



The Finnish Socialpanorama Centre
Suomen Sosiaalipanoraamakeskus

Bullying Applications in Mental Space – online International Conference

Marja-Leena Savimäki

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Bullying

Bullying is a hidden phenomenon, which is why teachers and supervisors do not always recognize it. Nevertheless, it is a phenomenon that can be identified and addressed with Social Panorama and Mental Space Psychology.

When someone is being bullied, it is important to understand that this person is not different from others; rather, bullying has to do with perceptions of a difference which the bully (or a group of bullies) has created.

This presentation introduces the bullying coaching process which is a very efficient technique as it is a direct way to influence the social structures of the mind and to create possibilities for change.

Marja-Leena Savimäki

NLP Trainer, Social Panorama Consultant Trainer, Fellow Member Trainer IANLP and SOMSP Ambassador. She works as a trainer, a coach and supervisor for groups and individuals in her own company. She has been studying, developing, and applying The Social Panorama Model in her work since 1998. She has been co-operating with Dr Lucas Derks from The Netherlands since 1998 and has arranged his trainings in Finland since 1999.

- She established The Finnish Social Panorama Centre in 2008 to co-ordinate her Social Panorama trainings and coaching
- She has trained NLP Practitioners since 2003, NLP Master Practitioners since 2005, NLP Trainer IANLP –trainings since 2011, Social Panorama Consultant -trainings since 2010 in Finnish and public trainings for adults since 2000 in Vantaa Adult Education Institute. This co-operation continues to date.
- She has participated in three modelling projects of tacit knowledge: Helsinki City/ How to motivate Alcoholic to be Sober in 2002, Helsinki City & The Finnish Work Environment Fund/ Modelling well performing teams – Eliciting hidden skills in 2003-2004 and The Culture Fund of Alfred Kordelin/Leadership skills of pension aged Directors of the Finnish Libraries in 2005
- She has met all criteria and got the recognition from IANLP in June 2010, as the first Finnish Fellow Member Trainer IANLP
- She was honoured with a nomination Mental Space Psychology Ambassador 2019.
- She has been a member of The NLP Leadership Summit since 2020.
- She translated the book Mental Space Diagnoses into Finnish with her colleague, and it was printed in March 2021. The Finnish name of the book is *Mielleavaruudellisia Diagnooseja – Opaskirja psykologisten prosessien ymmärtämiseen.*



Bullying is a hidden cultural phenomenon: a phenomenon about power

- ✓ It is an interactional process

where the bully, the person being bullied and the whole community (involved in the bullying) support this action whether it wants to or not. According to the study, the bullied person is unable either to influence or to stop the bullying

- ✓ In terms of the logical levels, bullying has mostly to do with beliefs and identity.

The most common beliefs are:

- the bullied person is bullied because he or she is somehow different
- so that he/she would not be bullied, the bullied person needs to change and because it is difficult/impossible to change a person's identity, there is nothing that can be done about the bullying
- the bully is either a natural leader or a narcissist
- when the bullying ends, it is believed that everything is ok once again, that is why there is often no after-care

- ✓ Bullying always happens in a community/group

- ✓ It is important to create a sense of threat towards to bullied person

- ✓ The starting point is to stigmatize the bullied person as different; otherness → the bullied person is isolated from the group

It is important to distinguish between concepts of difference and "produced" difference

- the difference is uniqueness; individuality → it is an especially important building block of a person's personality
- the "produced" difference is defined as something, that is inappropriate, forbidden, something that needs to be removed, or isolated (from the group) → the person needs to change in order to become accepted. The "produced" difference is created by the group/the community.

- ✓ For bullying to take place, there needs to be a community which is based on certain principles

- members cannot choose other members
- members are part of the community indefinitely. Usually for a long period of time
- it is not easy to leave the community (Eriksson B., 2001, Mobbning: en sosiologisk diskussion.)

- ✓ When bullying continues for a long time

- some of those who are bullied develop a belief that there is something wrong with them; they are the reason for the bullying
- others understand that the bullying has to do with something else than them → which gives them strength to oppose the bullying



Three levels of bullying

1. **Level - Actions** – means of bullying, appear in the community: testing, having fun, silencing, rituals, and isolation.

a) The testing phase

- the bully tests unconsciously the reactions of both the bully and the community to bullying.
- several individuals may be tested; the one who is selected is the one who does not object: i.e., reacts “right”
- in addition, the community’s approval is required
- shame prevents openness → the bullied person’s trump card is transparency → the bully loses his/her power

b) Having fun is essential

- bullying is often camouflaged with humor and play
- the bullied person, as well as someone who intervenes, gain a reputation for being serious-minded

c) The purpose of silencing is to strip someone of power

d) In isolation, those who are bullied are excluded from the community/group.

