

The Role of School Social Work in Preventing Bullying in Schools—A Study Based on Cognitive-Behavioral Theory

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to explore the necessity and application of cognitive-behavioral theory in school social work to prevent bullying in schools. By analyzing the current situation and causes of bullying in schools, combining the core ideas of cognitive-behavioral theory, and by analyzing the role of school social workers in facing bullying in schools, a series of prevention and intervention strategies are proposed. This paper argues that by changing students' adverse cognitive and behavioral patterns, we can not only effectively prevent and reduce the occurrence of bullying in schools, but also promote students' understanding of bullying in schools and improve adolescents' ability to deal with bullying in schools. At the same time, it provides theoretical support and practical guidance for building a safe and harmonious school environment.*

Keywords: *School bullying; social work; adolescents; cognitive-behavioral theory*

1. Introduction

Bullying in schools, as a serious social problem, seriously affects the physical and mental health of students and even leads to serious social consequences. In recent years, with the increasing social concern about bullying in schools, bullying in schools has become a hot topic through the news, media and other channels of communication, how to effectively prevent and intervene into not only an important topic in the field of education, but also a very important research direction in the field of social work, so in how to prevent and solve the phenomenon of bullying in schools, the intervention of professional social workers has become one of the effective means to prevent and solve bullying in schools. Therefore, the intervention of professional social workers has become one of the effective means to prevent and solve bullying in schools. Cognitive-behavioral theory, as a comprehensive theoretical framework integrating cognitive theory and behavioral theory, social workers use professional social work skills and methods to combine with cognitive-behavioral theory, which provides new perspectives and methods for understanding and solving the problem of bullying in schools.

2. Current situation and causes of bullying in schools

2.1 Status

School bullying is defined as an incident in which one party (individual or group) among classmates intentionally or maliciously carries out bullying and insults through physical, verbal and cyber means on a single or multiple occasions, resulting in physical injuries, property losses or mental damages, etc. of the other party (individual or group). Its common manifestations can be categorized into: physical bullying, i.e., teenagers use body movements to beat, kick, trip and other direct attacks on others. Verbal bullying, in which adolescents use insulting nicknames, name-calling, ridicule, taunting, intimidation, verbal jabs, or mocking comments about others to their peers. Social bullying, in which teens ostracize and isolate the bully by working with others to keep them out of the group. Network bullying, in which a teenager uses the Internet and other multiple online media to spread comments, pictures, or videos that are hurtful to the person being bullied. Property bullying, in which a teenager destroys the bullied person's belongings or demands money by damaging or destroying them. Sexual

bullying, in which a teenager uses sex or a particular body part as an object of ridicule or mockery. Meanwhile, the United Nations' definition of bullying in schools focuses on "peer-to-peer violence," a concept that encompasses physical, verbal, and interpersonal harm to the victim. Specifically, authorities such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) view bullying in schools as aggressive, repetitive behavior that occurs between individuals or groups of individuals who are outmatched in terms of power, causing physical and psychological pain and injury to the bullied.

2.2 Causes

First, personal factors. Adolescents' cognitive level, attitude and moral evaluation standard of school bullying behavior is one of the important factors of school bullying. When there are cognitive deficiencies in adolescents' cognition of school bullying behavior, adolescents tend to be more likely to take or suffer from school bullying behavior, which shows that there is an important influence of adolescents' individual cognitive level on school bullying behavior.

Second, the bystander factor. School bullying is a process of adolescent group interaction in which the roles of adolescents can be categorized as bullies, bullied, and bystanders. The roles of bystanders can be divided into the facilitator of bullying behavior. The person who follows the bully to participate in the bullying behavior; An reinforcement of bullying. The person who gives encouraging feedback to the bully; the protector of the bully. The person who stands on the side of the bully, comforts and supports the bully, and at the same time tries to stop the bullying behavior; and the outsider. The one who indifferently disregards the bullying behavior and doesn't take any action^[1]. In the case of school bullying, there is no such thing as an "outsider" in the full sense of the word, and the inaction of bystanders is essentially a form of condoning or supporting the bullying behavior. On the one hand, bystanders often bring a sense of achievement to the bully and stimulate the bully's desire to perform; on the other hand, the bully often repeats the bullying behavior in order to maintain his or her face in the crowd, and the bystanders will also increase the bully's sense of helplessness and panic. Therefore, in the process of school bullying behavior, bystanders will more or less make school bullying behavior more and more intense.

