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## **CREATING A SAFE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN RESPONSE TO BULLYING**

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Modern educational area nowadays faced with a spread of such phenomenon as bullying. This problem is not new for Ukraine and foreign countries, but because of its latency is not well researched. Nevertheless, the scientists, who started researching it, already give various definitions for bullying phenomenon. [3, p.28]

A safe educational environment is an integral qualitative characteristic of the inner life of a university, which is a combination of all positive opportunities for learning, upbringing and personal development. A safe educational environment of

a university assumes that each participant in the educational process is guaranteed compliance with their rights and norms of psychological and physical safety, conditions are created for the individual development of each student. When building such an educational environment, it is necessary to take into account the peculiarities of the interaction of participants in the educational process, strategies and technologies for teaching and educating students, technologies for accompanying participants in the educational process.

The creation of a safe educational environment, in our opinion, can be carried out in several directions:

- safety to ensure the physical health of students: sanitary and hygienic support of the educational process (optimization of the study load of students, organization of students' physical activity during the day, provision of a drinking regime, medical support);
- social and psychological safety: benevolent relationships (including trust in each other, attention and respect, psychological support, concern for the safety of each team member, etc.), the competence of social interaction, the acquisition of communication skills and the formation of a communication culture, as the ability of an adequate establishing mutual understanding, avoiding conflicts, creating an atmosphere of trust.

Safety is a necessary condition for the normal development of an individual, social organization, and society. Security can be categorized in the most generalized way as physical and psychological. The safety of the educational environment is considered as a fact of protecting students from physical and psychological danger. The formation of the educational environment in the context of its security implies the selection of the threats that it contains for their further elimination. According to A. A. Baranov, the threats to the safety of the student contained in the educational environment are latent and little understood. Threats include: dissatisfaction with the need for physical activity, threats to physical health, a low level of aesthetics, threats associated with

suppression of initiative and independence of students, lack of health-preserving measures, unfavorable psychological climate, insufficient psychological contact between all subjects of the educational process [3]

An important condition that makes the educational environment comfortable and gives it a developing character is its psychological safety. At the level of an educational organization, the creation of a psychologically safe and comfortable educational environment is manifested in the implementation of a system of measures aimed at preventing threats to the full development of the student's personality. The main threat to all participants in the educational process is receiving psychological bullying, as a result of which the student's personal development, mental and physical health is damaged. The main source of psychotrauma is bullying, violence in the process of interaction both from peers and adults. [2]

David Lane defines bullying as negative impact — violence, emphasizing that bullying is a violence of physical or psychical type, that is being observed for a long time from a side of individual person or a group of persons in relation to the person, who can't protect himself in a specific situation. I. Berdyshev claims that bullying is not a self-defense for the aggressor and notes the awareness of the violence being committed. D. N. Solovyov considers bullying as a variant of destructive conflict interaction, noting that bullying occurs in a small group, in which the violent acts committed against the victim are of continuous recurrent nature. At the same time, D. N. Solovyov draws attention to the presence of witnesses of these violent actions. D. Graham with co-authors notes the presence of an imbalance of forces among the involved participants in bullying, their cruelty towards each other, the intention to apply physical or psychological harm to the victim, thus defining bullying as a type of social interaction. Proponents of this approach perceive bullying as a type of behavior in a group structure. Bullying founder Dan Olweus defines bullying as a stereotype of group interactions, in which a person over time and repeatedly encounters deliberate self-harm or discomfort

from another person or a group of people in the context of “disproportionate “power” relations”. Scientists have different views on the interpretation of the concept, but it should be noted that regardless of the interpretation of the phenomenon, bullying is defined as a form of aggressive interactions. The main idea that unites different points of view on the rhetoric of these studies is that bullying is an act (action or inaction) of participants in the educational process, which consists in psychological, physical, economic, sexual violence, including with the use of electronic devices of communication, committed against a minor, or by such a person in relation to other participants of the educational process, as a result of which the mental or physical health of the victim may or has been harmed. [4, 6, 7, 8]

