



Addressing bullying through peer support groups. An approach based on sociometrics and the ecological model

Abordaje del bullying mediante grupos de apoyo entre pares. Un enfoque basado en la sociometría y el modelo ecológico

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ABSTRACT

This Intervention Plan corresponds to the Final Degree Project of the Bachelor's Degree in Psychology at Universidad Siglo 21, Río Cuarto. After the analysis carried out at I.P.E.M N°193 José María Paz in the town of Saldán (Córdoba), it is suggested to implement a peer support group, to reduce the prevalence of bullying. The first stage of the Action Plan consists of the administration of questionnaires to students and the subsequent analysis of the data collected. These instruments are: "Sociometric Questionnaire for Pre-adolescents", "Peer Roles in Fights" and "Questionnaire to Evaluate the Social Climate of the School Center". The second stage comprises 5 sessions with the students who make up the support group, together with a meeting with their parents; 2 collaborative workshops with teachers and individual interviews with students who have been assaulted and also with those who actively participate in conflicts. Once this stage is completed, the impact of the intervention is evaluated through the administration of the questionnaires above. The third stage culminates with a closing ceremony for the support group.

Keywords: Bullying; Support Group ; Ecological Model; Sociometry.

RESUMEN

El presente Plan de Intervención corresponde al Trabajo Final de Grado de la Licenciatura en Psicología de la Universidad Siglo 21, sede Río Cuarto. Tras el análisis realizado del I.P.E.M N°193 José María Paz de la localidad de Saldán (Córdoba), se sugiere implementar un grupo de apoyo entre pares, para reducir la prevalencia del acoso escolar. La primera etapa del Plan de Acción consiste en la administración de cuestionarios a los estudiantes y en el análisis posterior de los datos recabados. Estos instrumentos son: "Cuestionario Sociométrico para preadolescentes", "Roles de los compañeros en las peleas" y "Cuestionario para Evaluar el Clima Social del Centro Escolar". La segunda etapa abarca 5 sesiones con los estudiantes que conforman el grupo de apoyo, junto a una reunión con sus padres; 2 talleres colaborativos con docentes y entrevistas individuales con alumnos que han sido agredidos y también con aquellos que participan activamente en conflictos. Una vez finalizada esta etapa, se evalúa el impacto de la intervención, a través de la administración de los cuestionarios mencionados. La tercera instancia culmina con una ceremonia de cierre del grupo de apoyo.

Palabras clave: Bullying; Grupo de Apoyo; Modelo Ecológico; Sociometría.

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of this Final Degree Project (TFG), it was decided to implement an Intervention Plan at the Provincial Institute of Secondary Education (I.P.E.M.) N° 193: José María Paz, where the problem of bullying among students has been identified. In this regard, it was found that Argentina ranks as the fifth country with the highest incidence of school bullying cases worldwide. Furthermore, it is estimated that 7 out of every 10 students in our country experience some type of bullying or cyberbullying daily.(1) In this sense, it is known that bullying can generate severe repercussions and lasting consequences on students' mental and physical health.

Considering that the target population consists of adolescents, the following strategic line is chosen to address the problem of bullying: "Vulnerability and risk behaviors at present." In this context, young people are constructing their identity and attempting to define themselves, which involves mobilizing processes of exploration, differentiation from the family environment, and the search for belonging and meaning in life. These dynamics can generate a sense of vulnerability, increasing their exposure to possible risks.

It has been proposed to conceptualize school bullying as a systemic phenomenon, influenced by risk and protective factors that relate to the individual; family and peers; school settings; community, cultural norms, and the media.(2)

In this line, various background findings point to the need for antibullying programs to be capable of addressing the interactions of all agents in the educational community, since it has been found that interventions that use only an individual approach are not sufficiently effective. In this sense, it is advisable to adopt an ecological perspective, based on the work of Bronfenbrenner (3), which proposes that interventions consider the influence of different levels (individuals, peers, family, school, society); in the development and well-being of students.

On the other hand, this work draws on contributions from Sociometry, one quantitative research technique that makes it possible to discover the relationships and interactions among students and to determine the degree to which individuals are accepted or rejected within a group. This instrument allows obtaining a graphical representation of the group, identifying the students' roles in fights, and above all, this technique makes it possible to design interventions in accordance with the particularities of the group.(4)

In turn, it is essential to consider the direct involvement of students in the processes of prevention and addressing these problems. It is in this sense that the establishment of a support group is proposed, which is framed as one form of peer help or support. The intervention consists of bringing together certain students, training them in conflict resolution and assertiveness skills, and encouraging them to support, defend, and integrate classmates who are being attacked or ignored. In this way, the group would contribute to the improvement of the school climate, generating a framework of care and safety among the students.

Presentation of Strategic Line

In this Final Degree Project for the Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, the development of an Intervention Plan is proposed. It is necessary to define intervention as a form of action by various professionals, aimed at conflict resolution. This practice is linked to technical and theoretical knowledge and, specifically, to values, beliefs, and attitudes. In this way, intervention integrates a set of more or less systematic and organized activities, in which action is taken on some aspect of reality, with the aim of producing a certain impact (5).

The intervention in this work takes as its strategic line to address the problem of bullying: "Vulnerability and risk behaviors today". It will be carried out at the Instituto Provincial de Enseñanza Media (I.P.E.M.) N° 193: José María Paz, located in the city of Saldan, in the province of Córdoba, Argentina, and will focus on high school students.

During adolescence, the young person is constructing their identity, attempting to define themselves as one unique and autonomous individual. In this way, they test themselves again and again in order to see what they are capable of and identify what they need to feel similar to their peers.(6)

In turn, this stage involves numerous biological, psychological, and social changes that mobilize processes of exploration, differentiation from their family environment, and a search for belonging and meaning in life, among other situations that bring with them anxiety and a sense of vulnerability.(7,8)

Let us consider what we refer to when we talk about vulnerability. According to the perspective of Martuccelli (9), it is understood as a trait common to human beings and as the experience of being exposed to, hinting at a sense of finitude. In turn, he explains that vulnerability is always

a relational and contextual experience.

On the other hand, it is necessary to define risk behaviors as those involuntary or voluntary actions, carried out by an individual or community, that could lead to harmful consequences. Risk behaviors are biopsychosocial and are especially intense among adolescents.(10)

It is understood that risk conditions are what favor or increase the probability of developing problem behaviors, and not only the personal characteristics of the young person are responsible (11). Furthermore, risk behaviors represent a problem that entails major social and health consequences for the general population (12). In parallel, it should be noted that the school is among the most suitable places to identify risk factors and to implement actions for the prevention and promotion of protective factors. Interventions at the school level are considered to have a protective effect on the participants involved (13).

A context of vulnerability and adverse conditions places adolescents at risk. In these circumstances, the ability to effectively express their emotions is hindered, which is sometimes reflected through violent acts against themselves and others.(14) It should be recalled that bullying constitutes aggressive behavior directed toward others.(15)

For the aforementioned reasons, this work considers it appropriate to adopt the approach of Vulnerability and risk behaviors at present, since the proposed intervention plan would provide a service to an age group (adolescence) recognized for a certain social vulnerability and for frequent exposure to risk behaviors. This makes sense in the choice of an institution characterized by being the natural environment for adolescent development: the school.

Institutional synthesis

Instituto Provincial de Enseñanza Media (I.P.E.M.) N° 193 José María Paz is a public school, located in the city of Saldán, province of Córdoba. This locality comprises 13 neighborhoods, which are mostly composed of families with low socioeconomic resources (16).

Currently, the school is located at 647 Vélez Sarsfield Street, and 644 students and 97 teachers attend, distributed across morning and afternoon shifts, offering two specializations: Economics and Management, and Tourism (16).

Next, continuing with what was developed by Universidad Siglo 21(16), the significant events that have shaped its history and contributed to forging the institution as it is today are explored. The history begins in 1965, thanks to the action of one group of residents and representatives of the Municipality, who realized the idea of founding a secondary school, with the purpose of preventing the dispersal of young people who finished primary school and emigrated to other cities to complete their studies. Furthermore, it was founded with the objective of preparing students for adequate labor and personal integration, thus providing fundamental support for their participation in commercial and service activities within the same locality.

