her SPM exam and further study in Fine Metal Art Diploma. Case 2 "Boyfriend's torture" describing a 16-year-old girl who became a target of verbal bullying in a boarding school since form two after entering a relationship. Even after breaking up, one of her ex-boyfriends continued to harass her on social media platforms. As a result, she experienced a depressed mood, disturbed sleep, and poor concentration in class. Her symptoms worsened during the pandemic, and she resorted to self-harm behaviours, including wrist and thigh cutting, and one instance of consuming Clorox bleach. Raised by her father and grandparents after her parents' divorce, she received support from her stepmother, who brought her for treatment. She was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder, and later was referred to a psychiatrist due to ongoing self-harm behaviour and a drug overdose incident. She is stable on medication and obtained 8 As for her SPM. Case 3 "School Refusal" describing a 17-year-old girl who experienced bullying during form one at a boarding school, leading her to switch schools during form two. As a result, she developed depressive symptoms and attempted suicide at the boarding school. Raised by her grandparents and aunties after her parents' divorce, her symptoms worsened due to elements of parental alienation syndrome. She eventually refused to attend school and was brought for treatment by her aunt. Diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder with anxiety symptoms, she showed improvement with antidepressant and psychotherapy. Her aunt managed to resolve parental issues through communication with both parents. She subsequently obtained her driving license and achieved 4 As for her SPM. The psychological effects on the victim's mental health were explored, as well as the family dynamics and interventions implemented. These case studies shed light on the diverse manifestations and consequences of bullying on female adolescents' mental health. They reveal commonalities in terms of the timing of bullying incidents and seeking healthcare treatment. The series underscores the significance of recognizing and addressing the impact of bullying on adolescents' mental health and providing effective intervention as early as possible to promote their overall well-being.