Bullying is manifested through various forms of violence that are committed systematically against the same person. These may be manifestations of:

1. physical violence, including pushing, touching, kicking, fighting, kicking, slapping, hitting and other actions that cause pain and injury, etc.;
2. psychological violence, including insults, spreading false rumors, ridicule, intimidation, isolation, ignoring, boycott, refusal to communicate, threats, manipulation, blackmail, etc.;
3. economical violence, including petty theft, damage or destruction of personal belongings, extortion of money, food, etc.;
4. sexual violence, including insulting gestures, statements, nicknames, jokes, threats, spreading rumors, touching sexual (intimate) and / or content, etc.

It should be noted that bullying in the educational environment occurs not only between students. A specific problem in the educational environment is bullying by teachers in relation to students. Such bullying can be manifested through systematic actions: unreasonable underestimation of grades, systematic ignoring of the student’s opinion or actions, hanging labels on the student, insulting words, intimidation.

With the development of modern electronic technologies, violent actions (especially manifestations of psychological and

sexual violence) in bullying (harassment) are often committed with the help of electronic gadgets. Cyberbullying can take many forms: flaming, assault (repeated abusive text messages, constant calls, etc.), slander (spreading of derogatory false information through text messages, photos, videos using electronic gadgets), fraud or extortion of confidential information (texts, photos, videos and their transmission by the Internet or by mail to those to whom it was not intended), stalking or cyberpursuit (actions of covert surveillance, usually done secretly, anonymously, to cause psychological or physical harm), video recording of real attacks in order to spread them over the Internet, the use of Internet communication for further human actions, including its sexual use or driving bullied person to suicide.

The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature allows us to state that the reasons for bullying in interpersonal relationships can be different factors that can be combined into four groups: personal, family, social, environment. [4, 6, 7, 8]

Personal reasons — these are physical or psychological features of the child (individual features of physical, mental, intellectual development, appearance, etc.). Thus, bullying is often initiated by students who have certain individual psychological features and the aggressive behavior provoked by it (attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity disorder, behavioral disorders, bipolar disorder, oppositional disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and others).

Among the family factors that determine a student's aggressive behavior and can provoke bullying are: lack of close relationships with parents, lack of their attention or authoritarian style of communication; parental pressure or abuse.

Unfavorable socio-psychological climate in the educational institution, stress from learning due to overload, relationships with classmates and teachers, lack of proper attention from teachers contribute to the emergence of quarrels, conflicts, violence and their transition to bullying.

The most common factors that provoke bullying in an educational institution are:

- authoritarian learning style. Sometimes lecturers themselves can be the initiators of bullying, when the student is seen as an object of pedagogical influence, rather than an equal partner. The lecturer personally makes decisions, without taking into account the thoughts of the student, establishes strict control over the implementation of their requirements, as a result of written above students lose activity, are characterized by low self-esteem and aggression. In the authoritarian style of teaching, students' minds are focused on psychological self-defense, rather than on the acquisition of knowledge and personal self-development. When a lecturer uses a system of group punishment, when the whole group is punished for the fault of an individual student, it increases the risk of aggressive behavior among students.
- the lecturer who mentions any student as a positive or negative example for others often provokes rivalry, which in the future may escalate into bullying of this student.
- ignoring the problem at the level of the educational institution. Sometimes the teaching staff of an educational institution refuses to recognize cases of bullying in a group or educational institution as a whole, simply ignoring this phenomenon. This, in one case, can be perceived by students as a norm of behavior, and they will copy this behavior. Feelings of impunity and hopelessness often aggravate the situation with bullying in an educational institution.

Social factors are stereotypes, cultural norms, social and economic inequality, the influence of information technology (media, internet, games, movies, etc.). Students from rich families or from families with high social status may treat students from low-income families with contempt. Representatives of ethnic minorities, migrants, foreign students are more likely than others to be bullied in an educational institution, even by lecturers.