In this way, it began to operate as a private school in a building lent by the Nogal Histórico school. For the teaching staff that would work at that institution, a prior selection was carried out, clarifying the ad honorem nature of the position and that remuneration would be subject to the approval of the SNEP.(16)

In 1971, the Student Center was established. In 1993, the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) was outlined around the folkloric competition, which gives historical meaning and significance to the school's educational project. Its preparation is the result of the work of all institutional actors, with the participation of students, teachers, the management team, the neighboring school León XIII, the Army Corps, and alumni.(16)

Continuing with the information provided by Universidad Siglo 21(16), 2 years later, the school moved to its own facilities, and by the end of 2003 all building renovations were completed. By 2009, the institution participated in the improvement project of the Programa Nacional de Becas Estudiantiles, which made it possible to carry out significant institutional projects. Thus, the CAJ (Centros de Actividades Juveniles) was incorporated; these are educational leisure-time organizations aimed at the training, learning, recreation, and personal development of young people.

In 2014, emphasis was placed on the management team working jointly with other areas of the institution, implementing coexistence agreements. The institution has 8 tutors, a course coordinator, and a coordinator of the Youth Activities Center (CAJ) to accompany students in their academic performance. In 2015, continuing with the institutional improvement plan, tutoring began to play a central role in supporting young people, yielding good results in strengthening students' educational trajectories.(16)

The work with Educational Needs Derived from Disability (NEDD) gained relevance during the 2016-2017 period. This project is framed within Law 26.206, as set forth by Ministerial Resolu-

tion No. 667/114, which seeks to generate adaptations in consideration of each student's particular situation.(16)

It is necessary to present the vision of the Instituto Provincial de Enseñanza Media N° 193: José María Paz. This implies moving towards the comprehensive and permanent education of its students through various tools that facilitate critical thinking and problem solving. This vision is framed within values education, seeking to promote personal fulfilment and insertion into the world of work and sociocultural life, as well as the continuation of higher education.(16)

In turn, the mission of the institution is to enable each graduate to acquire knowledge relevant to the education of a citizen, through the culture of effort, learning, and personal commitment to their growth. Along these lines, the aim is to strengthen social commitment and the understanding of concepts applicable in daily life and its issues, with the purpose of recognizing universal values in social reality from an interdisciplinary perspective.(16)

As expressed by the director of IPEM 193, the School Coexistence Agreement (AEC) is an achievement of all members of the educational community, who recognize it as a regulator of interpersonal relationships. For this reason, having knowledge of it, being able to discuss, modify, and sustain it will allow members to relate in a respectful and collaborative manner. The process of producing the school coexistence agreements favored the development of a Coexistence Project, which has set the course of action since 2001. This program is based on the needs of the institution and is related to the Institutional Curricular Project (PCI) and its correspondence with the specific projects of each subject (16).

Institutional actors recognize the importance of upholding values based on universal rights, such as cooperation, tolerance, participation, solidarity, and freedom to express ideas, thereby promoting the formation and exercise of citizenship practices (16).

On the other hand, the institution mentions that there is a complex relationship among administrators, students, teachers, and families, because different roles and power relations coexist and alliances between groups are generated. In this sense, they note that it is necessary to restore symmetry in which the other is recognized as a valid interlocutor. Coexistence implies an effort that must be constructed among all actors of the educational community, ensuring the democratic participation of all members (16).

In this regard, surveys were conducted with parents, students, and teachers, which made it possible to update the agreement. The surveys, the implementation, and the subsequent analysis made it possible to identify that the most frequent conflict situations in the institution are psychological and physical violence and theft (16).

The project is based on the objectives of National Education Law No. 26.2061 and Provincial Education Law No. 9.8702, which promote the values of freedom, respect, empathy, tolerance, knowledge, responsibility, sense of belonging, equality, inclusion, and honesty, consistent with the institutional objectives expressed in the PEI (Institutional Educational Project) (16).

As principles and criteria guiding the School Coexistence Agreement, the institution proposes:

- Guide the actions of the members of the educational community toward respect for the dignity and privacy of individuals, the acceptance of sociocultural differences, and the non-violent resolution of conflicts.
- Reject all forms of harassment, discrimination, violence, and exclusion in daily interactions.
- Promote the formation and maintenance of bodies for participation, dialogue, and mediation in conflict resolution.
- Promote activities that create bonds of commitment among all institutional actors.
- Diagnose possible risk situations in order to prevent them.
- Promote critical and reflective participation to form citizens knowledgeable about their rights and obligations, in order to face conflicts and work toward achieving harmonious coexistence (16).

To implement the AECs, their dissemination is promoted through the students' communication notebooks; copies of the AECs (available for consultation in the institution's library); and publication on the school's website (for information and dissemination to the educational community and the society of Saldán) (16).

The School Coexistence Council shall be established and shall operate in accordance with the provisions of Resolution N° 149/103 (16). The "Classroom Council" shall be composed of a teacher counselor, a preceptor, and the class group; its tasks shall be to address particular and general situations of the course, agree on coexistence rules, etc. The "Coexistence Council" shall be responsible for intervening in conflict situations, applying alternative solutions such as mediation and negotiation, and guaranteeing the real and effective participation of all actors in the educational community in the review of coexistence rules (16).

Delimitation of the problem

Based on the information collected from IPEM N° 193 José María Paz and its subsequent analysis, the interview conducted with the course coordinator and teacher, Juan Rojas, is revisited; in it, he comments on the presence of a concerning phenomenon among students: bullying. This phenomenon contradicts the school's coexistence agreements, which promote respect for the dignity and privacy of the person and reject all forms of discrimination, harassment, violence, and exclusion in school interactions. In this regard, it is inferred that the institution has difficulties in addressing this problem effectively, thus providing ample opportunities for psychology as a suitable discipline to intervene in this case (16).

Traditionally, in educational institutions, situations of school violence have been addressed mainly through the application of punitive measures, such as reprimands and suspensions, and IPEM N° 193 José María Paz is no exception. This approach focuses on students informing adults about these incidents, so that adults are the ones responsible for resolving the situation through a sanction. However, intervening in this way provides few opportunities for students to develop social skills and conflict-resolution skills (17). Over time, IPEM has implemented other strategies to manage school coexistence, such as reflection work and community tasks, in addition to punitive sanctions.

The aforementioned raises the possibility that a different approach is needed to address bullying. In this regard, Cushman et al.(2) have proposed conceptualizing bullying as a systemic phenomenon influenced by risk and protective factors related to the individual; the family and peers; school settings; community, cultural norms, and the media.

A recent study analyzes the most relevant bullying prevention programs developed in Spain over two decades (1997-2017), and the results point to the need for programs to address the interactions among all agents in the educational community (students, teaching staff, family, and community).(18)

The Olweus program (OBPP) is the first bullying prevention program focused on the educational community as a whole. This proposal yielded effectiveness results that are highly recognized by the scientific community in reducing school bullying.(18) Based on this initiative, other systemic projects for preventing the phenomenon were developed, such as the Peer Tutoring Program (TEI), an educational strategy that proved effective in improving school coexistence.(19)

The data collected from the research summarized above suggest that anti-bullying interventions that use an individual approach are not sufficiently effective. In this regard, it is advisable to adopt an ecological perspective, based on the works of Bronfenbrenner (3), which proposes that interventions consider the different levels (individuals, peers, family, school, society) and examine their influence on students.

Furthermore, to examine how school bullying manifests, it is necessary to consider role theory, the foundations of which lie in social psychology. This model becomes relevant in the context of a specific group, where each member plays a particular role or part.(20) In bullying situations, some adolescents witness the aggressive acts, others even join in, and still others try to defend the victim. It is noteworthy that those who typically bully seek to demonstrate their power in front of them; without their presence, the bullying situation would not occur and would lose meaning. (17) In this way, within each group, a complex network of roles that interact and relate dynamically to one another is woven.(20)

Objectives

General objective

- Implement a peer support group, made up of 2nd year students from the Provincial Institute of Secondary Education (I.P.E.M.) N° 193: José María Paz, to reduce the prevalence of bullying.

