

BACKGROUND

- Bullying is a frequent experience, experienced by many schoolchildren (Olweus, 2010).
- Being bullied is associated with a range of mental health outcomes in both the short and long term (Rigby, 2003; Smith & Brain, 2000).
- Recently, there have been calls to define bullying as a traumatic experience, particularly given the overlap in the definitions of bullying and trauma (Idsoe et al., 2021; Jenkins et al., 2023).
- Previous research has found a relationship between being bullied and trauma, but studies typically use different measures and designs.
- Therefore, as part of a larger scoping review, this poster aims to summarise the findings of the analysis used to examine the following research question:
What evidence is there that bullying is a traumatic experience?

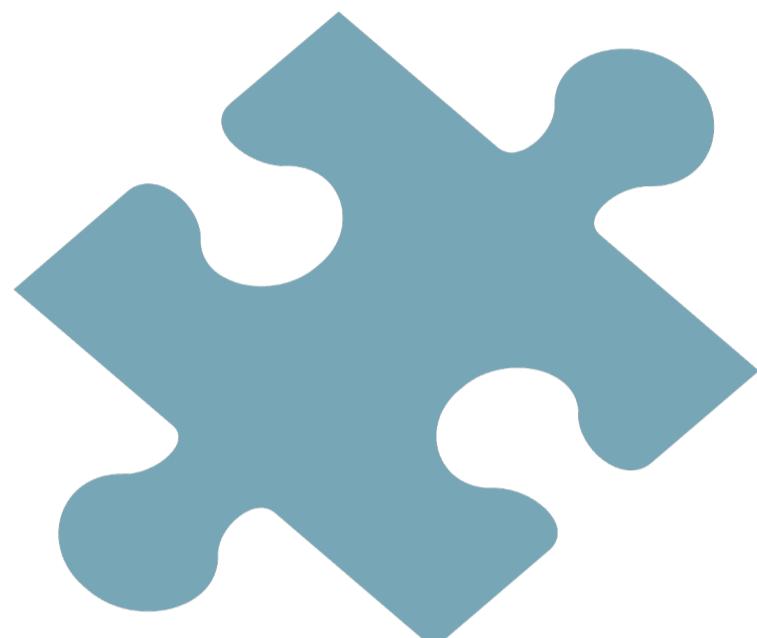
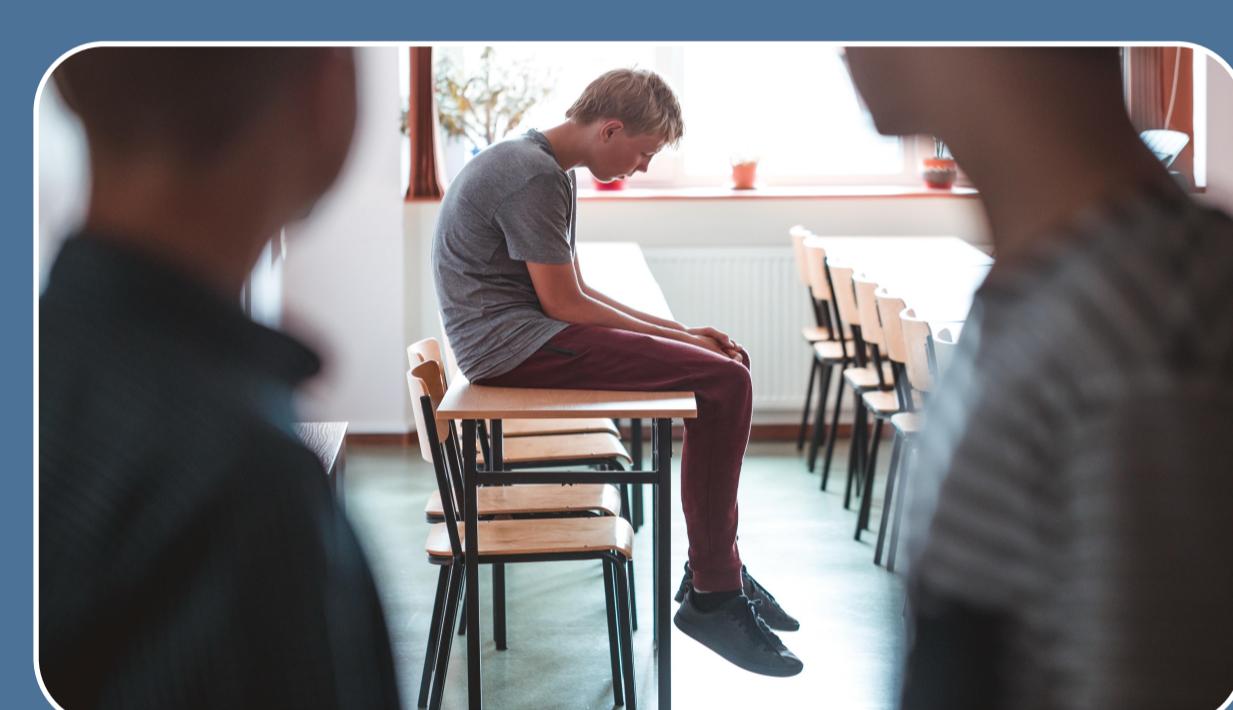