The popularization of violent patterns of behavior on television, in cinema, on the Internet can encourage students to show bullying. Modern media often show cruelty and violence and

significantly influence the formation of values and behavior of students. Some students, after watching the stories with cruelty and aggression, identify themselves with such characters and perceive it as a pattern of behavior, they gradually begin to see violence as a way to solve problems and imitate what they see in real life.

1. Personal factors are physical or psychological features of the student (individual features of physical, mental, intellectual development, appearance, etc.). Disorders and disorders in student development can be the cause of bullying. Thus, bullying is often initiated by students who have certain individual psychological characteristics and the aggressive behavior provoked by it (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, behavioral disorders, bipolar disorder, oppositional disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and others). Any difference — the difference between a student and other students, such as appearance, health, nationality, etc., can be one of the most common causes of bullying in relation to such a student. Sometimes students find bullying an acceptable way to assert themselves and gain authority in the eyes of friends and peers: to become popular, to lead, to influence others, to attract attention, to make others fear and respect. This reason is more likely during the period of junior year, as well as when new students appear in the group. Bullying can also be caused by student behavior — when the student shows or does not show the activity that is expected of most of the group (excellent, sophomore, too active / passive, expression / closed). In addition, the cause of bullying among students in higher education can be an attempt to compensate for failures in education, social life, etc. Yes, some students bully out of envy of more successful students, for better or cool things, clothes, gadgets.

2. Among the family factors that determine the aggressive behavior of the student and can provoke bullying, we can identify:

- lack of close relations between parents and students and lack of their attention to him deprives the student of the opportunity to share with relatives their problems and difficulties in communication;

- weak or too strong (authoritarian style of communication) control over the child. For example, if parents do not give the student peace of mind because of grades, shout at him, deprive him of walks and communication, leaving no time for rest, the student will behave in the same way with others;
- hyperopia. For example, when a young person leaves the family environment to the outside world, he is not able to solve problems on his own, is not able to stand up for himself, does not understand the importance of accepting other people;
- pressure or abuse from parents, which leads to a person's perception of the world around them as a constant source of threat. For example, if a young person in the family learns that quarrels, fights, insults, criticism and humiliation of others are the only way to express their dissatisfaction, then in a similar situation in an educational institution, he begins to act according to his usual scheme;
- domestic violence causes bullying, particularly in an educational institution, where a student who is a victim of domestic violence, copying the actions of adults, can become both a victim and an abuser.

### 3. Environmental factors.

Unfavorable socio-psychological climate in the educational institution, stress from learning due to overload, relationships with peers and teachers, lack of proper attention from teachers, contribute to quarrels, conflicts, violence and their transition to bullying. The most common factors that provoke bullying in an educational institution are:

- authoritarian learning style. Sometimes teachers themselves can be the initiators of bullying, when the student is seen as an object of pedagogical influence, rather than an equal partner. The teacher personally makes decisions, without taking into account the views of students, establishes strict control over the implementation of their requirements, as a result of which students lose activity, are characterized by low self-esteem and aggression. In the authoritarian style



of teaching, students' strength is focused on psychological self-defense, rather than on the acquisition of knowledge and personal self-development. When a teacher uses a system of group punishment, when the whole group is punished for the fault of an individual student, it increases the risk of aggressive behavior among students.

- the teacher's isolation of any student as a positive or negative example for others often provokes rivalry, which in the future grows into bullying of this student.
- ignoring the problem at the level of the educational institution. Sometimes the teaching staff of an educational institution refuses to recognize cases of bullying in a group or educational institution as a whole, simply ignoring this phenomenon. This, in one case, may be perceived by students as a norm of behavior, and they will model this behavior on other students. Otherwise, it provokes feelings of impunity and hopelessness and often exacerbates the situation with bullying in the educational institution.

In addition, sexual relations that occur among students also sometimes lead to bullying.