Specific objectives

- To determine the group structure through the "Sociometric Questionnaire for Preadolescents," in order to understand the relational dynamics and the preferences and rejections among 2nd-year students, with the aim of obtaining a mapping of the relationship networks of the groups.
- To identify the specific roles of bullying among 2nd-year students through the administration of the questionnaire "Roles of Peers in Fights," for the subsequent formation of the support group.

- To train conflict resolution and assertiveness skills with the support group, in order to create a safe and trusting environment in which students who are targets of bullying feel supported and defended by their peers.
- To promote the active participation of teachers, parents, and school administrators in the identification of bullying, fostering their commitment both to the problem and to its resolution.

Justification

School violence is a widespread phenomenon that impacts a large number of children and adolescents. One in three students are bullied worldwide and almost one in three students have been affected by physical aggression at least once a year.(21)

According to updated data from 2022 and 2023, Argentina ranks fifth among the countries with the highest incidence of school bullying cases worldwide. In 2020/2021, 14 800 cases of bullying were recorded in our country. However, the most recent figures indicate a concerning increase, reaching a total of 50 250 cases. These findings indicate that 7 out of every 10 students in Argentina experience some type of bullying or cyberbullying daily.(1)

In turn, drawing on the contributions of UNESCO (22), regarding the prevalence, by age, of Argentine students who reported having been subjected to bullying, it is observed that 13-year-old adolescents have experienced this phenomenon to a greater extent than adolescents of other ages. For this reason, the intervention plan is aimed at 2nd-year students at IPEM N° 193: José María Paz, who, at the time of the intervention, will be mostly 13 years old.

It is essential to ask ourselves: How does school violence affect the education and lives of students? It is known that bullying, in all its forms, can generate severe repercussions and lasting consequences for the mental and physical health of learners. In this sense, school bullying is associated with depression, suicidal thoughts, sleep disorders, headaches, and risk behaviors such as substance use and risky sexual relations.(21)

In turn, among the consequences of bullying, it is found that girls, boys, and adolescents experience difficulties concentrating at school, avoid school activities, are absent without providing an explicit justification, and may even be forced to take a more regrettable measure: dropping out of school. The aforementioned negatively affects their academic achievements, their performance, and, ultimately, their future.(22)

Learning is very difficult in a school climate saturated with fear, anxiety, and insecurity. When an adolescent is the target of bullying, their mind is constantly on alert because of threats and humiliations, and their difficulty in connecting with and attending to the activity and in participating in it meaningfully is no coincidence (23).

Let us consider what is meant by school climate. The concept can be defined as the social environment perceived in an educational setting, whose quality depends on the dynamics of relationships among educational agents, the particular organizational and management models adopted by the institution, the axiological scales circulating among educational agents, and the socioeconomic and political context in which they are embedded (24).

In studies conducted on school climate, the consequences of bullying were investigated as a negative effect on students' sense of safety; as a result, it was determined that there is a negative relationship between bullying and the student body's sense of safety, characterized by a negative school climate. The opposite occurs in schools with a good school climate (25).

Following this, in Colombia it was warned that a worse climate exists in public schools (specifically due to violence) than in private schools (26). In Chile, in turn, it was concluded that the majority of establishments with a better school climate in the country are privately managed, and that educational centers with lower scores in school environment were under municipal administration (27).

Along the same lines, school climate appears to be linked to the social context of the school (students' origin, its location, etc.) (28). In Argentina, there is an official classification of schools for this aspect: "degree of unfavorability," which depends on location and access difficulties (29). Accordingly, it should be recalled that the institution where the intervention proposal will be carried out is public in nature.

When considering a model for addressing bullying, the following question arises: From whom do victims ask for help? According to previous studies, victims tend to seek support mainly among their peers and, to a lesser extent, from their teachers. In turn, it has been found that classmates themselves have greater knowledge of the bullying situations that occur in the classroom (30).

The aforementioned confirms the importance of considering students' direct involvement in prevention processes. Drawing on the results obtained by Ttofi et al.(31), it is found that effective

programs to reduce bullying must not only address aggressive behaviors but also provide emotional and psychological support to victims.

In this sense, the establishment of 1 support group is proposed, framed within peer help or support. The intervention consists of gathering certain students who are responsible for supporting the classmate who is being attacked. What would they do if they see the student alone? What would they do or say if they observe that the student is being attacked? These are some of the coping strategies that would be considered jointly. In this way, the group would contribute to improving the school climate, generating a framework of care and safety among students (32).

Greater social support perceived by victims of school bullying, during or after the experience of maltreatment, is related to higher levels of indicators of overcoming school bullying (self-esteem, life satisfaction, and resilience) (33).

DEVELOPMENT

The term bullying was initially coined by Olweus (34) as a type of interpersonal violence exercised among students, characterized by a marked intentionality to harm another defenseless student, the asymmetry of power between victim and aggressor, the persistence of aggression, and the formation of a dyadic relationship of dominance and submission between the learners involved. In parallel, UNESCO (35) conducted a review of this definition, identifying the need to adopt a more inclusive concept of harassment, capable of reflecting the complexity of the phenomenon. As such, it is necessary to recognize that bullying is an issue that involves the entire educational system.

Thus, according to UNESCO (35), a reformulated and inclusive definition of school bullying must clearly indicate the following:

- Bullying and cyberbullying involve a power imbalance and occur within an established network of school and community relationships, but they are favored or inhibited by the social context and the educational system.
- Generally, bullying and cyberbullying entail the absence of effective responses and care toward students subjected to bullying.
- Bullying and cyberbullying cause emotional, social, and/or physical harm.
- Repetition is not only linked to the number of times bullying and cyberbullying incidents occur, but is also related to the effect on the target, who may fear that 1 single event will be repeated or shared again on social media.
- Not all perpetrators of bullying act intentionally; it is possible that they act in this manner as a consequence of group dynamics and not because they want to hurt the student who is the target of bullying.

It is necessary to mention that there are various types of bullying. Bullying can take the form of social exclusion, that is, when it is employed with the aim of achieving the isolation, rejection, or marginalization of a classmate. It is characterized by behaviors directed toward a certain student that hinder their social coexistence with their classmates, through actions that limit their interaction and interpersonal relationships (36).

Another type of bullying refers to psychological violence, in which behaviors are present whose actions denigrate the victim. A central characteristic is that, unlike physical violence, here the harm is emotional, manifested for example in offensive criticism, humiliation, etc. Physical violence, for its part, includes any bodily action such as pushing, hitting, forms of confinement, kicking, or damage to belongings.(36)

Verbal bullying includes actions such as assigning nicknames, threatening, insulting, expressing sexist or racial remarks for the purpose of discriminating, spreading gossip, or making repeated insulting jokes.(37)

Currently, another type is included, cyberbullying, which is defined as aggressive behavior that is repeated over time through the use of electronic devices, by one individual or a group toward a student who cannot easily defend himself or herself (38).

Two studies conducted in Latin America on types of violence are revisited. The first study, presented by Chiclayo Juárez (39), showed the predominance of bullying as follows: physical bullying (37.5%), psychological bullying (40%), technological bullying or cyberbullying (48%), social bullying or social exclusion (52.5%). The second study, conducted by Coob et al. (36), concluded, as a result of descriptive statistics, that psychological violence and social exclusion are the most representative types of violence in the sample. It could be thought that, at present, the ways of enacting violence are ceasing to be as manifest as in physical violence and are adopting more subtle forms such as those just described, which makes it more difficult for adults to identify them.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (3) is considered a suitable approach for understanding the phenomenon of bullying, due to its complex, dynamic, and systemic nature. The model analyzes the transactions and exchanges among the members of the educational system in which the violence occurs, through the assessment of five main levels: ontosystem, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

First, the Ontosystem is highlighted, which represents the set of internal factors of the individual.(40) In this sense, each adolescent has an individual learning style and presents a unique grouping of circumstances. To evaluate specific profiles, it is proposed to use the framework proposed by Mather et al.(41), known as the "Building Blocks of Learning," which considers four fundamental blocks at its base: Self-Regulation, Social Competence, Emotional Tendency, and Resilience. A greater understanding and awareness of students' unique profile of strengths and weaknesses could help educators improve school-related outcomes.

