

New study suggests gender gap around homophobic bullying

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A new study from *Educational and Psychological Measurement* (published by SAGE) found that when it comes to homophobic bullying, there could be a gender gap. While male victims are more likely to be bullied by male homophobic bullies, female victims are bullied by both males and females equally. Additionally, those surveyed for the research reported hearing a low number of verbal homophobic remarks towards gay men compared to other forms of non-verbal homophobic bullying.

"One explanation may be that verbal forms of homophobic [aggression](#) toward (supposed) [gay men](#) ... have been the most frequent and, therefore, may be perceived as 'normal,'" wrote Author Gabriele Prati.

Using a survey of 863 public high school students, Prati obtained data from bullies of students who were perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), witnesses of homophobic bullying incidents, and the actual victims themselves. Ten percent of the students surveyed were classified as homophobic bullies because they reported engaging in bullying behavior based on sexual prejudice at least once a week. 3.5% of students were considered victims of homophobic bullying because they were harassed by homophobic aggressors at least once a week.

The study also created a new tool called the Homophobic Bullying Scale. The scale records and measures all forms of bullying motivated by homophobia beyond just the traditional name-calling. The Homophobic Bullying Scale includes physical bullying, property bullying, sexual harassment, cyber-bullying, and relational bullying such as spreading

rumors and giving the silent treatment. The researcher found that previous tools that measured incidents of bullying in general could not capture the nuances of homophobia specifically.

"The use of measures not specifically designed for homophobic bullying may underestimate it," wrote Prati. "The items of the Homophobic Bullying Scale were created to measure high school students' bullying behaviors motivated by homophobia, including verbal bullying."

More information: The article "Development and Psychometric Properties of the Homophobic Bullying Scale" by Gabriele Prati in *Educational and Psychological Measurement* (EPM) is available free for a limited time at: intl-epm.sagepub.com/content/e...440169.full.pdf+html

Provided by SAGE Publications

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