4. Social factors are stereotypes, cultural norms, social and economic inequality, the impact of information technology (media, internet, games, movies, etc.). Quite often the cause of bullying in an educational institution is gender stereotypes, ie the dominance of men over women. Sometimes students can discriminate in interpersonal relationships with female and female teachers, demonstrating their strength and superiority. Sexual orientation can also be the cause of bullying in an educational institution. The spread of bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation is evidenced by the results of a study conducted by the NGO "Point of Support" in 2018, according to which 48.7% of LGBT students surveyed feel at risk in an educational institution because of their sexual orientation.

Social and economic inequality — is a fairly common cause of bullying in education. Students from well-to-do families or from families with high social status may treat students from

low-income families with contempt. Representatives of ethnic minorities, internally displaced persons, and migrants are more likely than others to be bullied in an educational institution, even by teachers. Students who are abused by others can be violent towards their abusers, which is a way to restore justice and assert themselves.

The popularization of violent models of behavior on television, in cinema, on the Internet can also motivate students to show bullying. Modern media often show cruelty and violence and significantly influence the formation of values and behavior of children. A significant proportion of young people after watching the stories with cruelty and aggression identify themselves with such characters and perceive it as a pattern of behavior. Young people are gradually beginning to see violence as a way to solve problems and imitate what they see in real life.

Bullying among young people has its own specifics. Studies show that bullying is less common among older children and young people (17 years and older) and less likely to occur in the form of physical violence. Adolescents often experience sudden mood swings, imbalance, irritability. They tend to feel underestimated; self-esteem is not yet formed. Behind this is often self-doubt, which leads to destructive, aggressive forms of self-expression, such as bravado, rudeness, harassment. These actions give them a sense of superiority, independence, independence for a while. The desire for self-affirmation and recognition are paramount at this age.

It is important for a young person to know that the needs he has are normal, but it is impossible to satisfy them by humiliating others. Therefore, it is very important to help young people to form adequate ways to express themselves, to realize their strengths and weaknesses, and to understand that internal discomfort cannot really be compensated by humiliating others. It is important to teach them to respect the psychological boundaries of other people and their own. Junior students are in transition when they are no longer children but not yet adults. It is important for them to feel that they are taken seriously, their wishes and ideas are taken

into account when they are consulted, their opinion is asked. It is important to help freshmen form a sense of being an adult who is responsible for their actions. Since young men and women do not want to rely on other people's views and theories, they need to be given the opportunity to talk about their experiences, their own stories. The discussion should focus on responsibility and the ability to understand the real causes of misunderstandings: differences between people, likes and dislikes, the desire to be "cooler" than others, and so on. An important point is the practicality of such work: when boys and girls not only are aware of the situation, learn information, but also have the opportunity to talk and / or simulate alternative behaviors that meet their needs. It is necessary to help young men and women to realize their feelings of irritation, anger and rage (naming and explaining them), to give them the opportunity to choose other ways of expressing these feelings than making fun of others. It is important to work on the development of empathy and constructive communication skills. Freshmen should also be held accountable for their actions and focused on understanding the consequences of those actions for their future. At this age there is a formation of individuality, young men and women are willing to creative self-expression, decision-making. If they have hobbies, then belonging to reference groups becomes quite important. Boys and girls become sensitive to criticism and remarks. This is a period of emotional instability associated with hormonal changes, changes in perception of yourself, the world around you, the search for answers to the question "who to become?", "What do I want?". There is an interest in practical knowledge and new skills, but given the current pace of technology and speed of life, we want to get it all quickly, "here and now". If a young person has a lot of instability and increased anxiety and tension, problems in the family or in relationships with others, low self-esteem, it can lead to destructive behavior, apathy, aggression and self-aggression, neglect of their responsibilities and, in fact, bullying. The most common manifestations of bullying at this age: intimidation, blackmail, gossip, ridicule, cyberbullying.

Usually the occurrence of bullying in an educational institution is a set of several reasons. Therefore, it is important for teaching staff to identify the factors of this phenomenon and find ways to reduce their impact.

To study the problem, we made an attempt to generalize and analyze the opinion of students about the manifestations of any forms of violence in KNUCEA. In the course of the research, the “questionnaire method” was used. Students were asked to express themselves in writing in three areas: relationships with classmates, family relationships, relationships with university professors. The survey was attended by students of 1st, 3rd, 5th courses of KNUCEA, a total of 126 people.