The Microsystem, for its part, is among the environments closest to the person, where immediate relationships prevail, which have a greater interaction in the individual's development.(42) These interactions generate changes in people's behavior at emotional, attitudinal, and cognitive levels.(43)

The Mesosystem is understood as an elementary form of connection between two environments, that is, it is the interconnection of the student with their broader educational environment. The student's family and the relationships between teachers and administrators are examples of this system.(3)

The Exosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner (3), encompasses environments that, although they do not include the student as an active participant, generate circumstances that affect the student. In this sense, modes of coexistence management, school coexistence agreements, the educational project, the school climate, and public policies such as inclusion policies become relevant.

The last system of this ecological model is the Macrosystem, which refers to the culture and the specific historical, political, and social moment in which the person lives. This level includes the ideology, the system of beliefs and dominant values that permeate the person and society at a given moment, in addition to the laws and norms that govern at the ministerial and national levels.(44)

From this perspective, it is considered that the solution to a problem, as in our case bullying, lies in promoting effective changes in the social context rather than attempting to directly modify the adolescent's behavior. This approach highlights that aggressive behaviors cannot be attributed solely to a student, but must be considered as the product of an interaction between the student and their environment.(44)

The Microsystem is revisited, that is, the world of relationships among peers. In this system, the different groups, roles, counter-roles, and statuses of students can be observed; concepts that will be developed below.

One group, according to the contributions of Pichón Rivière (45), is a restricted set of individuals who form an identity of their own and are linked by constants of time and space and joined by their mutual internal representation. In the group, an activity that constitutes its purpose or objective is proposed explicitly or implicitly, in which the members interact through mechanisms of assumption and assignment of roles.

Continuing with what has been mentioned, the role contains a series of functions attributed to it; that is, the role synthesizes a set of expected actions and, therefore, actions demanded of the role holder. In this way, the role is constructed by each group; it is not something pre-established in a linear manner. In fact, the role can vary and be reconstructed over time. It is also noteworthy that each person can possess a single role or multiple roles (46).

In this sense, according to Moreno (4), roles do not constitute a theoretical abstraction nor do they occur in a vacuum; rather, the person represents their role in a given context. Under this approach, direct observation of the "I" is inaccessible, but it can be observed and measured through the specific behaviors in which the role is manifested.

In addition to this, a role always occurs within a bipolarity, which implies that there is always an "other" involved, who will respond in a similar way to a role through the representation of a counter-role. Leader-followers, teacher-student are examples of the aforementioned.(47)

The amount of power and prestige that one subject has within one group is called sociometric status. The status that one individual exhibits is related to their social competence and to the number of rejections and choices they receive in a group.(20)

Along these lines, it is necessary to revisit the contributions of Moreno (4), one man devoted to the study of group dynamics and, in turn, a pioneer of Sociometry, which he defines as the mathematical study of the psychological traits of populations. The classic sociometric test is a

quantitative research technique of sociometry that allows extracting knowledge from the school problem and determining, based on its structure, the degree to which individuals are accepted or rejected in a group (their sociometric status) and discovering the relationships and interactions among students.(4) This instrument allows obtaining a graphical representation of the group and, in turn, when identifying the roles of students and their status; moreover, these data can be used to construct interventions.(48)

In this sense, this test makes it possible to detect the existence of isolated students in the group, chosen by nobody, or almost nobody, and the existence of students rejected by the majority of their classmates. Thus, when an adolescent with integration difficulties is observed, knowledge of the sociometric results will serve to incorporate them with the classmates with whom they feel most at ease and confident. In this way, it becomes easier to break the isolation.(48)

Ultimately, this tool makes it possible to identify popular, average, controversial, ignored, and rejected students. Let us see what each of them refers to:

Popularity can be described as the level of nominations (elections) received within the target group under study, with those who receive the most nominations being popular. It is a dimension associated with power, prestige, social skills, and visibility within the group. Prosocial leaders, characterized by cooperating, helping, and sharing, could be located here.(49) A caveat is necessary: a negative leader can also appear in the popular role, but these results will be compared with the "Roles of Peers in Fights" questionnaire, which will be explained later. This procedure will make it possible to clarify the situation.

It is pertinent to clarify that preference and rejection should not be defined as opposite poles of a continuum, because this would not allow differentiating between controversial individuals, who receive many nominations in both dimensions, and ignored students, who receive few nominations in both dimensions. The former tend to be individuals who engage in conflicts but at the same time have prosocial characteristics. The latter are those barely visible students, who receive few or no choices. These tend to be cases of social exclusion.(49)

Rejected students are those who receive high rejection nominations and low choice nominations. They are individuals with aggressive characteristics, who often engage in fights and have influence in the group. Negative leaders fall into this category. Finally, average students are those who receive an average number of choices and rejections.(49)

In parallel, Lucas Molina et al.(50) designed a questionnaire called "Roles of peers in fights" to identify peer roles in fights. The instrument reveals the existence of four roles: the aggressor, the victim, the victim's defender, and the passive observer. The role played is related to sociometric status.

The profiles addressed by this test are described below. Aggressors show a marked tendency to use violence and force (they tend to be involved in conflicts), and they present a desire to dominate others and difficulty following rules.(51) Their capacity for self-criticism is limited, so they exhibit good self-esteem or overestimate themselves. This self-confidence gives them significant influence within the group.(52)

Regarding victims, studies indicate the need to differentiate two types. The passive victim, for its part, is generally in a social situation of isolation and inhibition, showing passive and submissive behaviors. They are people with little emotional strength, unlike aggressors (52). On the other hand, the active victim presents an excessive and impulsive tendency to act, which leads them to react to aggressions frequently in a violent manner (53).

When analyzing sociometric status, it has been detected that the roles of aggressor and victim are associated with rejection, with defender students obtaining better status.(54) The role of defender, according to their peers, indicates that this child or adolescent has a good social position within their classroom (their status is popular), in relation to their peers. Furthermore, they display helping behaviors and present good socioemotional regulation capacity. The defender is capable of intervening in conflicts and confronting the aggressor in defense of the victim.(50) This role will be crucial for the formation of the support group.

Unlike defenders, student observers do not play an active role in fights among peers, nor do they interrupt violent situations. They display rather passive behavior and have an average status (50,54).

As previously mentioned, some students disapprove of violence and bullying and would like to help their peers voluntarily, but they often do not know what they can concretely do to intervene or feel confused by the situation and therefore cannot offer sufficiently useful support. This shows, among other things, that empathic emotions exist among students.(54)

In this sense, peers play a fundamental role in school bullying, since they are often the ones who protect their friends or take actions to prevent their victimization.(55) One appropriate way

to extend this protection beyond the close circle of friends is to form a support group whose methodology is based on protagonistic participation. This consists of promoting the active participation of young people, who through their involvement favor actions that overcome verticalist and adult-centric positions that regard the adult or expert as sender and adolescents as mere passive recipients. From this perspective, students are recognized as strategic allies for change, which maximizes the skills they already possess.(56)

The proposed intervention will make sense insofar as a context is created in which there is hope that things and relationships can improve if work is done on them. School is the ideal space to contribute to the improvement of interpersonal relationships by fostering among its students values based on equality, concern, tolerance, and empathy for the feelings of others.(57) At school, students can learn to value the richness of living together with others and to face conflicts and turn them into learning opportunities. Because school is a place to learn subjects such as Mathematics and Language but also to learn to relate to others, school is in itself a wager on the social bond. Or it should be.(17)

Action Plan

The approach to school bullying will take place at the facilities of the Provincial Institute of Secondary Education (I.P.E.M.) N° 193: José María Paz, with second-year students. The action plan will be implemented throughout the school year over an estimated period of two and a half months, beginning in early August, and will consist of three stages that will be developed subsequently.

