

Lesson 4

Say ‘No’ to Bullying

A. Warm up

Discuss the following questions in pairs

1. Have you ever been treated unfairly by your school or college peers? If yes, how did you feel about it?
2. What do you mean by the term ‘bullying’?
3. Look at the word cloud below. What behaviours/feelings are associated with the term ‘bullying’? Can you add some more words to the list?



- B. Now read the following newspaper report published in the online news portal, thedailystar.net. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Burning Issue of Bullying

[Aug 2, 2022 01:18 PM]

In a study conducted in June 2021, it was found that 44.4 percent of school students in Bangladesh suffered from bullying.

Bullying typically refers to deliberate actions or repeated behaviour that can be verbal, physical, psychological, or social, which cause a serious extent of intimidation or offence to someone else. Such actions undermine, humiliate, and cause both physical and emotional harm to the subjects. Young students especially tend to be extremely vulnerable to bullying, mainly because many of them are not entirely aware of the concept – that is, victims do not realise that they are being bullied, and bullies do not realise that they are causing harm.

In a report by UNESCO published in October 2019, it was shown that 23 percent of school students in Bangladesh are victims of bullying. In another study conducted in June 2021, it was found that 44.4 percent of school students in Bangladesh suffered from bullying. These data give us an idea of the prevalence of bullying in our country and how it is becoming a pressing issue by the day.

Existing data suggest that 44.4 percent of school students had experienced bullying victimisation. This is comparable to another study, according to a survey report by UNICEF which included a sample from 122 countries, where 35 percent of children aged between 13 and 15 years in Bangladesh said they experienced bullying at school.

Many children start bullying others without the knowledge of the consequences, not realising that their actions may be hurtful, as the actions often leave them with a feeling of authority over others. On the other hand, many children suffer from external trauma within their personal lives and tend to normalise crude behaviour within themselves, exerting their pent-up frustration on other children. Flipping the coin towards another perspective, many bullies have often been victims themselves.

Mostly, bullies go on to suffer negative impacts further down the line. Issues in relationships with friends and family, difficulty coping with varying work environments, anxiety disorders, and many more problems may arise as they transition into adulthood. The victims of bullying, on the other hand, grow up with serious mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, inferiority complex, eating disorders, and loneliness. Moreover, bullied children may also resort to becoming bullies themselves, keeping the cycle going.

Moreover, the counselling department of the school could also take initiatives such as organising workshops, conducting one-on-one sessions, and assigning a monitor among the students who would proactively address uncalled-for situations and inform teachers of them. Schools could also install complaint boxes which students can write to the authorities about any incidents that made them feel uncomfortable. To deal with such situations, students might also adopt a few strategies, such as standing up for each other, facing the bully in a group, and uniting against the bully to tackle him/her. As part of the development measure, they should be trained in groups from an early age to deal with such behaviour in a group.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/the-burning-issue-bullying-3085901>

Questions

- According to the study conducted in 2021, what percentage of students are victims of bullying?
- What are the causes of bullying mentioned in the report above?
- What are some of the probable effects of bullying on students?
- Make a list of initiatives that can be done to prevent bullying in school.



- C. This is an excerpt from the desk review titled ‘Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces in Bangladesh’ which was issued by Share-Net Bangladesh secretariat. Read the following text and answer the questions that follow.**

Like many other South Asian countries, in Bangladesh, the gravity of sexual harassment in public space has been diluted and almost “normalised” through calling it ‘eve-teasing’. ‘Eve teasing’ is just another term for sexual harassment in public space or street harassment in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries. By using a benign word such as ‘teasing’ to express a behaviour that is grossly inappropriate, it reduces the extent of the action, therefore, we should use the word sexual harassment instead of “eve-teasing” in order to address this deep-seated problem of our society.

Although late, policymakers in Bangladesh are also finally realising that eve-teasing constitutes sexual harassment. There is no estimate on national prevalence of sexual harassment in public spaces in Bangladesh.

A 2015 survey by ActionAid, an international non-governmental organisation, found that 84% of 800 women and girls reported experiencing sexual harassment in public places.

According to Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), a legal aid organisation, 108 women were sexually harassed in Bangladesh between January and October 2018, of which eight women attempted suicide, and seven men were murdered when they protested these harassments.

