



## Bullying and School Violence: Challenges and Perspectives for Building an Inclusive School

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### Summary

The article addresses the relationship between bullying and school violence and the construction of an inclusive school. Initially, bullying and school violence are defined, exploring their multifactorial causes, such as family problems, low self-esteem and exposure to violence in the media. The negative consequences for victims, perpetrators and witnesses are highlighted, emphasizing the need for a safe and welcoming school environment. Next, the concept of school inclusion, its principles and challenges, such as the lack of resources and inadequate teacher training, are discussed. The relationship between bullying/violence and exclusion is analyzed, highlighting how these phenomena perpetuate discrimination and compromise the integral development of students. Finally, the article presents strategies to prevent and combat bullying and school violence, such as implementing clear policies, training teachers, creating spaces for dialogue and promoting a culture of peace. Family and community involvement is highlighted as fundamental to the success of these actions.

**Key words:**bullying, school violence, inclusion, prevention.

### Abstract

This article discusses the relationship between bullying, school violence, and the construction of an inclusive school. Initially, bullying and school violence are defined, exploring their multifactorial causes, such as family problems, low self-esteem, and exposure to media violence. The negative consequences for victims, aggressors, and witnesses are highlighted, highlighting the need for a safe and welcoming school environment. Next, the concept of school inclusion, its principles, and challenges, such as lack of resources and inadequate teacher training, are discussed. The relationship between bullying/violence and exclusion is analyzed, highlighting how these phenomena perpetuate discrimination and compromise the integral development of students. Finally, the article presents strategies to prevent and combat bullying and school violence, such as the implementation of clear policies, teacher training, the creation of dialogue spaces, and the promotion of a culture of peace. The involvement of family and community is highlighted as fundamental to the success of these actions.

**Keywords:**bullying, school violence, inclusion, prevention.

### 1. Introduction

Bullying and school violence, complex and multifaceted phenomena, have become a growing concern in contemporary society. Defined by Fante (2012, p. 23) as “a set of intentional and repeated acts of physical or psychological violence”, bullying goes beyond mere interpersonal conflict, configuring itself as a social problem that demands attention and intervention. School violence, in turn, covers an even broader spectrum of aggressions, from physical and verbal to psychological, sexual and property, negatively impacting not only the direct victims, but also the entire school community (Silva, 2010; Lisboa, 2018).

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The roots of bullying and school violence are deep and multifactorial, intertwining with individual, family, social and school aspects. The literature points to a series of factors that can contribute to the emergence and perpetuation of these problems, such as low self-esteem, difficulty in relationships, family problems, exposure to violence in the media and lack of supervision at school (Fante, 2012 ; Silva, 2010; Cunha, 2015; Low self-esteem, for example, can lead the individual to seek validation through aggression, while relationship difficulties can make it difficult to resolve conflicts peacefully. Family problems, such as domestic violence and neglect, can normalize violence and hinder the development of healthy social-emotional skills. Exposure to

Violence in the media, in turn, can desensitize the individual to violence and provide models of aggressive behavior, as authors such as Bandura (1977) and Huesmann (2003) warn. The lack of supervision at school, finally, can create an environment that is permissive to violence, where aggressors feel unpunished and victims unprotected.

The consequences of bullying and school violence are devastating and can leave deep marks on the lives of everyone involved. For victims, the effects can be catastrophic, including depression, anxiety, social isolation, low academic performance and, in extreme cases, suicide (Fante, 2012; Silva, 2010). Bullying, in particular, can erode a victim's self-esteem, undermine their confidence, and harm their social and emotional development. School violence, in turn, can create a climate of fear and insecurity, affecting not only students' academic performance, but also their mental health and well-being.

Aggressors also suffer the consequences of their actions. The practice of bullying and violence can lead to relationship difficulties, antisocial behavior and a greater risk of involvement in crime (Fante, 2012; Silva, 2010; Lisboa, 2018). The aggressor is often an individual who also suffers, whether due to family, emotional or social problems. Aggression can be a way of expressing your pain, seeking power and control, or protecting yourself from real or imagined threats. However, violence does not solve problems, it only worsens them, perpetuating a cycle of suffering and destruction (Cunha, 2015).

Witnesses to school violence are also affected and may develop feelings of fear, guilt and helplessness (Oliveira, 2019). The silence of witnesses can perpetuate the cycle of violence, while intervention can help interrupt it. School, as a space for training and socialization, has a fundamental role in preventing and combating bullying and violence. The creation of a safe, welcoming and respectful school environment, where diversity is valued and conflicts are resolved peacefully, is essential for the healthy development of all students (Fante, 2012; Silva, 2010; Lisboa, 2018).