Teachers, parental guardians, administrators, and students will participate in this initiative, which aims to implement peer support groups among 2nd-year students at IPEM N° 193: José María Paz in order to reduce the prevalence of bullying and consequently improve the school climate. It should be noted that at this stage, work begins specifically with the 30 2nd-year students, morning shift, division A; eventually, depending on the circumstances, continuity with other divisions or courses may be evaluated.

First Stage of the Action Plan

The first stage of the Action Plan consists of administering the questionnaires to the students and subsequently analyzing the collected data. It is intended that this instance be carried out by the course coordinator and the Lic. in Psychology. These instruments are: Sociometric Questionnaire for Preadolescents,(58) Roles of Classmates in Fights (50) and Questionnaire to Evaluate the Social Climate of the School Center.(59) Beforehand, an informed consent form to participate in this instance is sent to students through the communication notebook. The form must be signed by their parental guardians and/or tutors.

Regarding the resources required at this stage, a person with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology is needed, as well as 30 copies of the questionnaires and 30 copies of the informed consent form (material resources). Regarding the duration of questionnaire administration, an estimated 60 minutes are required to answer them, and regarding data analysis, approximately 3 hours are needed to carry it out.

Sociometric Questionnaire for Preadolescents (C.S.P.)

The sociometric test is an instrument composed of 4 questions that allows one to determine, based on its structure, the degree to which individuals are accepted or rejected in a group (their sociometric status) and to discover the relationships and interactions among students. Ultimately, this tool allows identifying popular, average, controversial, ignored, and rejected students.(4) In this instance, it is administered to 2nd-year students who attend the

IPEM N° 193: José María Paz, the Sociometric Questionnaire for Preadolescents (C.S.P.), for ages 11 to 13, adapted by Aguado (58). Before distributing the questionnaires, students are told that the information collected will allow them to understand the relationships in their class, and they are given the following instructions for answering the questionnaire:

- Who can be chosen (only those from the same class-group).
- How many can be chosen (minimum 1 and maximum 3 students). If no classmate can be found, you can write "nobody".
- Full names must be written; nicknames are not allowed.
- This is an individual activity; talking with other classmates is not permitted either during or after the activity.
- Anonymity is assured. Only the Lic. in Psychology and the course coordinator can view the information.

After administering the questionnaire, Group Dynamics is used, a tool that processes the information derived from a sociometric test and generates different graphs such as sociograms and bar charts. The visualization of these images allows one to observe effectively and simply the social dynamics and relationships within a group, while also identifying acceptance and rejection choices among peers.

It should be clarified that a modification was made to the Sociometric Questionnaire for Preadolescents (C.S.P.), choosing to exclude section number 5, which is detailed below:

Who is the boy/girl in your class who stands out for:

- To have many friends.
- Not having friends.
- Getting along well with teachers.
- Getting along badly with teachers.
- Being friendly with colleagues.
- Being unfriendly to colleagues.
- Their ability to attend to and listen to others.
- Frequently drawing the attention of others.
- Their ability to resolve conflicts among peers.
- Its aggressiveness.
- Knowing how to communicate.
- Having problems communicating.

The reasons for this modification are supported by Castillo (60), as well as by methodological and practical considerations:

- The exclusion of this section will contribute to keeping the questionnaire within a manageable time frame appropriate for the age of the study group.
- Content Redundancy: Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the questionnaire are sufficient to identify patterns of choice and rejection, as well as the students' social status, which are the main objectives of this test. In turn, information on student roles is already addressed by the instrument "Roles of Peers in Fights", which makes the inclusion of this section in the C.S.P. redundant.

Roles of peers in fights

The instrument "Roles of Classmates in Fights" consists of 42 items. It aims to identify and characterize the different roles played by students in a particular class when fights occur among classmates, revealing the existence of four roles: aggressor, victim, defender of the victim, and passive observer.(50)

Based on a hetero-report, students must nominate those classmates who best fit each of the 42 items. For subsequent analysis, the Excel platform is used, in which the number of times each student is nominated by their classmates in each of the descriptive categories is counted and divided by the total number of students in the same class.

Questionnaire to Evaluate the Social Climate of the School Center (CECSCE)

The instrument was developed by Trianes et al.(59). The CECSCE measures the social climate from the students' perception and has 14 items, measured on a 1 - 5 point scale (Never = 1, Very rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Quite often = 4, Very often = 5).

Likewise, the questionnaire has 2 factors. The first factor refers to aspects of the school center, which allude to the capacity for help, peer relationships, and a sense of well-being. The aspects of the school center are observed in items 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The second factor relates to students' perceptions of their teachers, academic demands, fairness, and teachers' accessibility in their interactions with students. This factor comprises items 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, and 14.(59)

As mentioned above, the response format offers alternatives from 1 to 5. To obtain the score for each dimension, the responses to its respective items are added together. The School Center Climate score ranges from 8 to 40, while the Teaching Staff Climate score ranges from 6 to 30. The higher the score, the greater the perception of an adequate social climate.(59)

Second stage of the Action Plan

In this phase, the contributions of Beyebach et al.(32) and Kärnä et al.(61) are revisited; these serve as a guide for the implementation of some interventions. On the other hand, regarding the resources necessary to carry out this stage, in most activities a Bachelor's degree in Psychology (human resource), an available classroom, and chairs for all participants (material resources) are

required. It should be added that for session number 5 with the support group, in addition to the previously mentioned resources, it will be necessary to have additional material resources: a computer, a projector, and 4 color A3 printouts of a poster prepared with the students. And for workshop no. 2 with teachers, a speaker is required.

This stage of the Action Plan encompasses the following phases:(62,63)

- Individual interviews with students who have been attacked (identified as victims or ignored): two interviews of 30 minutes each are conducted with each student.
- Individual interviews with students who actively participate in conflicts: two interviews of 30 minutes each are conducted with each student.
- Meeting between the parental guardians and/or tutors of the students who would make up the support group and the Lic. in Psychology: the estimated duration is half an hour. It is conducted prior to the initiation of the support group.
- Support group sessions: 5 sessions are conducted weekly, each lasting an hour and a half, with the selected students and the Lic. in Psychology.
- Workshops with teachers: two workshops are held with the teachers of the second-year A students, morning shift, each lasting an hour and a half.

It should be noted that the chronological order of the activities of the second stage of the Action Plan is not specifically as described in this section, but is detailed in the Gantt Chart.

Individual interviews with students who have been assaulted

The sessions have an estimated duration of 30 minutes and consist of a conversation with students identified as targets of bullying, during which they will have the opportunity to share their experiences and feel validated. The Lic. in Psychology, for her part, will be able to assess the students' feelings and emotions and their relationships, identifying their risk level and possibilities for change. In turn, the psychologist expresses her support and intention to put an end to the bullying, which would improve the student's sense of safety (64,65). To these ends, during the interview, the following questions are asked:

1. How do you feel at school?
2. On a scale from -10 to 10, where 10 represents the best possible atmosphere in your class and -10 represents the worst atmosphere you have experienced, where would you say things stand now?
3. Who is/are currently making things difficult for you?
4. Who is/are by your side when things get difficult?
5. Who is/are your supports and friends in your class?
6. Can you think of ways in which we can help you with your classmates? And with your teachers?

It should be clarified that these students are not informed that the support group was established to help them.

A follow-up session is held with each student, in which the scale developed in question No. 2 continues to be used to assess whether things have improved and to make possible modifications with the support group.

Individual interviews with students who actively participate in conflicts

The interviews have an estimated duration of 30 minutes and consist of a conversation with students who actively participate in conflicts. During this meeting, the aim is for the student to reflect on their participation in conflicts with their classmates and to understand the impact of their actions on others. An attempt is made for the interview not to be perceived as a punishment, but rather as an opportunity to improve their relationships with their classmates. For these purposes, during the interview the following questions are asked:

- In what conflicts do you think you have been involved during this year?
- Could you give me specific examples of situations you remember?
- Why do you think you have participated in these situations?
- What did you feel at that moment?
- How do you think your classmates felt during these conflicts? How do you think a friend of yours would feel in that situation?
- Do you experience any difficulty regulating your emotions, such as anger or frustration?
- In what situations do you find it most difficult to control your emotions?
- What would you need from the school to improve your relationships with your classmates?