Third, peer support factor. When bullying behavior occurs in school, the bullied often choose to talk to their friends, but the friends of the bullied often lack the experience and methods to deal with bullying in school, so it is difficult to give helpful advice and solutions to help solve the problem, so social workers should train their peers to have a deeper understanding of bullying in school and the basic measures to deal with it.

Fourth, environmental factors. The classroom system and school climate have an important influence on school bullying, and the collective bullying attitudes of most class members are reflected in the beliefs of the group that supports or opposes bullying behavior, and the attitudes of the group that protects or excludes those who are bullied^[2]. A classroom norm against bullying is likely to lead individuals to reduce their bullying intentions and actions, thus making class members more likely to be protectors; conversely, individuals are more likely to be bullies if the classroom norm accepts or even encourages bullying behavior^[3]. At the same time, the school atmosphere has an important influence on the emergence of bullying in schools. A good learning atmosphere and strict school rules and regulations are conducive to the reduction of bullying in schools, and at the same time, they also deeply influence the attitudes of teachers and students towards bullying in schools, so social workers should work together with the schools and teachers to create a good atmosphere in schools.

3. Overview of relevant theories

Cognitive Behavioral Theories. Cognitive-behavioral theory mainly includes cognitive theory and behavioral theory. We consider this process of experience, information processing and learning followed by memory and knowledge as a cognitive theory process that treats cognition as a subject. According to Alfred Adler, wrong behavior is predicated on wrong cognition, in this statement cognition is extremely important Aaron Temkin Beck discovered cognitive therapy, which starts with analyzing the thoughts that trigger distress, followed by learning about the nature of the emotional disorder, followed by thinking about the subject, a series of processes that can help to change undesirable perceptions based on perceptions and thoughts". In behavioral theory, the two factors that influence people's behavior are situational and psychological, and we will also focus on the outcome of the behavior. In order to change people's behaviors and perceptions", an effective plan can be developed and then adjusted during the actual implementation. To summarize the Cognitive Behavioral

Theory in one sentence: In order to achieve a normal behavioral and cognitive style, it is necessary to enhance the client's cognition and improve his behavioral habits.

Albert Bandura took a "middle-of-the-road" approach combining traditional behaviorism and cognitive psychology by developing a theory of social learning based on the ternary interaction theory of interaction. Bandura's view is that human behavior, especially those complex behaviors, is acquired through learning. Behavior is formed as a result of the combined influence of genetic-physiological factors and the acquired experience environment, which mainly includes two ways of hands-on experience and observational learning. In social learning theory, observational learning is a very important aspect and the main way in which human behavior is acquired. Observational learning means that a person makes certain new responses or corrects certain behavioral responses he already has by observing others' behavior and its reinforcing results, and this paradigm can be in reality or characters in films or novels.

In actual practice interventions, the lack of social skills can lead to a variety of social adjustment disorders, and the most important goal of social skills training is to help those who lack the appropriate social skills to correct their mistakes and prevent these problems from recurring. In order to determine whether a client's social skills are up to standard, four indicators are used: determining whether the client has the appropriate behavioral responses needed to achieve goals; whether the client is able to integrate these skills into daily life; whether the client maintains consistency and regularity in the use of the social skills; and whether the client's social skills positively impact his or her quality of life, which is a question worth exploring. This method is used frequently in practice, due to the fact that many caseworkers with cognitive-behavioral problems are often accompanied by social interaction difficulties that make it difficult to integrate into society, which in this paper is mainly reflected in the cognitive-behavioral problems within the caseworker's family in terms of parent-child communication, and the ensuing difficulties in parent-child communication and parent-child relationships. Therefore, methods of social skills training can be used in conjunction with other methods when appropriate to achieve successful interventions.

In this paper, Cognitive Behavioral Theory is used in order to help school adolescents change their behaviors and perceptions. It is necessary to start from both cognitive and behavioral aspects, mainly to change the adolescents' perception of bullying in schools, and also to guide the adolescents to realize the dangers and solutions of bullying in schools, so as to promote the adolescents to have a clearer understanding of bullying in schools.