To allow social change regarding sexual harassment to take place in Bangladesh, it is imperative that we as a society listen more to the survivors, rather than blaming them. Starting from school-level interventions, public and private stakeholders must immediately begin to reframe the messaging around socialization of boys and girls and stop the propagation of stereotypical mind-set from parents, teachers and community to their children.

- D. Can you come up with a list of actions that can help society to reduce sexual harassment in public spaces? Make a presentation on this and present your work in the class.**

E. Read the following definitions of bullying and types of bullying. Then discuss the following questions in small groups.

“Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feels unable to stop it from happening.”

(National Centre Against Bullying, Australia; www.ncab.org.au)

Types of bullying

Verbal bullying	Social bullying	Physical bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teasing • Name calling • Inappropriate sexual comments • Taunting • Threatening to cause harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving someone out on purpose • Telling other children not to be friends with someone • Spreading rumours about someone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting/kicking/pinching • Spitting • Tripping/pushing • Taking or breaking someone’s things • Making mean facial or hand gestures

Source: www.stopbullying.gov

Questions for group discussion

- Do you see any bullying in your college? What forms does it take?
- What are some examples of bullying in your college?
- Can you give an example of group bullying?
- What can you/your friends do in your college to stop bullying?

F . Now read the following newspaper report published in the online news portal bdnews24.com. Then answer the questions that follow.

35% of school students experience bullying in Bangladesh: UNICEF

[News Desk, bdnews24.com

Published: 06 Sep 2018 03:27 PM BdST Updated: 06 Sep 2018 03:27 PM BdST,]

In Bangladesh, 35 percent students aged between 13 and 15 reported being bullied one or more days in 30 days or involved in a physical fight at least once in 12 months in 2014, says a new report.

Globally, half of students aged between 13 and 15 worldwide – around 150 million – report having experienced peer-to-peer violence such as physical fights or forms of bullying, from their peers in and around school, according to the report released by UNICEF.

The report is based on data from the *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children: Cross-national Study* and the Global School-based Student Health Surveys. The data include 122 countries, representing 51 per cent of the global population of children between 13 and 15.

The report finds that students experience other forms of violence at school, such as attacks in classrooms or physical punishment by teachers.

About 720 million school-age children live in countries where they are not fully protected by law against forms of physical punishment at school, according to the report.

“Education is the key to building peaceful societies, and yet, for millions of children around the world, school itself is not safe,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “Every day, students face multiple dangers, including fighting, pressure to join gangs, bullying – both in person and online– violent discipline, sexual harassment and armed violence. In the short-term this impacts their learning, and in the long-term it can lead to depression, anxiety and even suicide. Violence is an unforgettable lesson that no child needs to learn.”

Globally, slightly more than one in three students between 13 and 15 said they experience bullying, according to the report. About one in three has been involved in physical fights.

On the other hand, 17 million young adolescents in 39 industrialised countries have admitted bullying others at school, according to the report.

While girls and boys are equally at risk of bullying, girls are more likely to become victims of psychological forms of bullying and boys are more at risk of physical violence and threats.

The report notes that violence involving weapons in schools, such as knives and guns, continues to claim lives. It also says that in an increasingly digital world, bullies are disseminating violent, hurtful and humiliating content with the click of a button.

Questions

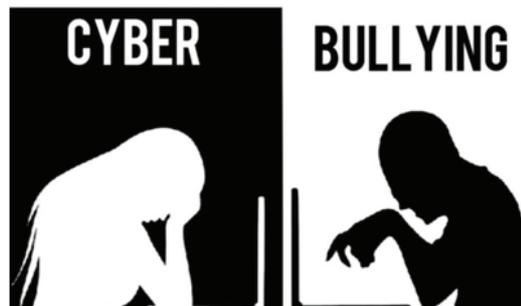
- What picture of bullying among Bangladeshi young students is presented in the report?
- What percentage of students globally are victims of peer to peer bullying?
- Do boys and girls become victims of the same type of bullying? Explain.
- Is bullying a problem in developing countries only?

G. Now read the letter written by a female student seeking help from the 'Your Advocate' counselling page of the newspaper *Daily Star* and discuss the questions that follow.

Query

I am a college student. In social media I have been facing a few problems since the very beginning. In the public groups and pages, I often face harassment by unknown users and strangers in the comment section. I wanted to know if there is any legal solution to my problem.