Thank you for your time and willingness to talk; you are assured that situations can change if a person works at it.

In follow-up interviews, the focus is on emotional management and regulation and on establishing concrete strategies to improve interpersonal relationships, affirming that the school is available to help him. The following questions are asked:

- Since our last conversation, have you been involved in any new conflict, or have you reflected on the previous ones?
- Was there ever a moment when you managed to avoid a conflict or handle it better? If the answer is “yes,” you are to be congratulated for it.
- Have you tried any technique to calm down when you are angry or frustrated?
- What things do you think you could do to better manage your anger or frustration? (Examples: count to 10, deep breaths, talk to someone you trust)
- How can we at the school help you better manage your emotions?

Meeting with parents/guardians or tutors of the students who would form the support group

The meeting takes place within the educational institution and lasts approximately 30 minutes. On this occasion, the parents/guardians are informed of the desire for these students to help some peers to be better off at school and to improve the climate of their class. They are informed that they have been chosen because they are considered to have the resources and qualities to achieve this objective, and they are asked to encourage their children and reinforce them for their participation in this group. In turn, the families are congratulated, because it is observed that their upbringing was based on the values of help and cooperation.

Support group

The support group meets with the psychologist for five sessions, one per week, for an hour and a half. Once the group is formed, the members are explained why they were chosen (because they have socio-emotional competencies), the importance of confidentiality is explained, and they are told that throughout the sessions skills such as assertiveness and conflict resolution will be trained. In this way, strategies will be designed together to deal with bullying.(32)

The selection criteria for the support group are based on data collected by the Sociometric Questionnaire for preadolescents and the Roles of Peers in Fights. In this way, between 6 and 8 students are included who present social competencies, whose role refers to defenders and/or popular students. Also incorporated are the preferred students whom the victims have chosen in the sociometric questionnaire to do schoolwork or to spend free time (even if they do not have the aforementioned statuses).

Session 1 with the support group:

Framing and welcome (10 mins):

- The 6/8 nominated members are withdrawn from class to form the support group and are taken to a classroom previously arranged in a circle.
- They are welcomed and warmly received, conveying enthusiasm for initiating this proposal. Next, we ask them: What do you think you are here for?
- They are informed that they have been chosen because of their socioemotional skills and competencies, as well as because of the significant influence they exert within the group. These qualities position them as suitable agents to assist certain classmates, particularly victims and ignored or rejected students (these students are named). Their participation would help improve the classroom climate and curb bullying. It is expected that they will contribute valuable ideas to carry out this project.
- They are told that their participation in the group is voluntary and that if anyone feels unsure about getting involved, we ask them to remain for this first session and, after it has ended, they may decide whether to continue.

Social phase (20 mins):

- Each of them is asked what they like to do outside school and what their favorite movie and food are, encouraging interactions and the building of trust among the members.

DEVELOPMENT (50 mins):

- We invite you to rate the class climate using a progress scale: On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that the class climate is at its worst and 10 when the climate is as you would like it to be.
- Based on the responses provided, they are asked “what do those scores make you think about?”, enabling them to discuss the most frequent conflicts they observe in their class, attempting not to blame any classmate and focusing specifically on bullying. We, in turn, ask them how these situations make them feel? And their classmates?
- Their knowledge about bullying, the types of bullying, and the harmful effects it produces in students who are targets of harassment is identified. They are asked how they think the victim feels, seeking to foster their empathy toward these students. This prior knowledge

will be contrasted with empirical information.

- We asked them whether they truly believe that these situations can change, arousing a sense of hope and confidence that it may be possible if we work together to achieve it.

Closing (10 mins):

- They are asked whether they have any remaining doubts about the functioning of the support group.
- They are asked, as an individual commitment for the coming week, to think about what concrete actions they could take to curb harassment, since their ideas will be taken up and debated in the next session.
- The meeting concludes with praise and thanks, reaffirming the importance of the space, of their being part of it, and of helping classmates who are not having a good time at school.

Session 2 with the support group:

Start (10 mins):

- They are welcomed again and thanked for their presence; since it is a voluntary space, it is valued that they had decided to maintain their participation in the support group.

DEVELOPMENT (70 mins):

- The scores on the climate scale provided by the previous meeting are revisited, as is the commitment they were asked to think about at home.
- Based on this, a brainstorming session is carried out in which they discuss what they can do to move up a point on the progress scale. We ask them: What small step could they take to improve things? What actions could they take to help classmates who are targets of bullying?
- Strategies are designed jointly regarding what to do, for example, when:
 1. A classmate is alone during recess.
 2. A student has been left without a group to carry out a practical assignment.
 3. They are bothering, mocking, insulting, or hitting a peer. At this point, it is central to clarify that, in order to stop these aggressions, they should not respond with aggression, trying to find assertive ways of speaking and acting.
 4. They realize that some students have not been invited to a
 5. birthday or get-together.
 6. A student feels sad after being mocked by their classmates.
- After the aforementioned points, they are asked: How confident are they that they will be able to take those steps? Possible fears and concerns that may arise in relation to this are addressed, and it is again pointed out that they have a significant influence on their class group. It is emphasized that their actions, because of their status and leadership, carry a different weight than if they were initiated by other students. Thus, by taking the initiative, their peers are likely to feel motivated to imitate their behavior and join actions aimed at improving coexistence, thereby promoting a multiplier effect.
- The following question is discussed: "In what ways do you believe teachers could help you stop bullying?", emphasizing that we all constitute the educational community and that we are part of both the problem and the solution. The answers to this question will be revisited later in the work with teachers.

Closing (10 mins):

- They are encouraged to implement the proposed ideas and observe their effect on the group and on the situations, as they will report on this the following week in session number 2.

Session 3 with the support group:

Start and development (75 mins):

- They are asked how they have been feeling with the support group and what challenges they have had to face.
- They are asked again to assess their perception of the school climate using the scale provided previously. In this exercise, the improvements they have experienced since the last assessment are examined in detail, and the methods and strategies they have used to achieve these accomplishments are explored.
- When reflecting on their progress, it is of utmost importance that they attribute to themselves the credit for the actions that have contributed to these improvements (attribution of control). To this end, the psychologist can ask: How have they achieved it? By recognizing and strengthening these prosocial behaviors.
- Taking into account the challenges and improvements they have experienced when acting against bullying, an activity is proposed: conducting intervention simulations, that is, role-playing. In this instance, they are invited to dramatize bullying situations as they manifest in the class group and to practice how to intervene effectively and safely. In turn, constructive

feedback is provided to improve each student's skills.

Closing (15 mins):

- Together, they consider and define the following: What name would they give this group? This aims to foster group cohesion, a sense of belonging, and group identity.
- The session concludes with praise and acknowledgment of the students for their continued participation in this project and their commitment to the cause.

Session 4 with the support group:

DEVELOPMENT (80 mins):

- Review of improvements and attribution of control.
- Climate score on the advancement scale.
- The strategic formulation of how to get worse is used, brainstorming, in which they are invited to comment on everything they can think of that they can do or not do so that the classroom climate worsens. Once those actions that could perpetuate the problem have been identified, students are informed that if they choose to carry them out, they will assume the consequences, since they know with certainty that these actions will worsen the situation.
- They were then instructed to observe the actions that their peers in the support group were carrying out to improve the situation and to play to see whom they discover carrying out actions that improve the climate.

Closing (10 minutes):

- The session closes with praise and thanks, and the comment is made that the next meeting will be the last of the support group, at least for now.

