



Peer violence and hate among school youth – diagnosis of the phenomenon, prevention and effective support strategies in the educational environment

Násilie medzi rovesníkmi a nenávisť medzi školskou mládežou – diagnostika javu, prevencia a účinné stratégie podpory vo vzdelávacom prostredí

Antoni OLAK¹, Bożena KONECKA-SZYDEŁKO², Sławomir
STEFANŃSKI³

¹Faculty of Management and Economics-Department of National Security

²University of Rzeszów, Faculty of Health Sciences and Psychology

³Dyrektor Podkarpackiego Oddziału Okręgowego Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża, Państwowa
Akademia Nauk Stosowanych

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Abstract:

The article is devoted to the phenomenon of peer violence and hate among school youth, with particular emphasis on cyberbullying. Various forms of aggression, risk factors and psychosocial determinants of aggressive behaviour in the school environment are presented. Signals indicating the experience of violence by pupils and the role of legal responsibility of minors and support of institutions such as the Probation Service Teams are discussed. The article emphasizes the importance of cooperation between the school and parents, peer mediation and the implementation of preventive and intervention programs, including international programs and Polish educational initiatives. The need to develop students' socio-emotional competencies (SEL) and build their mental resilience was indicated. Two case studies illustrate practical actions in responding to online hate and resolving school conflicts through peer mediation. The authors conclude that effective counteracting violence requires a systemic, multi-level approach, integrating educational, educational, legal and psychosocial activities.

Keywords: cyberbullying, peer violence, risk factors, socio-emotional learning (SEL), prevention and intervention programs



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Abstrakt:

Článek je venovaný fenoménu rovesníckeho násillia a nenávisti medzi školskou mládežou, s osobitým dôrazom na kyberšikanu. Predstavuje rôzne formy agresie, rizikové faktory a psychosociálne determinanty agresívneho správania v školskom prostredí. Diskutuje sa o signáloch naznačujúcich skúsenosť žiakov s násillim a o úlohe právnej zodpovednosti maloletých a podpore inštitúcií, ako sú tímy probačnej služby. Článok zdôrazňuje dôležitosť spolupráce medzi školou a rodičmi, rovesníckej mediácie a implementácie preventívnych a intervenčných programov vrátane medzinárodných programov a poľských vzdelávacích iniciatív. Bola naznačená potreba rozvíjať sociálno-emocionálne kompetencie (SEL) študentov a budovať ich psychickú odolnosť. Dve prípadové štúdie ilustrujú praktické kroky v reakcii na online nenávisť a riešení školských konfliktov prostredníctvom rovesníckej mediácie. Autori dospeli k záveru, že účinné bojovanie proti násilliu si vyžaduje systémový, viacúrovňový prístup, integrujúci vzdelávacie, právne a psychosociálne aktivity.

Kľúčové slová: kyberšikana, rovesnícke násillie, rizikové faktory, socioemocionálne učenie (SEL), preventívne a intervenčné programy

Introduction

Peer violence, including hate, and various forms of cyberbullying are one of the most serious threats to the harmonious development of young people in the school environment. Research indicates that up to 10-20% of students experience systematic peer violence, and an even larger group encounters digital aggression. This violence takes various forms – from physical and verbal aggression, through relational violence, to cyberbullying, which is distinguished by its specific anonymity, durability of the message and wide reach. Hate, i.e. malicious or offensive content published online, has become a common tool for excluding and intimidating students.

In the face of dynamic technological changes, growing activity of young people on the Internet and changing models of communication, the diagnosis and counteracting of violence require integrated activities of many environments – school, family, aid institutions and curatorial teams. The diagnosis of the phenomenon should take into account both psychosocial and environmental conditions, including the level of social competence of pupils, norms in peer groups and support from adults.

The article by Barlińska and co-authors (2018) emphasizes the importance of empathetic and social-emotional methods of reducing cyberbullying, including training in the ability to recognize emotions, self-regulation, and constructive conflict resolution.