- the bullied person is stripped from social power
- often leads to the bullied persons own desire to isolate himself/herself
- the bully gives power to those he/she wants to give it → supporters stay around

e) Rituals establish communality

- when the bullying prolongs, the group becomes more unified
- no one does that, what someone is being bullied, so as not to be bullied himself/herself
- rituals are often intended to give the bullied person a “disgusting” stamp. For example, someone is bullied for being fat: no one takes candy offered from the bullied person or the group stops eating candy in public.
- such communality is broken because relations between members are weak.
- the group members do not feel well
- communality is based on an imbalance of power and fear



2. **Level – Narratives**; stories that are told about the bullied person

- creating a certain kind of reputation and stamp of difference
- justification is included in the stories: “because he/she is like that”

3. **Level – The real reasons for bullying**

- at the core of bullying, you can find feelings of fear, guilt, and shame = the community’s and its members silent pain points
- the bully is bullying to maintain something good that is important for him/her: status, popularity, friends, by moving the focus away from himself/herself to someone else, who has reacted “right” in the testing phase

Make the phenomenon visible and you strip the hidden exercise of power away.

The members of the community have a possibility to see and understand the essence of the phenomenon, when someone opens the dynamics of bullying for both the bully and the community/group.

Also, the community needs help and support.

When making the phenomenon visible, the problem here may be that everyone knows who it is – the bullied person is ashamed.



Symptoms

The person who experiences bullying always has some degree of trauma that is important to treat. It can be challenging to recognize symptoms of bullying as they may not surface until much later. Some other incident triggers the symptoms unless the trauma has been dealt with.

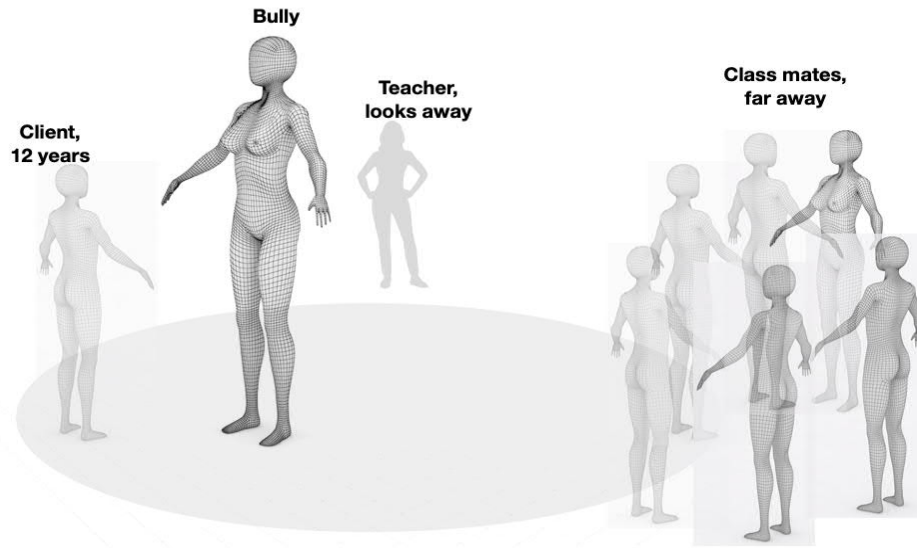
The symptoms can be:

- taking on a role to feel safe, such as the role of a clown, which is a way to hide the bullying experience and deny one's own feelings
- fear of social situations, panic attacks, shame, depression, feelings of worthlessness and an inability to believe in life.
- sleeping problems, stomach pain, headache, nausea, thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts, loneliness, low self-esteem, memory problems, eating disorders, absences (from work, school, etc.), underperforming etc.

Bullying creates a sense of insecurity: a feeling of being in a standby mode; that one must be constantly vigilant.