Session 5 with the support group:

DEVELOPMENT (75 mins):

- Review of improvements and attribution of control.
- School climate score on the progress scale.
- A poster is created in collaboration with the students (using Canva), reflecting what they learned in their work against bullying and answering the question: What can we do to curb school bullying? The poster will be signed by the members of the support group. After 4 copies are printed, the visible locations at the school where they will be placed are determined.
- We asked the students for feedback on their participation in the support group through the following questions: What do you think participating in this project has been useful for? What could we teachers or administrators have done differently in the face of the bullying problem? What points for improvement do you suggest for the support group?

Closing (15 mins):

- The possibility of relying on them to assist us in similar situations is raised.
- Praise and acknowledgments.

Workshop No. 1 with Teachers

The recipients of the workshop are the teachers of second year A, morning shift, and the course tutor. The two workshops aim to introduce ourselves to the teachers, provide specific tools to reduce bullying and manage student interactions, and, in turn, seek to foster collaboration among the teaching staff to promote a pleasant school climate.

Regarding the resources necessary to carry out this instance, a Lic. in Psychology is required as a human resource, and a classroom and chairs for the participants are required as material resources. In workshop No. 2 in particular, a speaker is required to play the meditation music.

- Previously, the possibility of administering the aforementioned questionnaires ("Sociometric Questionnaire for Preadolescents," "Peer Roles in Fights," and "Questionnaire to Assess the Social Climate of the School Center") is examined in collaboration with the course tutor. The importance of observing violence in interaction is briefly explained to them, and they are informed about the roles and their dynamics.

Start (20 mins):

- They are welcomed, and their participation is appreciated.
- We introduce ourselves by giving our names and commenting on what things we enjoy doing.

Development (60 mins):

- Feedback is provided to them on the data obtained from the questionnaires (Sociometric Questionnaire for Preadolescents and Roles of Peers in Fights), asking whether they observe the students and the roles they represent in the same way. Any doubts that may arise are addressed.
- The purpose of forming the support group is made explicit to the teachers.
- They are also invited to work with the class group, so that students can also understand the objective of the support group and can collaborate by drafting, with a designated teacher,

their commitments regarding this specific school bullying conflict. The aim is for the members of the support group, in that instance, to ask their classmates for help in improving the classroom climate and to convey their desire to help others. This would be carried out by giving these students the opportunity to address a few words to the class.

- On the other hand, the possibility of generating classroom agreements with students, by division, on how to address conflicts that arise is suggested to the teaching staff. This section is more general than the previous activity, since it involves any conflict that may emerge. This would make it possible to clarify expectations and norms for behavior and participation in the classroom, in addition to promoting peaceful coexistence.

Along these lines, teachers in the classroom could form subgroups of students to reflect on and propose classroom behavior rules and their possible consequences in the event of noncompliance. Subsequently, the criteria for selection and unification are debated among all the subgroups, choosing the most recurrent rules to set them down, *a posteriori*, in a written document signed by all members of the class, as a materialization of their assumed commitment. It should be noted that periodic review of the agreement is necessary, since its central characteristic is dynamism.

- Organizational measures are implemented in which certain teachers are assigned to discreetly observe the situation of students identified as victims, especially in areas where there is higher risk, such as recess, playgrounds, or the dining hall, since in those spaces students have more freedom and less supervision, which could increase the risk of being attacked. In this regard, if a teacher observes a bullying incident, he or she must intervene immediately to stop the behavior and thus support the victim. Likewise, in this situation, the teacher could quickly inform the students in the support group so that they can collaborate with him or her.
- Some ways to manage interactions among students are suggested. Along these lines, the aim would be for the teacher to be able to set limits on undesirable or aggressive forms of interaction in the classroom and to promote the use of positive reinforcement for empathetic and collaborative behaviors and forms of interaction.

The aforementioned is proposed in order to foster among students the feeling that engaging in a given behavior rather than another “makes no difference,” promoting responsibility for their own actions and ensuring that prosocial behaviors are duly recognized.

To these ends, effective strategies are designed jointly with the teachers, enabling them to carry out these actions in a coherent and sustained manner, drawing on previous successful experiences and new ideas that may emerge.

Closing (10 mins):

- Acknowledgments.
- A date is set for the next meeting (in 2 weeks), at which, among other things, progress on the aspects addressed in this meeting will be discussed.

Workshop No. 2 with Teachers

Start (20 mins):

- They are welcomed, and their participation is appreciated.
- A guided meditation is conducted in order to generate an initial atmosphere of calm, presence, and respect, which could facilitate more effective and flexible communication among the participants.

Development (60 mins):

- They are asked how they have been progressing with classroom agreements, the observation of students who are targets of bullying in common spaces, the management of interactions among students, and the drafting of commitments with students regarding school bullying. They are praised for the actions they have carried out and are encouraged to continue them.
- Activity: Some aspects of the work carried out with the students from the support group are shared with the teachers. The responses of these students to the question: In what ways do you believe teachers could help you to stop school bullying? are revisited. In turn, consideration is given to what the students identified as targets of bullying responded in individual interviews about: Can you think of ways in which we can help you with your teachers? Also, consideration is given to what students who actively participate in conflicts commented about: “What would you need from the school to improve your relationships with your classmates?” There is a debate about the aforementioned, comparing the feasibility of carrying out the ideas expressed by the students, inviting teachers to state: What can I commit to,

from my role as a teacher, to stop school bullying?

- In order to improve classroom dynamics and promote a safer and more conducive environment for the learning of all students, it is proposed to implement a system of flexible groupings. This initiative is based on strategically relocating students in the classroom, taking into account their previously identified roles and relational dynamics.

In this sense, they would be shown a sheet with the students' names and their possible groupings, and their opinion on these seat changes would be sought. In these groupings, it is suggested that students involved in conflicts should be placed separately in the classroom. These students will be seated next to classmates who have been identified as defenders and/or popular students. Students who have been identified as victims or ignored will be placed next to defenders, popular students, or next to classmates whom they have chosen in the sociometric assessment for spending free time or completing school tasks. The remaining students will be placed at the teacher's discretion.

Closing (10 mins):

- A conclusion is drawn using expressions similar to these: "I thank you for being present today and for the willingness you have demonstrated in these two meetings. I encourage you to continue to become actively involved in the conflicts that affect the school community, because it is worth it. I deeply believe that changes can be generated if we work together. I hope you can understand that your role is crucial not only in this bullying problem, but also in building a safe and inclusive educational environment for all students. I hope that the strategies and tools shared are useful to you and that you can apply them effectively in your classrooms. Let us continue working together to make this school a pleasant place for coexistence. I am available for whatever you need."

Third stage of the Action Plan

This final stage consists of holding a closing ceremony for the support group, which will take place after the Evaluation of the intervention (explained below). The ceremony will be attended by the students in the support group, their parents and/or guardians, the management team, and the teachers of second year A, morning shift. The estimated duration is an hour and a half.

The objective of the event is to congratulate and recognize each participant for the actions they have carried out together to stop bullying and improve the classroom climate, encouraging them to continue behaving in this way. Regarding human resources, a Bachelor's degree in Psychology is requested, and according to material resources, it is necessary to have the place where the events are held, chairs for all those present, and a microphone. As content resources, recognition certificates will be required for the students who are members of the support group.

Start (10 mins):

- We thank you all for attending this ceremony and for your active participation from the very moment this project began.

DEVELOPMENT (60 mins):

- Members of the support group are invited to comment: How did they arrive on the first day at the support group? How do they leave today? What do they think changed in their course as a result of this?
- Some parents of the students are invited to comment: How do they feel knowing that their son/daughter participates in this project? Have they noticed any change in them?
- Some teachers are suggested to recount how they have seen the students from the support group in the classroom? In what way do they believe it has contributed to improving the school climate?
- It is proposed that the management team say a few words.

Closing (20 mins):

- Certificates of Recognition are presented to each member of the support group for having contributed to curbing school bullying and improving the classroom climate. This presentation is carried out in collaboration with the school management team and the class tutor.
- During this ceremony, a closing speech will be shared with all those present, in which some of the results obtained through the questionnaires administered before and after the interventions will be presented in a simple and brief manner. The data collected at both time points will be compared and contrasted, highlighting the differences and improvements observed throughout the process.