Sztajnkowska and Milczarczyk (2024) point to the current context of peer violence in the Polish education system, emphasizing the need for systemic diagnosis and preventive actions. The research of Jaskulska and co-authors (2022) shows that the problem of peer violence and cyberbullying is global, which makes it possible to compare the mechanisms of aggression and the effectiveness of interventions in different countries. In turn, the analysis by Sitarczyk and Dudziak (2024) takes into account the perspective of different groups of stakeholders – students, teachers and parents – which allows to identify areas requiring educational, educational and psychological support.

Effective counteracting peer violence and cyberbullying requires a systemic approach that integrates social and emotional education, psychological support, legal tools and cooperation between school and family. The introduction of preventive programs and the development of students' socio-emotional competences is becoming

an essential element of the strategy for building a safe and conducive to the development of a school environment.

1. Peer violence in the school and online environment

The phenomenon of peer violence, both in the school environment and in the online space, is one of the most serious educational and social challenges of modern schools. Traditional forms of aggression – such as physical, verbal or exclusionary violence – are increasingly permeating the digital world, where they take the form of cyberbullying. The anonymity of the Internet, the speed of dissemination of content and the lack of direct contact are conducive to the intensification of aggressive behaviour and make it difficult to control it. Both school violence and cyberbullying have a significant impact on the emotional development, social functioning and sense of security of children and young people. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms of these phenomena and developing effective preventive and intervention measures is becoming increasingly important.

1.1. Forms of violence and hate

Peer violence in the school environment takes many forms, including physical, verbal, relational and cyberbullying. Physical aggression involves directly attacking the victim's body – hitting, pushing, hitting – and although its occurrence is increasingly monitored in many schools, it still poses a serious threat to students' sense of security. Verbal aggression includes insults, humiliations, humiliating comments or verbal threats, while relational violence takes the form of exclusion, gossip, isolating the victim or manipulating a peer group.

In recent years, more and more attention has been paid **to cyberbullying**, i.e. aggression carried out through digital media, such as social media, instant messaging or online games.

It is characterized by the specific anonymity of the perpetrator, the durability of the message and a wide range – offensive content can be shared hundreds of times, remaining online for a long time, which significantly increases the psychological impact on the victim. Research indicates that up to 25-30% of school-age youth in Poland have experienced cyberbullying in the last year.

Online hate is defined as malicious or offensive comments published on the Internet, which are intended to ridicule, humiliate or exclude a specific person. The scientific literature emphasizes that hate is often repetitive and directed at the same people, and its psychological effects can include feelings of isolation, lowered self-esteem, anxiety, and even depression. This phenomenon is particularly dangerous because aggression can permeate from the school space to the virtual one, prolonging the victim's negative experiences beyond the duration of school classes.

Empirical research also indicates that risk factors related to peer violence include both individual characteristics of students (low mental resilience, impulsivity, lack of social competence) and environmental factors, such as malfunctioning of peer groups, lack of family support, and exposure to violence in the media. In pedagogical practice, it is observed that children and young people who experience cyberbullying often do not disclose it to adults, fearing that access to the Internet will be restricted or that the aggressors will react.

Examples of research indicate that among high school students, 15-20% admit to having been a victim of cyberbullying at least once in the past six months, and more

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than 10% have experienced this phenomenon repeatedly. An interesting aspect is also the fact that some students play the role of victim and aggressor ("bullyvictim") at the same time, which is associated with a higher risk of emotional problems, learning difficulties and conflicts in peer relationships.

Effective diagnosis of forms of violence therefore requires an integrated approach, including observation of teachers, pedagogues and psychologists, analysis of data from surveys and questionnaires, as well as support from parents and support institutions. It is important to monitor both direct aggressive actions and subtle forms of relational or digital violence in order to be able to respond appropriately and introduce preventive actions at the individual, class and school levels.

1.2. Sources and risk factors

Peer violence in the school environment does not appear in a vacuum – it is the result of a complex influence of individual, family, social and environmental factors. The most frequently indicated risk factors include communication disorders in the family, lack of adequate emotional support, excessive exposure to violence in the media, as well as a low level of social competence of students. Children and adolescents who do not receive support from their parents or guardians in resolving conflicts are more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour in peer relationships.