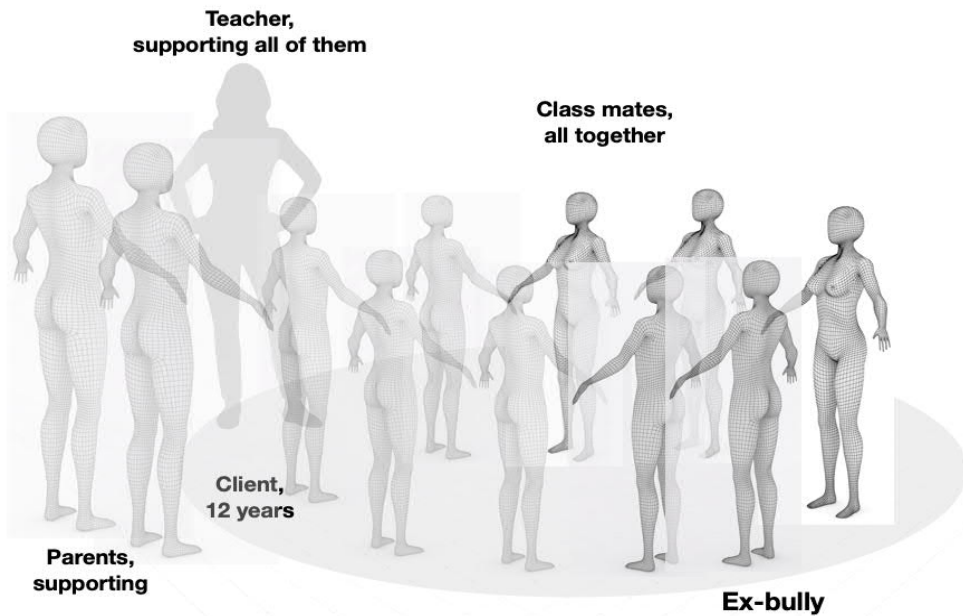
The consequences of bullying can be far-reaching and have lifelong effects. These effects are unique and that is why the symptoms and reactions can be different and of varying degrees.

Case 1. Client, 12 years, is bullied at school.



Case 1: bullying context; the client all alone with no support

(Savimäki, 2021)

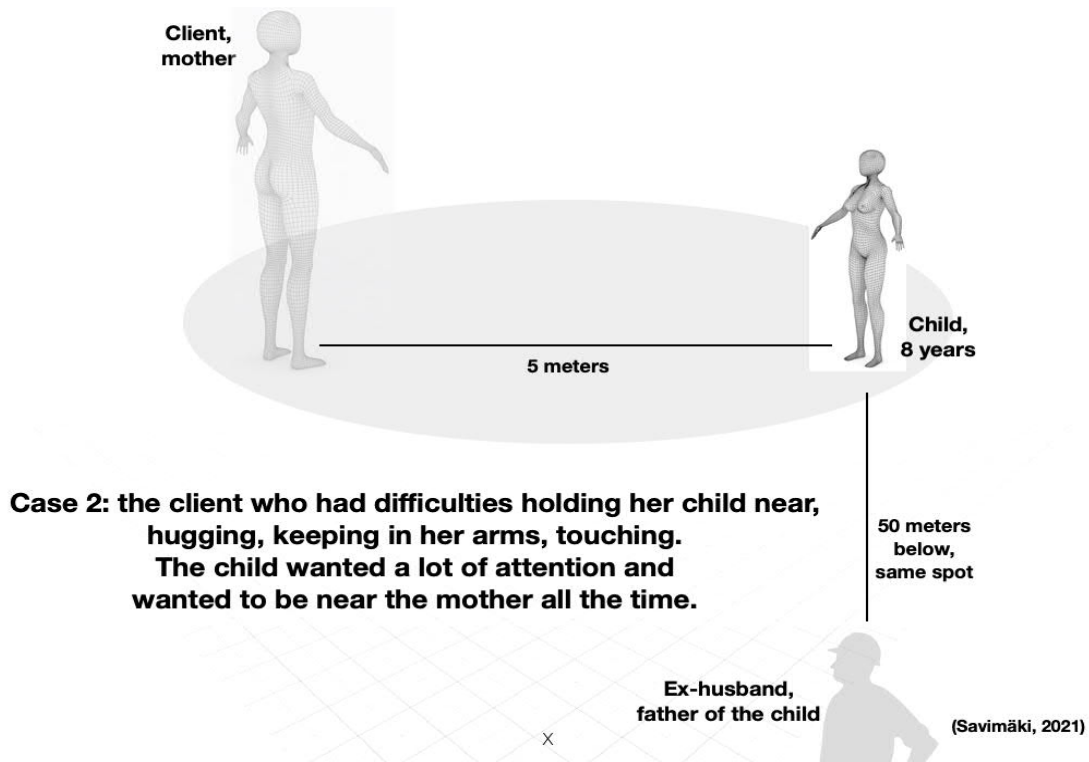


Case 1: bullying context, the changed social panorama; client as a group member with support

