

Prevention of bullying among adolescents on the basis of gender approach

Ksenia Shalaginova

(Tula State Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University)

Abstract

Abstract the article presents the experience of working with adolescents for the prevention of manifestations of school violence. Prevention of violence is more effective when the gender features of manifestation of school bullying. This circumstance requires the maintenance of individual work with boys and girls, because the specifics of their behavior is quite different. Comparative analysis of results of ascertaining and control stages of the experiment allows to draw conclusions about the positive dynamics in the sample and identification of specific behavior in a situation of potential bullying of boys and girls and the development of complex of preventive measures based on them, allows us to take such activities to a qualitatively new level.

Keywords: *bullying, violence, prevention, gender aspect*

Currently, the issue of bullying is relevant to the whole of Russian society and schools. In Russian psychology until recently bullying is not considered as the specific situation of social interaction. Some of its elements were described as “manifestations of aggression,” “victimization,” “low social status in a group.” The problem of school violence in domestic science for a long time belonged to the category of problems that used to be hushed up, to pretend that nothing was happening.

Until recently, both in domestic and in Western practice the problem of bullying is predominantly classified as “male”, as for many it is males who are more aggressive in comparison to females. It is believed that boys are more prone to acts of aggression but it is not fully true; the girls’ aggression is just different. The difference between the aggressiveness of the sexes is especially noticeable between ten and fourteen years when girls go further in their mental and physical development than boys. According to the majority of scholars, the difference in aggressive behavior between girls and boys has been more and more decreasing; in recent years girls have begun to exhibit aggressive behaviors.

Using a gender perspective enables to destroy the cultural constraints of development, to reveal the inner potential of the individual and to create conditions for girls and boys’s self-realization. Taking into consideration of gender features gives, on the one hand, the opportunity to

show an individual approach to the student, on the other hand, it opens up new possibilities for the studying of aggression, its prevention and correction of its destructive manifestations.

As the methods of investigation, we have used the following: theoretical analysis of the psychological and pedagogical literature on research topic; psychological and pedagogical experiment in the unity of the three phases (summative, forming and controlling); method of data processing: qualitative and quantitative analysis of the study results.

In order to identify gender-specific predisposition to bullying (mainly in the role of instigators, the bullying initiators), we picked up a package of diagnostics tools: the Buss-Durkey Inventory; assessment of the level of group cohesion in the class by C.E. Seashore; types of behavior in the conflict by K. Thomas; diagnostic technique of self-assessment of mental states by G. Eysenck; test “Level determination of conflict resistance” by N.P. Fetiskin, V.V. Kozlov, G.M. Manuilov; methods of “interference” diagnosis in emotional contact establishing by V.V. Boyko; method of diagnosing the empathic abilities level by V.V. Boyko, express questionnaire “Index of tolerance” by G.U. Soldatov, O.A. Kravtsov, O.E. Hukhlaev, L.A. Shaygerova.

The study took place in the academic year of 2014–2015 on the basis of three schools and two gymnasiums in Tula. In total, the study involved about 320 teenagers (152 boys and 168 girls).

Results analysis of the summative stage of the experiment allowed drawing the following conclusions.

Using the Buss-Durkey Inventory there were identified above average performance on the scales of physical, indirect, verbal aggression, suspicion and guilt for groups of boys and girls. It was identified the most problematic indicators – 80% of girls and 50% of boys are inclined to verbal forms of expression of the aggression; 60% of girls and 30% of boys show suspicion; 60% of girls and 30% boys tend to the indirect aggression; 40% of boys and 10% of girls use physical force as a way to throw out the aggression, “to solve the problem”; 50% of boys and 60% of girls feel guilty; 60% of both boys and girls experience increased irritation.

Test by K. Thomas has allowed to determine the dominant style of a person's behavior in a conflict situation. The most preferred tactics of behavior in the conflict is “avoiding”, 40% of boys and 30% girls have inclined to it; the second place are taken by the “rivalry” – 30% of boys and 55% girls; 20% of boys bent to adaptation; about 25% of girls and boys – to compromise; 10% of boys and 5% of girls uses cooperation.