The group environment is also a significant risk factor – peer violence is more common in classes and groups with poorly developed social norms. Olweus' (2013) research shows that in groups where there are no clear rules about social behavior and the effects of aggression, students are more likely to use violence against their peers. In addition, the presence of "aggression leaders" in a group can lead to the dissemination of aggressive behavior patterns and the perpetuation of a hierarchy based on bullying.

At the individual level, risk factors include temperamental traits such as impulsivity, low levels of empathy, and difficulty controlling emotions. In addition, young people who use digital media intensively and are exposed to violent content on the Internet or computer games may be more prone to online and offline aggression. Statistics show that around 20-25% of students who regularly participate in online communities have experienced cyberbullying at least once in the past six months.

Family factors are equally important. Research indicates that children raised in an environment where there are no consistent rules, frequent conflicts between parents and limited emotional support are more likely to take on the role of aggressor or victim at school. Contemporary psychological research shows that interventions aimed at strengthening family ties and developing communication skills can significantly reduce the risk of peer violence.

At the social level, the phenomenon of violence is also linked to cultural and social norms. Environments in which violence is downplayed or tolerated are conducive to the perpetuation of aggressive behaviour among young people. The literature also indicates that peer groups that promote rivalry and hierarchy based on dominance are more likely to show the occurrence of verbal and physical aggression.

The conclusion of the research is the need for a multi-level preventive approach – both through family support, the development of students' socio-emotional competences, and the formation of coherent social norms in peer groups and the school as a whole. Recognizing the sources of risk allows for better planning of

intervention activities and prevention programs, which is crucial for reducing peer violence and cyberbullying in the school environment.

2. Psychosocial conditions conducive to violence among young people

The period of adolescence is characterized by intense psychosocial changes, which significantly affect peer behavior. During this period, young people are intensively searching for their own identity, testing the limits of independence, and looking for recognition and belonging to a peer group. The need for acceptance among peers can lead to both taking on the role of an aggressor and a passive observer of violence. Research indicates that adolescents often adapt their behaviour to group norms, which in the case of environments that tolerate aggression is conducive to its formation.

Peer aggressors often have a high social status in the group, which makes it difficult for teachers and educators to identify the problem. High status can be due to popularity, leadership skills, social media activity, or attendance at school events. Research by Olweus (2013) shows that in classrooms where there are clear social hierarchies, high-status students are more likely to use violence against their classmates, and other students often turn a blind eye to their behavior for fear of rejection.

On an individual level, psychosocial factors include impulsivity, low empathy, and difficulty regulating emotions. Students with low emotional resilience and high sensitivity to stress are more likely to get involved in conflict or become victims of aggression. At the same time, it is observed that adolescents functioning in an environment where violence is the norm or widely tolerated internalize aggressive behavior patterns more quickly.

Factors related to communication in the peer group are also important. Research indicates that children and adolescents who have limited interpersonal skills, difficulties in negotiating conflicts and insufficient ability to understand the emotions of others are more likely to participate in acts of violence – both as perpetrators and observers. In the case of cyberbullying, similar relationships are observed – young people who do not understand the consequences of their actions online are more likely to publish offensive comments or participate in hating others.

In addition, family and parenting interactions during this period have a significant impact on aggressive behavior. The lack of consistent rules, limited emotional support and high intensity of conflict in the family promote the internalization of patterns of violence and reduce the ability of young people to resolve conflicts constructively. Practical pedagogical observations show that students from such environments are more likely to take on the role of aggressors in peer groups or become passive observers, which contributes to the perpetuation of the cycle of violence.

The conclusion from the literature is the need to carry out educational and preventive activities that develop emotional and social competences and the skills of assertive response to violence. Implementing SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) programs in schools allows to increase students' empathy, improve the ability to regulate emotions and build psychosocial resilience, while reducing the risk of engaging in peer violence and cyberbullying.

3. Cyberbullying – recognizing and responding

Cyberbullying is one of the most dynamically developing forms of peer violence, the effects of which often equal – and sometimes exceed – the consequences of traditional school violence. Students, using social media, instant messengers or online games, gain new tools to ridicule, intimidate or exclude others.

However, recognizing cyberbullying is more difficult than in the case of direct aggression – it takes place outside the control of adults, often anonymously and can continue continuously, regardless of place and time. Therefore, it is crucial to develop the competences of teachers, parents and students themselves in identifying danger signals and taking quick, adequate intervention measures. Effective response requires both knowledge of school procedures and an understanding of the specifics of the digital environment, in which violence takes on new forms and reach.