Figure 2: Key findings of the scoping review.

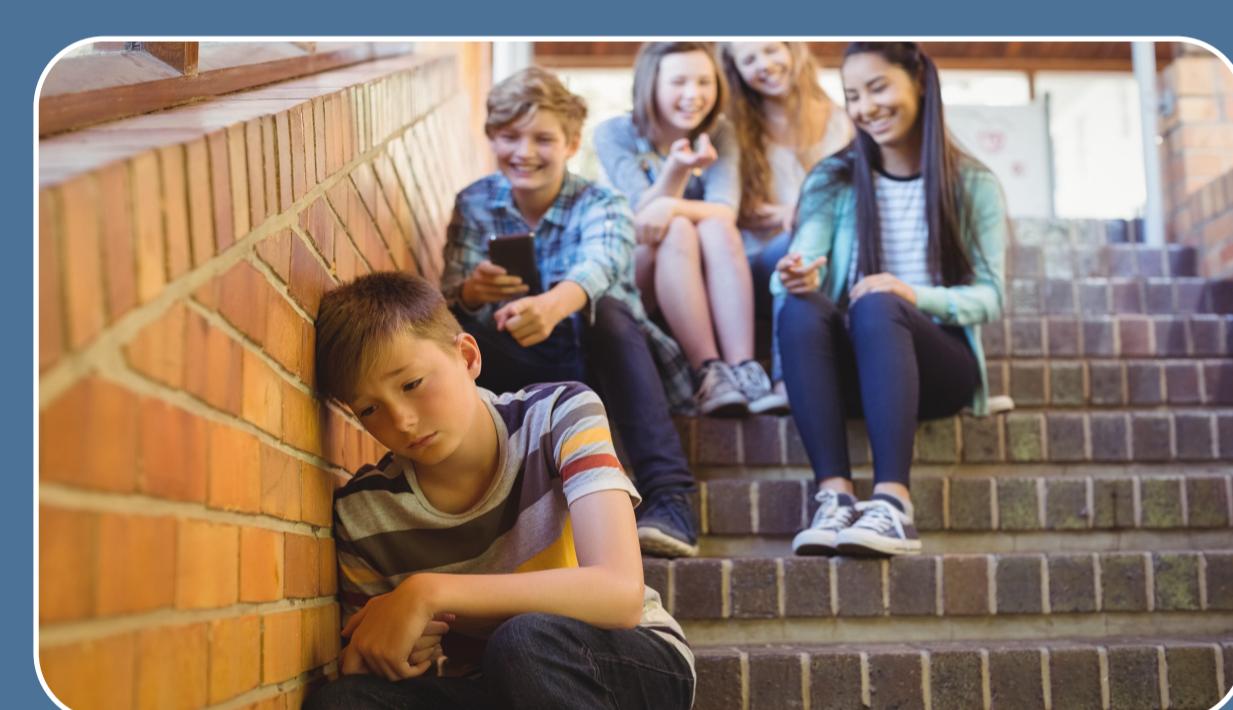
KEY FINDINGS

- The included studies examined the relationship between bullying and trauma in slightly different ways.
- These different methods of studying this relationship can be categorised in the following ways:
 1. The relationship between being bullied and being diagnosed with clinical levels of post-traumatic stress disorder.
 2. The relationship between the frequency of being bullied and symptoms of PTSD.
 3. The relationship between being bullied and domains of trauma.
 4. Qualitative investigations of the traumatic impact of bullying
- A narrative synthesis was undertaken to synthesise the findings of the studies in each of these categories, see Figure 2.



The association between being bullied and being diagnosed with PTSD

- A total of 11 articles examined this association.
- All these papers found that being bullied was associated with being diagnosed with PTSD.
- Girls who were bullied were found to have higher PTSD scores than boys (Baldry et al., 2019; Crosby et al., 2010; Idsoe et al., 2012; Stickley et al., 2013).
- Young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder who were bullied reported higher PTSD scores compared to neurotypical young people (Paul et al., 2018).



The relationship between being bullied and PTSD

- A total of 27 articles examined the association between the frequency of being bullied and PTSD symptoms. A range of different measures were used.
- All these papers found an association between being bullied and symptoms of PTSD.
- This relationship was reported for both bullying and cyberbullying.
- This relationship was also found in longitudinal studies (Holfeld & Mishna, 2021; Iyer-Eimerbrink & Jensen-Campbell., 2019; Mehari et al., 2020).



The association between being bullied and different domains of PTSD

