

Teachers admit to bullying students

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U.S. researchers in Topeka, Kan., say nearly half of elementary school teachers surveyed about bullying in schools admitted to bullying students.

The Menninger Clinic scientists surveyed 116 teachers from seven elementary schools. While more than 70 percent of the teachers believed bullying was isolated, an estimated 45 percent of them admitted to psychologically pulling rank on students themselves.

"It didn't surprise me that nearly half of teachers admitted to bullying, because they are aware it is a problem," said Dr. Stuart Twemlow, lead author of the study and director of the Peaceful Schools and Communities Project of the Child and Family Program at The Menninger Clinic.

"Teachers need methods and help with disciplining children," said Twemlow, a professor of psychiatry and a former teacher. "The tragedy is that school districts rarely give teachers any help with discipline. They learn it by the seat of their pants."

Collaborating in the study was Peter Fonagy, director of the Menninger Child and Family Program and a professor of psychoanalysis. Fonagy is also Director of Clinical Health Psychology at University College London.

The research appeared in the May issue of The International Journal of Social Psychiatry.

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