3.1. Characterisation of the phenomenon

Cyberbullying is a specific form of peer aggression that is significantly different from traditional school violence. Its main features are the lack of time and space limitations, the ability to leave permanent traces on the network and a potentially wide reach of recipients. Unlike physical or verbal aggression at school, cyberbullying can occur outside of school hours, at home or in other places where the student is present, and its consequences are long-lasting and difficult to remove.

Hinduja and Patchin (2015) point out that cyberbullying encompasses a wide range of activities – from sending offensive messages, to posting compromising photos or videos, to creating fake online profiles to ridicule a person. The literature also emphasizes that cyberbullying can take various forms: trolling, hate, online exclusion, digital stalking or experiencing threats online.

The aspect of anonymity is also important – perpetrators often feel protected because their identity is difficult to establish. This means that some behaviors that would be inhibited by social norms in a traditional school can be carried out on the Internet without inhibitions. At the same time, the availability of digital technologies means that cyberbullying can involve a large number of people at the same time, increasing the psychological pressure on the victim. International research indicates that between 15% and 35% of school-age students have experienced cyberbullying in the past year.

3.2. Signalling in pupils

Recognizing cyberbullying among adolescents is difficult because children and adolescents rarely disclose their experiences to adults, fearing that they will be deprived of access to the internet or that the problem will escalate. Teachers and parents should pay attention to the following signals that may indicate an experience of cyberbullying:

- sudden avoidance of social media or a change in internet usage habits,
- low mood, frequent sadness, withdrawal, reluctance to participate in school activities,
- isolating oneself from peers and limiting social contacts offline,

- a decrease in academic performance and lack of motivation to perform school duties,
- psychosomatic symptoms, such as headaches, sleep problems or lack of appetite.

In addition, teachers and educators should observe changes in students' interpersonal behaviour – conflicts with peers, avoidance of cooperation in a group, more frequent arguments or symptoms of fear of returning to school. Pyżalski's (2020) research indicates that effective identification of cases of cyberbullying requires the integration of information from students, teachers and parents, and the use of diagnostic tools such as anonymous surveys, online behaviour questionnaires and interviews with an educator.

The literature also emphasizes the importance of educating students in the field of digital safety and developing socio-emotional competences. Prevention programs that teach how to recognize threats, respond to online aggression, empathize with other Internet users, and assertively report worrying situations reduce the risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of cyberbullying.

An effective response to cyberbullying also requires the cooperation of schools, parents and specialists – psychologists, educators and curatorial teams. Early detection of the threat and the use of appropriate intervention procedures can significantly reduce the negative psychological effects on the student and contribute to building a safe educational environment.

4. Legal responsibility of minors and support for victims

In Poland, the legal responsibility of minors is regulated by the Act of 26 October 1982 on Proceedings in Juvenile Matters, amended in 2022 in the field of support and rehabilitation. According to the regulations, young people between the ages of 13 and 17 can be held liable for acts that have the characteristics of criminal acts, including those related to cyberbullying, such as defamation, criminal threats or persistent harassment. These provisions are aimed not only at providing an appropriate legal response, but also at supporting minors in the process of rehabilitation and social reintegration.

An important role in this regard is played by the **Teams of the Probation Service of the Court (KSS)**, which operate at family courts and deal with supervision, educational support and mediation between the parties to the conflict. Probation officers have the opportunity to conduct community interviews, monitor family and school situations, as well as propose individual rehabilitation programs for young people who exhibit aggressive behavior. In practice, this means that the intervention of a probation officer may include both educational and educational activities aimed at reducing the repetition of criminal acts and strengthening the socio-emotional competences of young people.

In the case of cyberbullying, the legal responsibility of minors also includes the consequences related to the publication of offensive content, the dissemination of defamatory information or threats online. These actions may result, m.in, in an order to apologize to the victim, participation in educational or educational activities, and in extreme cases, court proceedings leading to the application of educational or corrective measures.