*Shila (not real name)
Sirajganj*



Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/law-our-rights/your-advocate/cyber-bullying-1586431>

Questions to discuss in pairs.

- What is Shila's problem?
- What suggestions would you give Shila to cope with her problems?

H. Read the reply given to Shila's letter by a legal practitioner.

The situation you are facing is commonly known as cyber bullying. It is basically an act done by a person(s) against another person(s) by using electronic communication, e.g. social media. A few examples of cyber bullying are— causing someone harm by posting unwanted or private information, threatening a person by sending mean messages via emails, social networking websites, text or audio messages, spreading rumours via email or social networking sites, sharing private/embarrassing pictures, creating fake profiles, etc.

In Bangladesh, cyber bullying is not just an act to be scorned at but is an offence punishable under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act 2006. The Act, *inter alia*, provides that a person who deliberately publishes, in a website or in electronic form, any material which is fake and obscene or has the effect of corrupting persons who are likely to read, see or hear the material or causes to prejudice the image of a person or may hurt religious belief or instigate against any person, then the person publishing the material will be guilty of an offence under the Act. The punishment for such an offence is imprisonment and/or fine.

Victims of cyber crimes (including cyber bullying) can lodge a complaint to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) by calling at +880-29611111 or by emailing at btrc@btrc.gov.bd. BTRC is supposed to take necessary actions within 24 hours and the perpetrators will be brought to justice within 3 days after the complaint is filed. The government has also launched a cyber-crime helpline. Victims can call at +8801766678888 to submit their complaints.

Furthermore, if the harassment amounts to criminal intimidation (threatening someone with injury to his/her person, reputation, property etc.), then the perpetrator may be liable to punishment as per the Penal Code 1860.

The steps mentioned above should definitely be taken if the matter is serious. An important first step is the internal reporting process of the particular social media website or application. If we take Facebook, for example, photos and comments can be reported and the particular user can be blocked. Similar reporting systems are in place in most other popular social media websites or applications.

Now discuss in pairs if the following statements are true/false.

- Cyber bullying can be carried out by using the electronic media.
- If a young man sends offensive pictures to his female friend's Facebook page, it is considered cyber bullying.
- It is not legally prohibited to open a social media account with a fake identify.
- One may face legal procedures for sending unwanted text messages to someone's phone.
- You cannot report to Facebook authority if you find a comment made by someone unacceptable.

I. Now, complete the following text on Seven Ways to Deal with Cyber Bullying with the words given below.

parents opportunity report attitude social
privacy screenshot response images immediately

1. Don't respond instantly

If you are facing bullying from someone, please don't respond (a) _____ or panic because this is what the reaction the bully wants from you. Do not over-react, as this will give the bully more power to harm you. Be patient.

2. Save all the evidence

So, if you have any evidence or proof about the bully, like texts, (b) _____, emails, etc., save them and keep them safe. This evidence can be used against the bully under the cyber law act. So even if the bullying is very minor, always keep the evidence or its (c) _____ safe which can be used for complaining against digital bullying.



3. Talk to someone you trust

Talk to an adult whom you trust. This will help you to feel relieved a bit. It is preferred that you involve your (d) _____ as they are your strong support in your good and bad times.

4. Be genuine

On social media, it often happens that you like someone and you talk to that person, but in case you do not like someone or the texts sent by the person, block the person but do not send an angry (e) _____. You should not lower yourself to that person's level.

5. Just Block and delete

The moment you are harassed and you feel it is coming on you more often, block the bully and (f) _____ it. In case the bully is texting, or sending images or putting comments then go to your (g) _____ settings and block the person from sending you the same.

6. Protect passwords

It is always advisable to protect the passwords of each of your accounts on the web and on the (h) _____ media. Everyone should keep their passwords safe and secure. Please do not give the bullies an (i) _____ to get into your account.

7. Don't be a bystander, be a friend:

Watching or participating in the act of bullying hurts the person who is suffering the most. If you know someone doing it please ask the person to stop it, don't just be a bystander. This (j) _____ of yours will empower the bullies more, thus report it when you see it is happening near or around you.

Source: <https://thenextscoop.com/cyber-bullying/>

J. Look at the anti bullying posters (a-c) below. Then think about three slogans to complete posters 'd-f'. Share your completed posters with a peer and edit/improve your slogans, if required.