Diagnostic technique of self-assessment of mental states by G. Eysenck allowed considering the measure of aggressiveness (stable personality characteristics) for boys and girls. Based on the results, we can conclude that 30% of boys and 20% of girls have a high aggressiveness, these children have problems with relationships with other people.

Technique of group cohesion level by C. Seashore allows, on the one hand, talking about the high rates of solidarity, on the other hand, passive attitude to the participation in extracurricular activities, community life should be noted at 60% of boys and 20% of girls. Most of the boys (55%) has a low level of conflict resistance.

Girls (60%) have the average level of conflict resistance. Most respondents teenagers – boys (85%) and about 75% of girls – are on level 4 of an emotional efficiency. To some extent, emotions complicate the interaction with partners for many boys and girls. Emotions usually do not interfere with the relationship with partners only for some girls. Most boys have revealed such “interferences” in communication as inflexibility, underdevelopment, inexpressive emotions (45%), dominance of negative emotions and inability to manage emotions (15%). While girls show such “interferences” as: inability to manage emotions and to dose them, inappropriate display of emotions (65%), inflexibility, underdevelopment, inexpressive emotions (25%), dominance of negative emotions and reluctance to draw nearer to other people on an emotional basis (30%). Teenage boys have badly expressed rational channel of empathy (45%), emotional (25%), intuitive (25%), penetrating power of empathy (10%) and there are no identification in empathy (0%). At the same time, the girls have not developed an intuitive channel of empathy (25%) and the penetrating power of empathy (35%). Thus, the majority of the boys (75%) have revealed a lower level of empathy, and the majority of girls have the average level of empathy (55%).

The majority of female (95%) and male representatives (100%) has the average level of tolerance.

Based on the results of the study, we have developed a prevention program designed according to adolescents and gender characteristics of students.

Objectives of the program: to understand psychological essence of aggression, aggressive behavior, its specificity by adolescents, to develop skills of secure and adequate expression of anger; to create conditions for the study and understanding of one’s own emotions and the emotions of other people; to develop the ability to understand one’s own feelings; to realize the negative emotions, to elaborate them and to act them out;- to optimize the interaction of teenagers in the team; to form skills of constructive conflict resolution; to increase the level of tolerance empathy; to develop the need for further self-development and realization of personal potential.

When organizing activities with teenage boys, special attention should be paid to their motor activity. Boys are inherently less restrained and unable to control their behavior with the same success as the girls. A long stay in a sitting position has a greater negative impact on boys than on girls. For this reason, when working with boys, it is necessary to hold a small warm-up, movement exercises.

In working with the boys, the emphasis is done on the development of skills of secure and adequate anger expression, on adolescents' understanding of psychological essence of aggression, its specificity, peculiarities, on optimization of the teenagers' interaction in a group, on increased empathy and tolerance, “emancipation” of the emotional sphere.

Adolescent girls are sometimes notable for their indecision. When conducting preventive activities, it should be created a situation of success for girls to “push” them to discuss and answer. For this purpose, such techniques are used as questions for reflection (without the correct answer), group work where each girl gets a task and contributes to the work, etc.

When working with girls, the focus is to develop the ability to understand their feelings, awareness of the negative emotions, their elaboration and acting out, the ability to adequately show and restrain negative emotions towards other people, to decline indirect verbal aggression, to increase empathy, to form skills of constructive conflict resolution.

Classes are designed for two groups and assume a unit of joint activities, training units separately for boys and separately for girls. The time of each lesson is 90 minutes.

As a basis for the development of preventive programs, we used psychological group training. Psychological group training is a method of intentional human changes aimed at their personal and professional development through the acquisition, analysis and re-evaluation of their own experiences in group interaction.

Comparative analysis of summative and control phases' results of the experiment allows drawing conclusions about the positive dynamics in the sample.

Through the decrease in performance above average on the scale of physical aggression in 10% of boys and girls; indirect aggression in 20% of boys and 10% of girls; verbal aggression in 20% of boys and 30% of girls; irritability in 20% of girls and 10% of boys; guilt in 10% of boys and girls. The level of verbal aggression is reduced in boys and girls alike; the level of physical aggression among girls has decreased by 20%, among boys – by 10%; emotional aggression in girls has decreased by 20%, in boys – by 10%; self-aggression among girls has decreased by 30% and among boys – by 20%.