Practical research shows that the effectiveness of support depends on an integrated approach of the school, family and justice institutions. Dąbrowska (2022)

points out that effective cooperation between curators, school educators and parents makes it possible not only to monitor the student's situation, but also to implement preventive measures that limit the escalation of violence and support the psychosocial development of minors.

In addition, psychological support programs for victims of violence are being introduced in the Polish education system, including psychological consultations, stress management workshops, assertiveness trainings and support groups. Research indicates that the combination of legal, educational and psychosocial activities significantly reduces the risk of repetition of criminal behaviour among young people and strengthens the social and emotional competences of pupils.

The conclusion from the literature and practice is the need for a systemic approach in which preventive, educational and legal activities function in parallel. Only in this way is it possible to effectively reduce peer violence and cyberbullying, as well as to provide adequate support for both perpetrators and victims.

5. Parents' cooperation with the school and peer mediation

Effective counteracting peer violence requires an integrated approach that includes both educational activities at school and the involvement of parents in the educational process. Research indicates that the coherence of the school and family environments is one of the key factors reducing the risk of aggression and cyberbullying. Parents who participate in the creation of school educational and preventive programs have the opportunity not only to learn about the methods of teachers' work, but also to actively support children in developing socio-emotional competences.

In practice, cooperation between the school and parents can take various forms. These include: educational meetings and workshops for parents, individual consultations with a school pedagogue, participation in class councils, as well as joint development of codes of conduct applicable in classes and the whole school. Wójcik's research (2021) shows that the systematic involvement of parents in preventive activities promotes early detection of educational problems, which allows them to react faster to the first signals of aggression, isolation or exclusion among students.

At the same time, peer mediation plays an increasingly important role in resolving peer conflicts. It is a method based on dialogue and cooperation, in which a neutral mediator – often a student himself trained in communication and conflict resolution – helps the parties to the dispute to find a common solution. Peer mediation allows students to understand the other party's perspective, develop empathy, negotiation skills, and the ability to solve problems constructively.

Hutchinson (2019) emphasizes that peer mediation is effective not only in the case of individual disputes, but also in group situations when conflicts increase in the classroom or project team. Examples of research show that after the introduction of peer mediation in secondary schools, a reduction in the number of incidents of verbal and physical aggression by up to 30-40% was observed, as well as an improvement in relationships between students.

An important element of effective mediation is the parallel support of parents – both in preparing children to participate in the mediation process and in continuing educational activities at home. Involving parents in discussing the outcome of mediation, implementing rules at home and supporting the child in developing social

skills increases the effectiveness of the programme and contributes to the long-term improvement of the social climate at school.

To sum up, the integration of school and parent activities together with the implementation of peer mediation is an effective mechanism for counteracting violence, resolving conflicts and supporting the psychosocial development of young people. The literature indicates that the success of such activities requires regularity, professional pedagogical support and consistent involvement of all participants in the educational process.

6. Prevention and intervention programs

Contemporary research on peer violence and cyberbullying indicates that effective prevention requires multi-level educational, psychosocial and intervention activities. Prevention programs in schools are aimed not only at reducing aggressive behavior, but also at developing students' social, emotional and communicative competencies.

6.1. Proven programs

One of the most recognized and recommended programs in the world is the **Olweus Program**, the main goal of which is to reduce violence at school through activities at the level of the whole school, individual classes and individual support for students. This program assumes systematic monitoring of students' behavior, training for teachers and school staff, and involving parents in the preventive process. Olweus' research has shown that implementing a program can reduce incidents of physical and verbal violence by 20–50% depending on the grade and school.

In Poland, an effective initiative is the **"School without Violence" program**, which develops a culture of dialogue, builds awareness of the problem of violence and monitors relationships among students. The program includes workshops, educational activities, peer mediation and parent engagement activities. The implementation of the programme in Polish schools shows a significant reduction in class conflicts and an improvement in the social climate among pupils.

In addition, the prevention of cyberbullying is becoming increasingly important. **The Cyberbullying Research Center Toolkit** offers schools a set of educational tools, lesson plans, strategies for responding to online incidents and materials to support the development of students' digital competences. International research shows that digital education and awareness of the consequences of cyberbullying results in a reduction in the number of online hate acts by about 15-25% among young people.