(Savimäki, 2021)

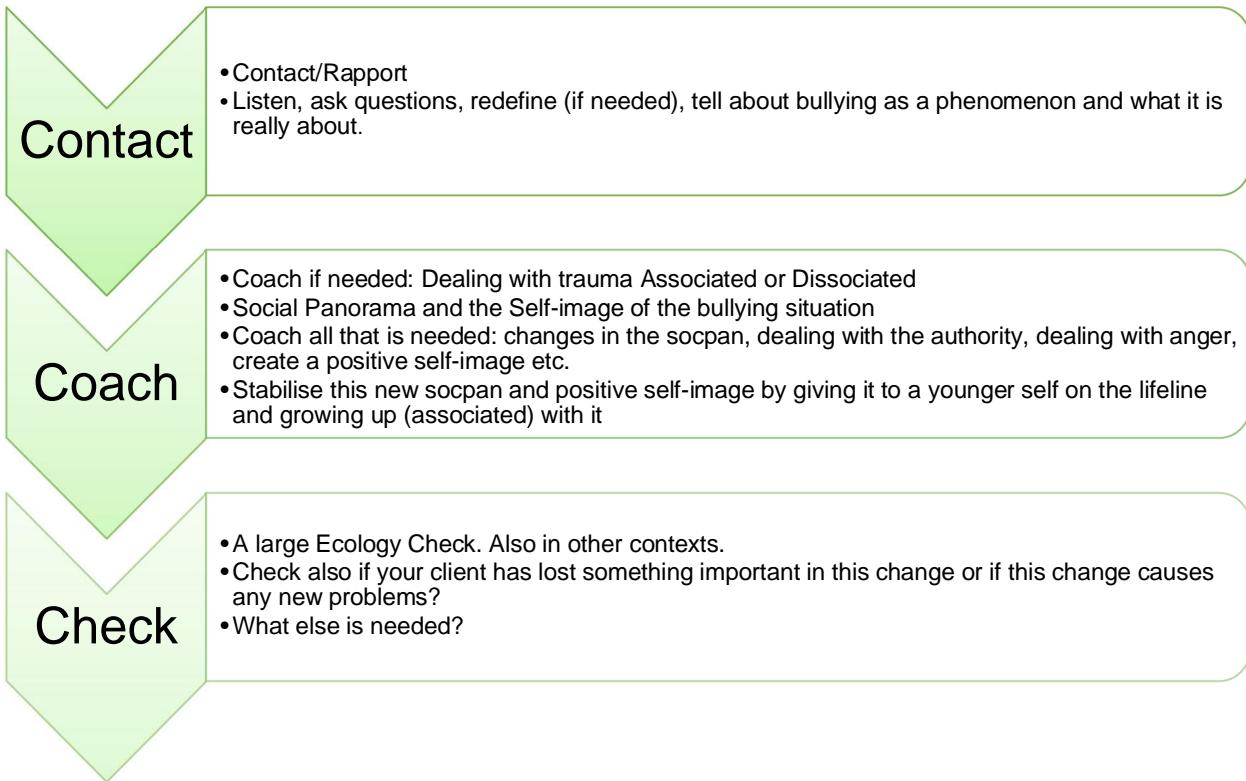


Case 2. Client, a mother. Her problem is that she had difficulties holding her child near, hugging, keeping in her arms, touching. The child wanted a lot of attention and wanted to be near the mother all the time.



Coaching Process

either as bullying is ongoing or as aftercare.



The Mental Space

May the problem of the client be tiredness, anxiety, insomnia, lack of motivation etc., most often I start with the Social Panorama and the Self-image. When almost every human problem has something to do with relationships, the Social Panorama is a great tool to clarify the structures of even the most complex interpersonal themes with its systematic nature.

Sources:

Hamarus Päivi, School bullying as a Phenomenon. Some Experiences of Finnish lower secondary school pupils. University of Jyväskylä 2006, 265p. Jyväskylä Studies in Education, Psychology and Social Research ISSN 0075-4625; 288).

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The Society for Mental Space Psychology 2019©, MSD-1: Mental Space Diagnosis - Manual for the Understanding of Psychological Processes

Marja-Leena Savimäki, training materials.