4. Application of cognitive-behavioral theory in preventing bullying in schools

Social workers can use cognitive-behavioral theory to effectively intervene and change bullying behavior when preventing and dealing with bullying in schools. Cognitive-behavioral theory emphasizes the mediating role of cognition in emotion and behavior, and suggests that by altering an individual's cognitive structure, it can influence his or her emotional and behavioral responses. The following are specific strategies for application:

First of all, social workers can work together with school teachers to raise awareness by holding thematic class meetings. At the same time, social workers can also raise young people's awareness of bullying in schools by means of education and publicity, which can be embodied in the following: through campus lectures, posters, brochures and other forms, popularize the harmfulness of bullying in schools and the basics of cognitive-behavioral theories among students, so as to enhance their awareness of self-protection and anti-bullying.

Secondly, conducting typical case analysis. When adolescents face bullying in school, due to the lack of basic knowledge of bullying in school and the lack of a comprehensive study of the handling process, it is easy to cause sexual harm in school. Therefore, social workers analyze typical cases of bullying in school together with adolescents in the form of individual cases or small groups, and in the analysis of typical cases of bullying in school, they use cognitive-behavioral theories to explain the cognitive bias and emotional reaction of bullies, so that students can realize that the root cause of bullying behavior lies in wrong cognition. Emotional reactions, so that students realize that the root cause of bullying behavior lies in wrong cognition. Through the combination of cognitive behavioral theory and typical case analysis, it can promote teenagers' understanding of bullying in schools and enhance their ability to deal with bullying in schools, and at the same time, through the analysis of typical cases of bullying in schools, it can effectively prevent and reduce the emergence of bullying phenomenon in schools.

Thirdly, building support networks in schools. Bullying in schools is usually more likely to occur among young people who are introverted, shy and do not communicate much with others. For this group of young people, social workers should work with schools to utilize the "power of justice" in the classroom to encourage students to support and supervise each other, forming a good atmosphere for resisting bullying. At the same time, social workers should actively contact schools and public welfare organizations in the society, and introduce professional psychological counseling agencies and social work agencies to provide professional psychological support and intervention services for bullies and victims. At the same time, social workers can also organize mutual help groups in classes or grades through the establishment of mutual help groups, so that students can share each other's experiences and feelings, and support and help each other in the groups. By promoting home-school cooperation, communication and cooperation with students' parents can be strengthened, so that they can pay attention to their children's psychological and behavioral changes together, and detect and prevent bullying behaviors in a timely manner. Professional social workers contribute to the prevention and reduction of bullying in schools by integrating social resources and applying professional social work methods and skills.

Fourthly, attention should be paid to the personal growth experiences of both the "bully" and the "bullied". From the perspective of social work, it is necessary to pay attention to the personal growth experience of the case. In cognitive-behavioral theory, cognition and behavior influence each other, as we often say, cognition has a guiding effect on human behavior. Social workers can use interviews with parents, neighbors, classmates, school teachers, friends, and the community, using a semi-structured interview outline to conduct the interviews, and at the same time organize the data obtained from the interviews. The interviews are used to understand and analyze the adolescents' personal growth experiences and to explore the adolescents' perceptions in order to analyze the root causes of bullying in schools.

5. Role of social workers in dealing with bullying in schools

Social workers are people who follow the values of social work and use the professional methods of social work to engage in professional social services^[4]. They are people who have certain professional knowledge and engage in social welfare services. According to the above definition, we can find that social workers have the following basic characteristics: they agree with and follow the values of social work. In our country, it is manifested in the idea of serving the recipients wholeheartedly and not making personal gain by the process of helping people. They are persons engaged in social welfare services, not administrative officials. They are engaged in social service work as a considerable part of their professional or social life, not as an occasional activity. They possess certain professional approaches to social work which may be defined by international general practice or developed from local experience. Therefore, the role of social workers is crucial in school bullying incidents. Through their professional services and interventions, social workers provide support to the victim, guide and educate the assaulter, and promote the improvement of the overall school environment. Specifically, the following are the major roles and responsibilities of social workers:

First, the role of supporting victims. By providing psychological support and counseling to victims, social workers can use professional skills such as empathy to listen to their stories, understand their feelings, and guide them to find positive ways of coping. They use a variety of psycho-therapeutic techniques, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and psycho-education, to help victims regain their self-confidence and positive attitudes. At the same time, social workers create a safe and private environment for victims to feel comfortable and willing to share their experiences. This space contributes to the victim's healing and recovery. Social workers have the responsibility to assist victims in reporting to the police and dealing with matters related to bullying in schools. They provide legal assistance and guidance to ensure that the rights of victims are protected and that perpetrators are duly punished.