Most of the students are in good relations with their parents: 70% of the respondents believe that they have a “friendly close-knit family”, “parents treat them with respect as a person”, “support in undertakings”, “help develop creative abilities”, “praise for success, encouraging in case of failure”. 27% of the respondents believe that they have “quarrels in their family, but they need each other.” 3% note that their family has “tense relations”, “there are often quarrels”, parents “do not notice good deeds, but always see blunders for which they scold and punish”, “there are situations when you want to leave home”.

96% of the respondents note that they “feel comfortable in the group”, they have developed “good relations with classmates, among whom there are friends”. About 2% of respondents point to “normal relationships” with classmates, noting that there are no friends in the group. 2% of respondents show no interest in classmates, stating that classmates are “indifferent” to them, and they are to classmates. Analyzing the nature of students’ interpersonal relations, it should be noted that 50% of the respondents indicate that it is customary in the group to “ridicule, troll each other”, 4% — “constantly humiliate someone”. On the other hand, 100% of the respondents reject the existence of physical violence by their classmates.

The following tendency is observed in relations with lecturers: the majority of respondents (96%) believe that teachers are ready

to help the student, respect the student's personality (95%), understand the problems of their students (76%). However, at the same time, some destructiveness of communication and interaction is noted: 16% of respondents note that lecturers are rude, offend the dignity of the student, 19% of respondents note the requirement of unquestioning obedience to the lecturer, 13% — intimidation of students. [5, p.28–30]

The most effective work to create a carefree educational environment, in our opinion, is to work on the basis of peer-to-peer relations. It is necessary to create such an atmosphere between the participants of the educational process, which will help everyone to feel their significance for the team, personal value, not afraid to talk about their experiences with peers. It is important that students can discuss issues in a circle. It is necessary to create additional opportunities for students to express their own opinion (with the help of the stand “Psychological Service”, where you can leave a sticker with a comment; an anonymous box; speaking at a meeting; through a mentoring system, etc.). Planned measures to normalize relations among students should especially develop:

- 1) empathy, emotional intelligence, awareness of their feelings and the feelings of others;
- 2) communication skills, skills to listen and hear each other, to understand the topic of conflicts, to respond to objections, to defend one's own opinion.

To implement these tasks, in our opinion, suitable:

- creative classes on creating posters, videos, motivators, etc. on such topics as: “skills of successful communication”, “differences that enrich us”, etc.;
- games for team interaction (build one object, perform tasks where each team member is important to achieve a common goal);
- interactive meetings with representatives of related professions: lawyers, psychologists, law enforcement, etc.;
- classes with the use of media (for example, documentaries, which are accompanied by an information block and discussion);

- trainings where young people themselves teach each other, share videos, media content or exercises and stories on overcoming bullying, etc.;
- production of educational materials on the formation of tolerant relations between students, culture of peace, intolerance of discrimination, raising awareness on combating gender-based violence;
- development and implementation of measures to acquaint and promote among students the current legislation on the protection of young people from any form of violence, violation of their rights, ill-treatment;
- involvement of student self-government bodies in conducting informational and cultural-educational events on the prevention of cruelty and violence in the student environment: design of the information stand “STOP — Bullying!”.

All of the above makes it possible to conclude that violence in the educational environment has a different nature and character. It can manifest itself both in the form of one-time and in the form of systematic actions. But these actions always harm the mental and physical health of all participants in this process. The reason for the emergence of bullying in higher education is often a low level of emotional intelligence of students, a low level of skills of proper communication and cooperation, tolerance and acceptance of otherness. The most common consequences of bullying are decreased academic performance, refusal to attend school, and self-injurious behavior. Therefore, in modern higher education, the priority of work on the prevention of harassment and conflict becomes obvious. Preventing bullying and creating a friendly educational environment is not just a process. It is a restructuring of the consciousness of everyone — students, teachers, parents and other members of the educational community.

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