6.2. The importance of early prevention

The most effective prevention programs are based on **early intervention**, which includes the development of social-emotional competences, emotional education, strengthening mental resilience, and learning empathy and assertiveness. These programs work not only on the individual level of the student, but also on the level of the entire class

group, which allows to shape positive social norms and strengthen peer bonds.

Borecka-Biernat (2016) points out that early prevention brings measurable effects: students participating in systematic emotional classes and workshops for the development of social competences show less propensity to use violence, greater resistance to peer pressure and a higher level of empathy. In addition, early interventions raise awareness of the risks of cyberbullying, which is particularly relevant in the digital age, where online aggression can have long-term psychological consequences.

To sum up, effective prevention of peer violence and cyberbullying requires the use of multi-level programs, including emotional education, psychosocial support, group interventions and educational tools adapted to the specifics of the school and online environment. Early implementation of such programs allows not only to reduce aggressive behavior, but also to build lasting socio-emotional competences of students.

7. Building mental resilience and emotional-social competence (SEL)

The development of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competences is a key element of the prevention of peer violence and cyberbullying in the school environment. SEL programs focus on developing students' ability to recognize their own emotions, regulate reactions, cope with conflict situations, and respond empathetically to the needs of others. Durlak and co-authors (2011) in a meta-analysis of 213 SEL programs showed that participation in systematic classes of this type increases students' sense of agency, reduces problem behaviors and improves psychosocial functioning.

A key element of SEL programs is **emotion recognition training**. Students learn to identify their own emotional states, name them and notice emotional signals in other people. Studies show that children and adolescents who develop this skill cope better with stress, have greater resilience to peer aggression and are more likely to undertake prosocial activities.

Another area is **self-regulation**, which includes controlling impulsive reactions, planning actions and responding constructively in difficult situations. SEL classes that develop self-regulation, reduce the frequency of classroom conflict, and reduce aggressive behavior by 20–30%. Students learn breathing techniques, relaxation strategies and methods of reflecting on their own behavior, which supports the development of social and emotional competences.

Constructive conflict resolution is another pillar of SEL. Students will learn the techniques of negotiation, peer mediation and assertive communication. These programs enable young people to take on the roles of both mediator and participant in the conflict, which develops empathy and a sense of responsibility for the common good. Research by Hutchinson (2019) shows that regular conflict resolution training contributes to improving the class climate, reduces the number of aggressive situations and strengthens cooperation in a group.

In addition, SEL programs have a positive impact on the development of **mental resilience of students**, i.e. the ability to adapt in the face of difficulties, peer pressure or negative experiences. Incorporating SEL classes into the school schedule allows children and young people to develop strategies for coping with frustration, stress, and situations that require perseverance.

In school practice, SEL programmes can take various forms, including individual workshops, group classes, social skills trainings and modules as part of

educational lessons. It is important that these activities are systematic, carried out by trained teachers or pedagogues, as well as supported by parents and the school community. The effect is not only to reduce aggressive behavior, but also to increase the sense of security, trust and cooperation in the educational environment.

To sum up, the implementation of SEL programs in schools is an effective strategy to support the psychosocial development of students, building mental resilience and preventing peer violence and cyberbullying. These programs integrate emotional education, social competence, and coping strategies for conflict situations, creating a safe and supportive school environment.

8. The role of psychosocial support for students - case studies

Analysis of specific cases of peer violence and cyberbullying allows for a better understanding of the mechanisms of conflict in the school environment, the importance of prompt intervention and the role of psychosocial support for students. Below are two examples of situations that illustrate various aspects of prevention and intervention activities in Polish schools.

8.1. Case Study 1 – Online Hate and School Reaction

Description of the situation:

A student of the first grade of a secondary school has become the object of hate on a popular social media platform. A vulgar comment about her appearance was shared by her peers more than 50 times, which caused the girl to feel ashamed, lower her mood and avoid contact with her peers.

The school's reaction:

- the tutor immediately organized a meeting with the school pedagogue in order to support the student's mental health,
- individual interviews with the aggressors were conducted, explaining the consequences of their actions and reminding them of the principles of the school code of conduct,
- the case was reported to the family probation officer, who conducted an environmental interview and implemented educational supervision,
- Educational workshops on hate and cyberbullying were organized in the classroom, covering the principles of online communication and the legal consequences of online activities.