Second, the role of educating and guiding the aggressors. Social workers establish a good relationship with the aggressors, and through empathy training and legal knowledge learning, motivate them to recognize the wrongfulness of bullying in schools and demonstrate the society's attitude of zero tolerance towards bullying^[5]. At the same time, social workers assess the reasons why aggressors commit school bullying, help them change their cognition, emotion management and behavior modification, and guide them to establish a correct outlook on the world, life and values. With the help of social workers, moral education activities are carried out to promote positive interpersonal values to students and to develop their moral judgment and good behavioral standards.

Third, management and coordination roles. Social workers assist in establishing and promoting the prevention and control mechanism of school bullying in schools. Together with the schools, they help the relevant school personnel to work together to formulate relevant policies and norms, set up a reporting system, and supervise the implementation of the system by the schools and the teaching staff. At the same time, social workers can organize training courses to enhance the awareness and ability of teaching staff to deal with the problem of bullying in schools, and to strengthen their sensitivity and coping skills. Social workers can also provide profound education to those who are inclined to school bullying or school bullies by coordinating school resources and integrating the aggressors into a network of education, psychological counseling and social support to provide them with professional guidance and support.

Fourth, the role of publicity and advocacy. Social workers can popularize the dangers of bullying in schools and the knowledge of prevention and control through the platform of home-school-society linkage, so as to raise students' and parents' awareness of the problem of bullying in schools, and to carry out strict prevention of bullying in schools^[6]. At the same time, social workers can promote the improvement of the legal system of school bullying prevention and control by participating in legislative proposals to ensure that those who are bullied are treated fairly and that bullies are punished for their behaviors^[7]. Most importantly, social workers should contact all walks of life, such as civil organizations, government departments, charitable foundations, communities and other social organizations to participate in the publicity and advocacy activities of bullying in schools, and in this way, vigorously appeal to all walks of life to pay attention to the problem of bullying in schools, raise the awareness of and attach importance to bullying in schools, and work together to prevent and control bullying in schools.

6. Conclusion

Based on the cognitive-behavioral theory, this paper discusses in depth the necessity and application strategies of school social work in the prevention of school bullying. Through a detailed analysis of the current situation and causes of school bullying, and combining the core ideas of cognitive-behavioral theory, this paper proposes a series of targeted preventive and intervention measures.

First of all, this paper clarifies the diversity and seriousness of bullying in schools, including various forms of physical bullying, verbal bullying, social relationship bullying, network bullying, property bullying and sexual bullying. These bullying behaviors not only cause direct harm to students' physical and mental health, but also may trigger long-term psychological shadows and social problems. Therefore, the prevention and intervention of bullying in schools is an important topic that needs to be solved urgently in the field of education and social work. In terms of causal analysis, this paper points out that personal factors, bystander factors, peer support factors, and environmental factors are the main reasons for the occurrence of school bullying. Adolescents' cognitive level, attitudes and values have an important impact on bullying behavior; bystanders' inaction or reinforcing behaviors can exacerbate bullying; lack of peer support makes it difficult for the bullied to get effective help; and the classroom system and the school atmosphere constitute important environmental factors of bullying in schools.

Based on the above analysis, this paper proposes the important role and application strategies of school social work in the prevention of school bullying. First, through the guidance of cognitive-behavioral theory, school social workers can help students change their poor cognitive and behavioral patterns, and improve their understanding of and ability to cope with school bullying. This includes cognitive restructuring training to help students establish correct values and morals; behavioral interventions to correct students' poor behavioral habits; and the provision of emotional management and stress coping skills to enhance students' psychological resilience. Secondly, school social workers should be actively involved in intervention work at the classroom and school levels. They can establish class and school anti-bullying norms by formulating and implementing anti-bullying policies; organizing anti-bullying education and publicity activities to raise the anti-bullying awareness of all teachers and students; and establishing an effective monitoring and reporting mechanism to detect and stop bullying behaviors in a timely manner. In addition, this paper emphasizes the important role of peer support in preventing school bullying. School social workers should train their peers to be able to understand school bullying and basic coping measures, so that they can provide effective support and advice when the bullied need help.

In summary, this paper argues that bullying in schools can be effectively prevented and reduced through the intervention of school social work and the guidance of cognitive-behavioral theory. This not only helps to protect the physical and mental health of students and maintain the harmony and stability of schools, but also provides valuable theoretical support and practical guidance for the field of social work and the field of education. In the future, we expect more schools and social workers to pay attention to and participate in the prevention and intervention of bullying in schools, and work together to create a safer, healthier and more harmonious environment for young people to grow up in.

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