- A total of 10 articles examined the relationship between being bullied and different domains of PTSD.
- A relationship was found between being bullied and:
 - Avoidance (Brewer et al., 2017; Carney, 2008; Gumpel, 2016; Kurniawan et al., 2022; Plexousakis et al., 2019; Sjursø et al., 2020; Vidourek et al., 2016).
 - Trauma-related shame (Wu et al., 2021).
 - Hypervigilance (Plexousakis et al., 2019).
 - Somatisation of PTSD symptoms (Plexousakis et al., 2019).

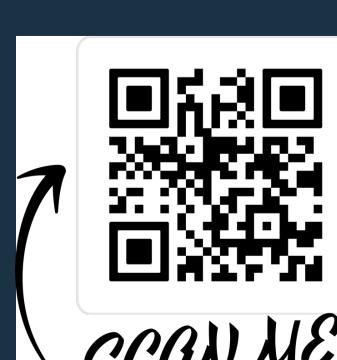


Qualitative examination of the association between being bullied and trauma

- One paper reported a qualitative investigation of the traumatic impact of being bullied (Neves et al., 2023).
- In their study of four adolescents who had been psychologically bullied, they highlighted the traumatic impact of being bullied.
- They also found that avoidance was a commonly used coping mechanism by participants.

DISCUSSION

- The findings of this review highlight the traumatic impact of being bullied.
- The relationship between being bullied and trauma has been examined in several different ways, including the relationship between being bullied and being diagnosed with PTSD and the relationship between the frequency of being bullied and symptoms of trauma. Most studies employed a cross-sectional design.
- Avoidance was the most frequently measured sub-domain of trauma, with research reporting a consistent relationship between being bullied, school absence, skipping classes and avoiding certain areas/ activities in school.
- The findings of this review highlight the traumatic impact of being bullied and the need for trauma-informed interventions to support those being bullied.



References

Please scan this QR code to access the references for this poster and to find out more about the review.

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