This article aims to analyze the relationship between bullying and school violence and inclusion, investigating how these phenomena can compromise the construction of a truly inclusive school. To this end, qualitative bibliographical research will be carried out, based on scientific articles, books and other relevant sources, which address the topic of bullying, school violence and inclusion. The research will seek to identify the main causes and consequences of bullying and school violence, the most effective prevention and combat strategies, and the challenges and opportunities of school inclusion in a context of violence.

The relevance of this study lies in the need to understand the complexity of the phenomenon of bullying and school violence, and to identify effective strategies to prevent and combat them, in order to promote a safer, more welcoming and inclusive school environment for all students.

## 2. Bullying and School Violence

Bullying, defined by Fante (2012, p. 23) as “a set of intentional and repeated acts of physical or psychological violence, carried out by an individual or group of individuals, against one or more people, with the aim of intimidating, attacking, humiliating or excluding”, is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that plagues the school environment, as pointed out by several authors (Fante, 2012; Silva, 2010; Lisboa, 2018). School violence, in turn, covers an even broader spectrum of aggressions, such as physical, verbal, psychological, sexual and property, which occur in the educational sphere, negatively impacting not only the direct victims, but also the entire school community, such as warn Silva (2010) and Lisboa (2018).

The roots of bullying and school violence are deep and multifactorial, intertwining individual, family, social and school aspects. Factors such as low self-esteem, relationship difficulties, family problems, exposure to violence in the media and lack of supervision at school can create fertile ground for these problems to flourish. Low self-esteem, for example, can lead the individual to seek validation through aggression, as Fante (2012) points out, while relationship difficulties it can hinder the peaceful resolution of conflicts, as highlighted by Silva (2010). Family problems, such as domestic violence and neglect, can normalize violence and hinder the development of healthy socio-emotional skills, as evidenced by studies by Cunha (2015) and Oliveira (2019). Exposure to violence in the media, in turn, can desensitize the individual to violence and provide models of aggressive behavior, as authors such as Bandura (1977) and Huesmann (2003) warn. Finally, the lack of supervision at school can create an environment that is permissive to violence, where aggressors feel unpunished and victims unprotected, as Lisbon (2018) points out.

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in the lives of everyone involved. For victims, the effects can be catastrophic, including depression, anxiety, social isolation, poor academic performance and, in extreme cases, suicide. Bullying can erode the victim's self-esteem, undermine their confidence and harm their social and emotional development, as pointed out by Fante (2012). School violence, in turn, can create an environment of fear and insecurity, hindering student learning and integral development, as highlighted by Silva (2010).

Aggressors also suffer the consequences of their actions. The practice of bullying and violence can lead to relationship difficulties, antisocial behavior and a greater risk of involvement in crime, as several authors warn (Fante, 2012; Silva, 2010; Lisboa, 2018). The aggressor is often an individual who also suffers, whether due to family, emotional or social problems. Aggression can be a way of expressing your pain, seeking power and control, or protecting yourself from real or imagined threats. However, violence does not solve problems, it only worsens them, perpetuating a cycle of suffering and destruction, as Cunha (2015) points out.

Witnesses to school violence are also affected and may develop feelings of fear, guilt and helplessness, as highlighted by Oliveira (2019). The silence of witnesses can perpetuate the cycle of violence, while intervention can help interrupt it. School, as a space for training and socialization, has a fundamental role in preventing and combating bullying and violence. The creation of a safe, welcoming and respectful school environment, where diversity is valued and conflicts are resolved peacefully, is essential for the healthy development of all students, as argued by Fante (2012), Silva (2010) and Lisboa (2018).

### 3. School Inclusion

School inclusion, an ideal that seeks to guarantee access, participation and learning for all students, regardless of their characteristics and needs, is a fundamental right and a pressing challenge for contemporary education. As Mantoan (2003) states, "inclusion is everyone's right and a school's duty. It is a process that requires changes in culture, practices and educational policies". This paradigmatic change, which goes beyond the simple inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms, implies rethinking the school as a space for welcoming and valuing diversity, where all students feel like they belong and have their needs met, as advocated by Stainback & Stainback (1999).

The principles of school inclusion, such as valuing diversity, respect for differences, equal opportunities, participation of all students and collaboration between school, family and community, are pillars that support the construction of a truly inclusive school. Valuing diversity, as Mittler (2003) highlights, implies recognizing and celebrating individual differences, whether cultural, ethnic, religious, social or learning. Respect for differences, in turn, means ensuring that all students are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their characteristics and needs, as recommended by the Salamanca Declaration (1994).