The result:

The student received professional psychological support, and the whole class implemented the principles of digital safety and created an "online communication code".

The intervention has shown effectiveness both in limiting further aggressive actions online and in building social awareness among students.

8.2. Case Study 2 – Peer Mediation in School Conflict

Description of the situation:

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Two students of the technical school got into a conflict related to the exclusion of a third colleague from the project group. The situation escalated to verbal aggression and isolation of the student from group cooperation.

The course of mediation:

- peer mediators conducted individual meetings with each of the students to get to know the perspective of all parties,
- common objectives of mediation were established: ending the conflict and restoring cooperation in the project group,
- A class contract was developed defining the principles of cooperation, mutual respect and communication in the team.

The result:

The conflict was successfully resolved, the students signed a contract and continued their joint projects. Peer mediation allowed participants to understand the other party's point of view, develop social skills and empathy, as well as improve the climate of collaboration in the classroom.

The analysis of both cases indicates that the school's prompt intervention, the support of a pedagogue and psychologist, cooperation with a probation officer and the use of peer mediation are effective strategies to reduce violence and hate. In addition, digital education and the creation of class contracts are conducive to building a safe learning environment and strengthening students' social competences.

Summary

An analysis of peer violence, hate and cyberbullying in the school environment indicates that effective prevention and intervention require **a systemic approach**, including multi-level activities that integrate the school, family and support institutions¹. Diagnosis of the phenomenon is the first step in identifying both victims and perpetrators of violence. Studies show that early recognition of symptoms of aggression, isolation or online harassment can effectively prevent the escalation of conflicts.

Emotional and social education is an important element of the strategy for counteracting violence. Programs such as **SEL (Social and Emotional Learning)**, emotion recognition workshops, self-regulation trainings or peer mediation enable students to develop social competences, empathy and the ability to constructively resolve conflicts. The implementation of proven prevention programs, such as **the Olweus Program, School without Violence** or educational tools in the area of cyberbullying, brings measurable effects in the form of reducing physical and verbal aggression, improving the classroom climate and increasing the digital safety of students.

An important aspect is **the use of legal tools and institutional support**. The teams of the Probation Service of the Probation Service, the school pedagogue, the psychologist and the parents work together to monitor the situation of the students, conduct mediation and introduce rehabilitation measures.

The effectiveness of interventions depends on the coherence and regularity of these activities, as well as on educating young people about legal responsibility and the consequences of aggression, including cyberbullying.

The development of **mental resilience of young people** is another key element of prevention. Students who participate in systematic activities that develop

emotional and social competences show a greater ability to cope with stress, peer pressure and difficult interpersonal situations. Combined with early diagnosis and education, developing mental resilience contributes to reducing aggressive behaviour and improving the quality of psychosocial functioning at school.

To sum up, effective combating of peer violence and hate speech requires **an integrated strategy** in which diagnosis, education, development of social and emotional competences, legal support and cooperation of all institutions function in parallel. Only such a systemic approach allows us to build a safe and supportive school environment, conducive to the harmonious development of young people and reducing the negative effects of aggression and cyberbullying.

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Autors:

¹**Antoni Olak, Honorary. Prof.:** Rev. B. Markiewicz PANS in Jarosław: Faculty of Management and Economics-Department of National Security; WSPiA in Lublin: Department of International Relations, Poland, mail: antonio130 @vp.pl;

²**Bożena Konecka-Szydelko,** Voivodeship Sanitary and Epidemiological Station in Rzeszów, 35-959 Rzeszów, 16 Wierzbowa Street, University of Rzeszów, Faculty of Health Sciences and Psychology. 35-310 Rzeszów, 1a Warzywna Street, ,e-mail: bozena.konecka-szydelko@sanepid.gov.pl

³**Sławomir Stefanski,** Dyrektor POO (Podkarpackiego Oddziału Okręgowego) Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża, Państwowa Akademia Nauk Stosowanych (PANS) im. St. Pigoń w Krośnie Zakład Zielenictwa, e-mail: slawomi_stefanski@wp.pl: