**Stopping bullies**

**Bullying is a learned behaviour that may be preventable if discouraged**

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A couple of days back, a video became viral on social media where a girl in Lahore’s private school is being subjected to vicious physical and verbal bullying by her classmates. To make matters even worse, the perpetrators are recording the whole scene and there isn’t a shade of remorse on their faces with not a single individual trying to help the poor girl indi­cating a visible social decadence in our society. As expect­ed, the incident received outrage on social media and is being condemned across the board, and rightly so. Bully­ing in educational institutions is one of the most reported events globally as well in Pakistan. No school nor any uni­versity is free from this curse. According to a World Health Organisation (WHO), study in 2012, between 15 to 35 people ended their lives in Pakistan every day with the suicide rate be­ing 7.5 per 100,000 people. In simple words, approximately 13,000 people took their lives that year. Hence, there may be an estimated 140 000–300 000 acts of self-harm in Pakistan annually. In 2016, the estimate was 2.9 per 100,000 i.e., over 5,500 ended their lives. Experts say the number of people dying is likely somewhere be­tween the two figures, but the truth remains hidden.

['India expanding settler-colonial project in IIOJK by grabbing Kashmiris' land'](https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Feb-2023/india-expanding-settler-colonial-project-in-iiojk-by-grabbing-kashmiris-land)

Bullying can lead to emotional distress, and self-harm, and in many cases has apparently led to suicide. It can also put a young person at higher risk for depression, anxiety, and lower academ­ic achievement. In recent years, cyberbullying has received in­creased attention, as electronic devices have become more com­mon. Bullying through electronic means, although prevalent, ranks third after verbal bullying and physical bullying. In gener­al, bullying is a common type of social experience that children re­fer to as “getting picked on.” Most bullying, including being insult­ed, threatened or excluded from activities, still happens in person. Among students who reported being bullied, said they were tar­geted in a classroom or were victimized in a hallway or stairwell. Students reported being bullied in more than one location. We as a society tend to overlook these issues since we don’t realise the impact bullying has on the victim, and how long the impact could last. Schools could play an influential role by coming up with strat­egies to prevent bullying of any sort. If schools are not taking pre­cautionary measures to mitigate or reduce the reoccurrence of such events, then that’s neither good nor enough school. Not just schools, families, family dynamics, cultural factors, and even com­munity response also play a role in the occurrence of bullying in­teraction. Although there are many causes of bullying, certain risk factors may attract bullies to their victims. Children who are dif­ferent from their peers, who are weaker (than bullies), who are socially isolated, less popular, and have few friends, or may have underlying feelings of personal inadequacy.

[President felicitates Iran on 44th anniversary of Revolution](https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Feb-2023/piaf-rejects-hike-in-power-gas-tariffs-fears-increased-energy-rates-to-damage-economy)

In November 2022, Shahrukh Jatoi, alongside accomplice Sir­aj Talpur, the main accused in the Shahzeb Khan murder case had been released from jail over raising huge question marks over the delivery of justice in the country. The high-profile case had gripped the entire nation for almost a decade. The Sindh High Court’s (SHC) verdict of death punishment was annulled by Pakistan’s Supreme Court following reconciliation between the two parties. It is perti­nent to mention that 20-year-old Shahzeb Khan was murdered in cold blood by Shahrukh and Siraj (both belonging to influential fam­ilies) in Karachi’s Defence Housing Authority (DHA) while returning home from a wedding with his sister. However, the issue of bullying in children is a complex problem that emerges from social, physical, institutional and community contexts, as well as the individual char­acteristics of the children who are bullied and victimized. Moreover, it is solely not the school’s responsibility to mould a child’s behav­iour but parents as well. Many researchers believe that bullying is a group process and therefore interventions against bullying should be targeted at the peer-group level rather than at individual bullies and victims. Schools must involve parents and use a family thera­py approach. The schools must investigate the matter and come up with different effective anti-bullying strategies to reduce bullying and harassment. Since bullying is a very complex problem there is no “quick fix” to prevent or intervene with this issue. It is important to understand the issues that are unique to the individual and the context in order to develop and implement interventions. Here we describe important elements for intervention to address this issue in peers’, management’s, and parents’ presence.

[Folk singer Bashir Baloch passes away in Quetta](https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Feb-2023/folk-singer-bashir-baloch-passes-away-in-quetta)

School based-intervention may include a change in classroom environments, inculcation of mindfulness hands-on activities, in­crease in peers-parent involvement from time to time, setting up clear and lucid rules against bullying comprising the consequences; if committed, improved supervision, and providing protection and support for the students bullied. Bullying is a learned behaviour that may be preventable if discouraged and dealt with compassion.

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