Equality of opportunities, one of the basic principles of inclusion, involves ensuring that all students have access to the same resources and learning opportunities, with the necessary adaptations and support so that they can develop their potential. Ainscow (2001) highlights that equity does not mean treating all students the same way, but rather offering each one what they need to learn and develop. The participation of all students, in turn, means ensuring that everyone has a voice and a place at school, that their opinions are heard and valued, and that they can actively participate in school activities, as stated by Booth and Ainscow (2002). Collaboration between school, family and community, as Dyson (2001) emphasizes, is essential for building a support network that strengthens inclusion and promotes the student's integral development.

3 However, building an inclusive school is not an obstacle-free path. The lack of resources and adequate infrastructure, such as accessible classrooms, adapted teaching materials and specialized professionals, can hinder the implementation of inclusive practices, as pointed out by Carvalho (2008). Inadequate training of teachers, who often do not feel prepared to deal with the diversity of students and their specific needs, can compromise the quality of inclusive education, as Glat and Blanco (2011) warn. Resistance to change, both on the part of teachers and the school community, can create a climate of hostility and hinder the implementation of new practices, as observed by Mendes (2014). The lack of institutional support, both in terms of public policies and financial resources, can limit the school's actions and compromise the sustainability of practices

inclusive, as pointed out by Pletsch (2010).

Overcoming these challenges requires a collective commitment to inclusion, which involves the participation of all actors in the school community. Continuing teacher training, which addresses topics such as diversity, inclusion and adapted teaching methodologies, is essential to ensure that teachers have the necessary skills to deal with the diversity of students, as advocated by Glat and Blanco (2011). The creation of spaces for dialogue and collaboration between school, family and community can strengthen the student support network and promote everyone's participation in the construction of an inclusive school, as highlighted by Dyson (2001). The search for resources and partnerships with other institutions can help to overcome the lack of resources and infrastructure. Raising awareness among the school community about the importance of inclusion and the benefits it brings to all students can help overcome resistance to change and create a climate of acceptance and respect for diversity, as stated by Stainback & Stainback (1999).

#### 4. Relationship between Bullying/Violence and Inclusion

Bullying and school violence, like shadows that cast themselves over the ideal of inclusive education, represent significant obstacles to the construction of a welcoming school environment that is respectful of diversity. As Fante (2012) and Silva (2010) point out, these phenomena perpetuate the exclusion and discrimination of vulnerable groups, such as students with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ and ethnic minorities, who become preferential targets of physical, verbal and psychological aggression, compromising development of these students and perpetuating social inequalities.

Silva (2015) emphasizes that “an inclusive school must be a space that welcomes and respects diversity, where all students feel safe and valued.” This statement, which echoes the thoughts of authors such as Mittler (2003) and Stainback & Stainback (1999), highlights the importance of creating a school environment where diversity is not only tolerated, but celebrated, and where all students feel they belong and respected. To achieve this ideal, it is essential that the school adopts proactive measures to prevent and combat bullying and violence, creating an environment of peaceful and respectful coexistence, as advocated by Abramovay and Rua (2002).

Preventing bullying and school violence requires a multifaceted approach, which involves raising awareness among the entire school community about the importance of respecting differences and the creation of reporting and support mechanisms for victims, as recommended by Olweus (1993). Promoting activities that value diversity and mutual respect, such as interdisciplinary projects, debates and conversation circles, can contribute to building a culture of peace and inclusion at school, as suggested by authors such as Freire (1996) and Gadotti (2000). ). The continued training of teachers and staff, which enables them to identify and deal with situations of bullying and violence, is equally essential, as Debarbieux and Blaya (2001) point out.

In addition to prevention, it is crucial that schools adopt effective measures to combat bullying and violence when they occur. Rigorous investigation of complaints, application of disciplinary measures to aggressors and psychological support for victims are essential actions to guarantee the safety and well-being of all students, as advocated by Fante (2012) and Silva (2010). The school must be a space of justice and protection, where everyone feels supported and confident to report any type of violence, as stated by the authors of the UNESCO report (2019) on school violence.

Combating bullying and school violence is imperative to building a truly inclusive school. By creating an environment that welcomes and respects diversity, the school not only protects the most vulnerable students, but also promotes the development of everyone, preparing them to live in an increasingly plural and complex society. Inclusion is not only a right, but also a duty of the school, which must commit to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn and

grow up in a safe, welcoming and violence-free environment, as stated by the authors of the Declaration of Salamanca (1994).