Through boys's manifestation of this style of behavior in conflict resolution as a compromise – 15% and increase in performance of collaboration by 5%. Manifestation of leading style of girls' behavior – the compromise – 35%, the rate of avoidance has decreased by 10%, the competition – by 15%; cooperation has increased by 10%; a tool as a way of behavior in the conflict has appeared – 5%.

Level of group cohesion in class for all students is in a range from medium to high above. At the controlling phase of the experiment, 45% of boys have identified average level of conflict resistance and 35% – low. These results differ significantly from the results of summative stage.

Boys are marked by the increase in the number of respondents with an average level of conflict resistance, the reduction of the number of subjects with low levels of conflict stability; a very low level of conflict stability in the male sample at this stage is not revealed. The girls at the controlling stage have obtained the following results – in most study subjects conflict resistance is average of 55%, a high level is inherent to 20%, a low level of conflict resistance is in 25% of the girls participating in the study.

Rational channel of empathy is detected in 65% of boys interviewed, a 20% increase compared to the summative stage, and 55% of girls surveyed. Emotional empathy channel is at 25% of boys, which remained unchanged, and 80% of the female a 10% increase compared to the summative step. Intuitive empathy channel is at 35% of boys and 30% of girls noted this type. Thus, in male and female sample number of respondents has increased by 10%. Purposes promoting the empathy have been found in 35% of males and 45% of females. These figures have also increased in the respective male and female sample. Penetration in empathy has been found in 25% of boys and 60% of girls. The number of teenagers characterized by the presence of this type of empathy has increased in male and female sample. Identification of empathy at the controlling stage of the experiment has been found in 20% of boys and 55% of girls. This figure has risen in girls who are characterized by identification in empathy in the female sample; it has increased by 15%.

At the controlling phase of the experiment, teenage boys have been identified by such “interferences” in establishing emotional contact as inflexibility, underdevelopment, and inexpressive emotions – 25%. The presence of positive dynamics in a sample of young people should be noted, as this figure is 20% less than at the summative phase. There is a slight decrease (5%) in the number of young people who are dominated by negative emotions. The sample of girls has been noted by positive dynamics in the emergence of such “interferences” in establishing emotional contact as the inability to manage emotions, dose and inappropriately display emotions (it has decreased by 20%), inflexibility, underdevelopment, inexpressive emotions (it has lowered by 10%), the dominance of negative emotions and unwillingness to get close to people on an emotional basis (it has reduced by 5%). Thus, compared to the summative phase, the number of teenagers on all previously “identified interferences” has decreased.

As a result of the controlling phase of the experiment, 20% of the surveyed boys are at level 5 of emotional effectiveness in communication, 45% – at level 4 and 35% – at level 3. Girls were allocated as follows: 10% – at level 5 of emotional effectiveness, 35% – both at level 4 and at level 2, 20% – at level 3. All figures have been significantly changed compared to summative phase.

The average level of empathy has been identified at 55% of boys which is 20% higher than at the summative phase, 45% of the low level of empathy, which is 30% less compared to the summative phase. Most girls – 75% – have the average level of empathy. The number of

respondents with an average level of empathy in the female sample has increased by 25%, with a low level – 25% that is lower by 15% and 10% has a very low level, that has remained unchanged.

A comparative analysis of the results of diagnostic by the express-questionnaire “Tolerance index” at summative and controlling phases of the experiment lets talk about the positive dynamics at the sample of girls only. 5% of the girls in the summative phase have revealed a high level of tolerance which has not been found at the summative phase Thus, the majority of respondents in the samples of girls and in the sample of boys – 90% and 100%, respectively, have an average level of tolerance and show a combination of both tolerant and intolerant features. In some social situations, they behave tolerantly, in others – they may manifest intolerance.

The analysis of the results of the conducted study allows speaking about effectiveness and appropriateness of the gender specificity in the prevention of school violence. Identification of the behavioral peculiarities in a situation of possible bullying of boys and girls and development of a set of preventive measures based on them allow bringing such activities to an entirely new level.

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