The speech will sound similar to this: "Having faced the challenge of reducing the prevalence of school bullying in this school year, in order to improve the school climate, I believe it has

been possible because we did it jointly, and because we understood that we all were and are part of both this problem and its solution. Parents, teachers, administrators, students, we have all worked as a team, each contributing from their role and experience. Feeling mutually supported, setting common goals, and agreeing on the steps to follow were aspects that, I consider, have allowed us to move forward and achieve significant results.

I fully trust in our adolescents' resources to resolve their conflicts. Throughout this process, I believe we have all seen them reach agreements, communicate, and act in pursuit of a common goal: helping their classmates feel better at school. In turn, we were able to observe its effects on the class climate and in the classrooms. I believe this project has revealed a part of themselves of which they were unaware, and I hope they continue to strengthen it.

I would like to thank especially the teachers, who have been fundamental in this process, guiding and supporting the students in this initiative. I also thank the students' parents, whose collaboration and confidence in this project have encouraged their children to continue in this group. To the administrators, thank you for making the implementation of this model in the institution possible.

To achieve different results, we had to do something different, and you have done it. Let us continue working together, with the confidence that, by working together, we can create an inspiring future for this school.

Gantt chart

Table 1. Gantt Chart						
	Action Plan	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
First Stage	Questionnaire Administration					
	Data Analysis					
Second Stage	Meeting with Parents					
	Support Group Session 1					
	First Interviews with Students Who Have Been Victims of Aggression					
	First Interviews with Students Who Actively Participate in Conflicts					
	Support Group Session 2					
	Teacher Workshop 1					
		Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Second Stage	Support Group Session 3					
	Follow-up Interviews with Students Who Have Been Victims of Aggression					
	Second Interviews with Students Who Actively Participate in Conflicts					
	Support Group Session 4					
	Teacher Workshop 2					
	Support Group Session 5					
	Evaluation:					
Third Stage	Questionnaire Administration and Data Analysis					
	Closing Ceremony					

Evaluation

Regarding the human resources required for this stage, a psychologist with a bachelor's degree is needed, and regarding material resources, 30 copies of the questionnaires described above are necessary: Sociometric Questionnaire for Preadolescents,(58) Roles of Peers in Fights (50), and Questionnaire to Evaluate the Social Climate of the School.(59) The estimated duration to carry out this stage is 4 hours, taking into account the administration and subsequent analysis of the data. Collaboration from the class coordinator is expected at this stage.

Tabla 2. Presupuesto		
Recursos	Precio Unitario	Total
Arancel del Lic. en Psicología (área Educacional)	Coordinación de grupo: \$16 200	\$121 500
	Docencia e investigación: \$25 100	\$200 800
	Coordinación de talleres: \$20 800	\$93 600
	Asesoramiento ante necesidades y demandas relevadas: \$16 200	\$105 300
Material impreso: 4 pósters.	Hoja A3 color: \$900	\$3600
Material impreso: 30 cuestionarios (administrados antes y después de la intervención).	Hoja A4 blanco y negro: \$45	\$2700
Material impreso: 30 consentimientos informados.	Hoja A4 blanco y negro: \$45	\$1350
Material impreso: Certificados de reconocimiento.	Hoja A4 color grueso: \$600	\$4800
Total		\$533 650

To assess the effectiveness of this intervention program designed to reduce bullying, specific measurement instruments will be used at 3 different time points: before the intervention (explained in the initial stage), immediately after it, and a year after its implementation.

In this sense, after the execution of the program, the questionnaires will be administered with the aim of measuring immediate changes and evaluating the initial effectiveness of the intervention. Finally, a year after the implementation of the program, the questionnaires will be administered again in order to evaluate the sustainability and persistence of the positive effects of the intervention in the long term.

Expected Results

The implementation of the support group is expected to have a significant impact on students’ relational dynamics, thereby reducing the prevalence of bullying at school and generating a school climate in which empathy and cooperation prevail. The members of the support group, through assertiveness and conflict resolution training, will act as emotional support for bullied students, providing a trusting environment where they can feel protected and defended.

Along these lines, adolescents will understand that stopping situations of violence demonstrates great strength and courage toward their peers who receive aggressions, and over time, it is likely that these bullying dynamics will be increasingly interrupted and reported by the peers themselves. Furthermore, it is expected that these students become multiplier agents of change, capable of taking the initiative in the face of new problems that may emerge in the course, transcending the specific conflict of school bullying.

The interventions will also seek to make roles within conflict dynamics more flexible. In this way, it is expected that those students who actively participated in bullying situations begin to better manage their emotions, understand the impact of their actions on others, and thus reduce their aggressive behaviors. This will be facilitated by the active participation of their peers and teachers, who will model positive forms of interaction.

Through the work plan, the aim would be for students who were previously ignored or rejected to find a place in the school community, becoming visible and integrated into peer groups that consider and respect them. The aforementioned would make it possible to turn time at school into a more pleasant and less stressful experience.

On the other hand, the collaboration and active participation of teachers, school administrators, and parents will be fundamental in the identification and resolution of bullying. It is expected that these actors understand the importance of their role in managing school coexistence and in involvement in conflicts among students. In this regard, it is expected that student-teacher trust and support will increase, facilitating communication and reporting in problematic and/or risky situations.

In relation to them, the aim is for all members of the educational community to understand that they are part of both the problems and the solutions, achieving common goals and enjoying teamwork. The intervention will not only impact the students, but will also benefit the entire educational community, being part of a joint transformation.

Ultimately, although it is not possible to guarantee the total elimination of bullying, a significant reduction in levels of harassment is anticipated and, consequently, an improvement in the school climate and in peer relationships.

CONCLUSIONS

During the development of this Final Degree Project, the necessary resources have been used to reduce the prevalence of bullying and to make IPEM 193 a more pleasant place for coexistence.

Throughout this work, we have understood that violence is not an individual act, perpetrated by a single person, but rather that violence occurs in interaction, adopting various roles and counter-roles. It is the context surrounding it that facilitates or prevents its emergence.

In this sense, it is indispensable to move away from simplistic and linear interpretations that trivialize the complexity of the phenomenon and translate interpersonal conflicts into disputes between good and bad, between victims and victimizers. Adopting a systemic and social perspective, following the contributions of sociometry and the ecological model, does not refer to intervening by wasting time punishing students who actively participate in conflicts, but rather to transforming the contexts and dynamics in which aggressions unfold.

This multidimensional view invites consideration of the influence of contextual factors on students' individual development, such as school climate, group dynamics, ways of managing coexistence, school agreements, the educational project, and institutional policies. Considering their importance, it was decided to intervene in most of these dimensions.

It should be noted that workshops with students were not proposed, because it is considered that these traditional approaches could be insufficient, as they offer tools that do not address the development of specific skills. Instead, it was decided to implement one peer support group, seeking to ensure that members become aware of their leadership capacity and the influence they exert within their group. In this way, an attempt is made to enhance the resources they already possess, in order to contribute positively to their school environment. The statement seems obvious, but adolescents need adults; they need to be "taken seriously" and involved in daily practices.

For future work, it could be significant to consider conducting a comparative assessment of students' academic performance before and after the intervention plan. Such an assessment would make it possible to analyze how the school climate and the prevalence of bullying influence adolescents' academic performance.

By way of closing, the following question is considered valuable: "What does it mean to be a school?" Being a school implies, of course, teaching (and constructing) curricular content, but it also implies providing students with all the necessary opportunities to learn to relate to each other, to make mistakes and try again, to resolve their conflicts harmoniously, and to coexist with their peers. Because, as stated previously, school is a space for learning subjects such as Mathematics and Languages, but also for learning to relate to others. School, in itself, is a wager on the social bond.

As educators and as adults, we assume a high responsibility for the comprehensive education of our adolescents. And that this education is also possible in an environment of respect and collaboration is the inalienable foundation that we must guarantee in order to build a more empathetic school, the school in which they deserve to live.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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