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#### 5. Prevention and Combat Strategies

Preventing and combating bullying and school violence requires a multifaceted approach, which includes different strategies and the active participation of the entire school community, as Fante (2012) and Silva (2010) emphasize. The implementation of clear policies and rules of coexistence, which define what is considered bullying and violence, as well as the consequences for the aggressors, is fundamental to sta-

establish a safe and respectful school environment, as recommended by the National Program to Combat Systematic Intimidation (Bullying) of the Ministry of Education (MEC). These rules must be widely publicized and discussed with students, so that everyone understands the importance of mutual respect and non-violence, as suggested by the works of Olweus (1993) and Smith et al. (2004).

The training of teachers and other education professionals is an essential pillar in preventing and combating bullying and school violence, as highlighted in the UNESCO report (2019) on school violence. Education professionals must be trained to identify the warning signs of bullying, such as social isolation, a drop in academic performance and changes in behavior, as described by Rigby (2002) and Pepler et al. (2006). Furthermore, they must be prepared to intervene appropriately, offering support to victims and referring aggressors for the necessary follow-up, as suggested by studies by Craig et al. (2000) and Orpinas et al. (2002). Continuing training should address not only the theoretical aspects of bullying and violence, but also practical prevention and intervention strategies, such as conflict mediation, the promotion of empathy and the development of socio-emotional skills, as advocated by authors such as Goleman (1995) and Elias et al. (1997).

The creation of spaces for dialogue and participation, such as conversation circles, debates and school assemblies, is essential for students to feel heard and valued, and so that they can express their opinions, feelings and conflicts in a constructive and respectful way, as pointed out by Freire (1996) and Gadotti (2000). These spaces, as suggested by Augusto Cury's School of Intelligence Program, can be used to discuss topics such as bullying, violence and discrimination, promoting critical reflection and the search for peaceful solutions to conflicts. Open and frank dialogue about bullying and violence can help to demystify the topic, break the silence that often surrounds these problems and create an environment of trust and mutual respect, as stated by the authors of the UNESCO report (2019) about school violence.

Promoting a culture of peace and respect for diversity is another crucial aspect in preventing and combating bullying and school violence. The school must be a space for valuing differences, where all students feel welcomed and respected, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or socioeconomic status, as recommended by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Projects and activities that promote a culture of peace, respect for diversity and empathy among students, such as cultural, sporting and artistic activities, can contribute to the creation of a more positive and inclusive school climate, as argued by authors such as Delors (1996) and Morin (2000).

Family and community involvement is fundamental to the success of actions to prevent and combat bullying and school violence, as emphasized by Fante (2012) and Silva (2010). The family, as the first socializing institution, plays a crucial role in shaping children's values and attitudes. Open dialogue about bullying and violence, establishing clear limits and valuing respect and empathy are attitudes that parents can adopt to prevent their children from becoming involved in violent situations, as suggested by studies by Baldry and Farrington (2000) and Espelage et al. (2003). The community, in turn, can contribute to creating a safer and more welcoming social environment, offering support to families and schools, and reporting cases of violence, as highlighted by the MEC's National Program for Strengthening School Councils.

Preventing and combating bullying and school violence requires a joint effort from the entire school community, as advocated by several authors and official documents (Fante, 2012; Silva, 2010; UNESCO, 2019; MEC). The implementation of clear policies, teacher training, the creation of spaces for dialogue, the promotion of a culture of peace and the involvement of the family and community are strategies that, combined, can create a safer, more welcoming and freedom-free school environment. violence, where all students can learn and develop fully.

## 6. Final Considerations

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This study sought to analyze the complex relationship between bullying, school violence and the search for an inclusive school. It was evident that bullying and violence, with their multifactorial roots, represent significant challenges for the construction of a welcoming school environment that is respectful of diversity. Its negative impacts on victims, aggressors and witnesses highlight the urgency of effective preventive and combat actions.

School inclusion, in turn, presents itself as an ideal and a right, which demands the creation of spaces where diversity is valued and all students feel safe and belong. However, the

The realization of this ideal faces challenges such as lack of resources, inadequate teacher training and resistance to change.

Overcoming these challenges requires a joint effort from the entire school community, including the implementation of clear policies, ongoing teacher training, the creation of spaces for dialogue and the promotion of a culture of peace and respect for diversity. Family and community involvement is also fundamental to the success of these actions.

This study, by analyzing the causes and consequences of bullying and school violence, and by proposing prevention and combat strategies, seeks to contribute to the construction of a truly inclusive school, where all students can learn and develop in a safe environment, welcoming and free from violence. The fight against bullying and school violence is a commitment for everyone, an essential step towards building a more just, equitable and supportive society.

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