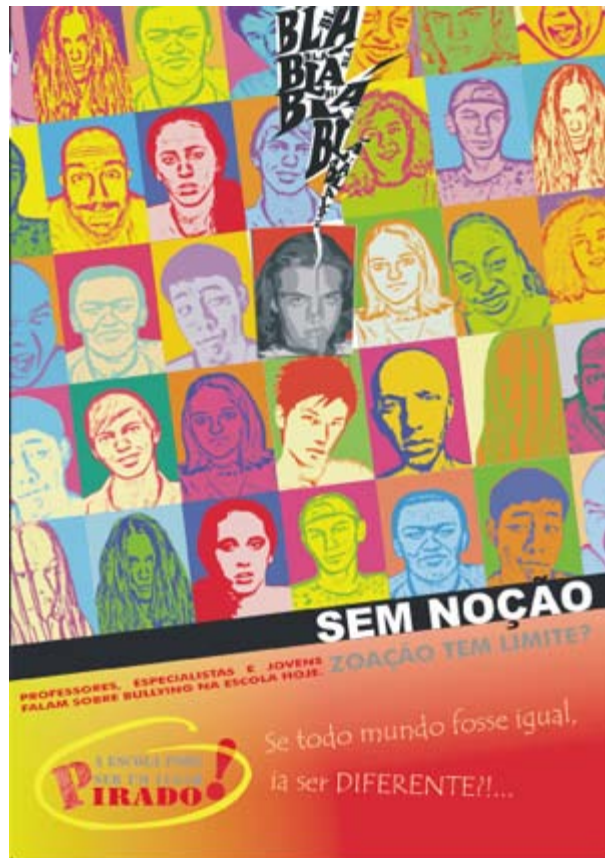


* Original article

Comments about the documentary film titled: *Sem noção: zoação tem limite?*



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Summary

The term *bullying* is usually described as an action of physical or psychological aggression, intentional and repeated, generally performed by an individual or a group, having the purpose of intimidating, humiliating, persecuting and harassing its peers. The present video focuses on the *bullying* phenomenon at the school environment; in the video, teenagers, specialists and educators compose a round table by means of their talks about the subject matter as of today. Young people talk about what they think and feel about the theme and they relate their experiences as from both standpoints: the one of the bully and the one of the bullied person.

Technical Features

Management and screenplay: collective

Duration: 15 minutes

Prepared by: Faperj / Icict / Fiocruz

Production Year: 2009

An image has recently traveled around the world in the Internet and, in a short time, it became headline news in the main TV networks. Recorded in a cellular phone and posted on the Youtube, the image shows, at an Australian school, the reaction of a *bullying* victim taking revenge against his aggressor. Richard Gale, 12 years old, a squalid and withered aspect, skinny guy, punches another guy, Casey Heynes, 16 years old, much bigger physically, who alleges that, along the years, was the

target of on-going aggressions at the school because of being fat. Tired from aggressions suffered since he was 8 years old, he decided to react in a frightening way: lifting up his aggressor and throwing him to the floor as if to cut him in halves. The image has an impact due to its violence. Upon the release of those images through the world-wide network, the two young people were interviewed by an Australian TV network, and both of them told their versions of the case. Casey Heynes – the victim – attracted the sympathy and the empathy of millions of people who got access to the video in the Youtube; he became a kind of a “hero” for those people who were never able to try some reaction against their aggressors, and Heynes is being acclaimed for the achievement while Gale became is seen as a kind-of-dangerous villain, and this will not make his life easy at all from now on.

The term *bullying*, a word of English origin for which there is no translation to Portuguese, is usually described as an action of physical or psychological aggression, intentional and repeated, generally performed by an individual or a group, having the purpose of intimidating, humiliating, persecuting and harassing their potential victims, violent attitudes that occur without an evident motivation, adopted by one or more students against other ones, causing pain and anguish, and performed within an unequal relationship of power. While many of those young people called that action as *whizzing*, that practice is gradually reaching other proportions, each passing time, becoming more violent and occupying another modality and space: the virtual ambience, known as *cyberbullying*, being practiced in blogs and relationship Internet sites, where the author and/or authors send to their “targets” insults, moral attacks, physical threats, negative rumors and every type of violence within that context.

A recent research, performed by the IBGE [Portuguese siglum for Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics], reveals that around 30% of the students already suffered some way of *bullying*. It is a relatively recent phenomenon; the news about *bullying* has been shown, with some frequency, by the television programs, calling the attention and arousing the interest of educators, parents and specialists. However, the fact of being included into the most outstanding news has not unfortunately meant that solutions are being developed for an effective fight against the *bullying*; not even a public discussion about the subject matter is being thought over. What can be seen are specific actions for individual cases. The “Fantástico” [Fantastic] show, of the “Globo” Brazilian Television Network, in its March 27th, 2011 issue, presented some comments about the theme, based on the case of two teenagers in Australia; the TV network organized a discussion with some “specialists”, opening, this time, a communication channel so as the people, by telephone or through the Internet, could tell about any *bullying* experience having been suffered. Many telephone calls were received; they were more than 200 made during a short time span, and one of them called the attention because of having been made by an aggressor, identifying himself as presently being 47 years old, apologizing to all of the people whom he persecuted, humiliated, aggressed. And the subject matter was closed without recommendations.

In addition to interviews and discussions of the subject matter through the communication media, which occur when a similar case as that one at the Australian school happens, there are researches that take the time to analyze the theme in depth, giving the due attention to the problem. One of those examples is the *Program for Reduction of the Aggressive Behavior among Students*, also known as the *Bullying Program*, a research coordinated by the pediatrician Aramis Lopes Neto, of the Brazilian Multiprofessional Association for Protection to Children and Teenagers [in Portuguese: Associação Brasileira Multiprofissional de Proteção à Infância e à Adolescência (ABRAPIA), performed in 2002 with financing from Petrobras. According to Aramis Lopes, some researches were made, as per the Program, at schools in the Rio de Janeiro City and it helped to divulge, in a broader way, an old and fairly known issue, but not enough discussed and faced, as the *bullying* is.

Another research, the result from a project financed by the Foundation for Support to the Research in the Rio de Janeiro State [Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – FAPERJ – Portuguese sigla], in partnership with the Institute for Health Communication, and Scientific and Technological Information [Instituto de Comunicação e Informação Científica e Tecnológica em Saúde – ICICT] of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation analyzed the subject matter in depth choosing the teenager, at the school environment, as the starting point for the preparation of a strategy on mental health information that, based on the specialized literature, records that many of the young people, who suffer *bullying*, end up developing psychic problems that, in some cases, are irreversible, causing some times the suicide of the victim or the homicide of the aggressor. In order to justify this statement, let us just remember the massacres that occurred at the Columbine Institute, in the Colorado State in the U.S.A., in 1999, when two students shot classmates and professors, killing 12 people. And, another case of the same nature that occurred, in 2007, at Virginia University, when a 23-year old South Korean student, who was taking the undergraduate Literature course, armed to the teeth, killed 33 people, including students, professors and employees of the University. These two cases, of significant impact, occurred in the United States of America, and the authors of the massacres committed suicide after the attacks. The reports state that, in the two cases, the protagonists of the attacks were systematic victims of *bullying* from the side of the classmates.

Finished in 2009, the aforementioned research project titled *Breaking the Silence – Literacy in Mental Health* brought together a group of researchers, of various profiles, in the theme, particularly due to their work practices, which gave a transdisciplinary character to the research that was coordinated by the researcher, Lady Doctor Maria Cristina Guimarães, of the Scientific and Technological Health Information Laboratory of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz/ICICT, Portuguese siglum). One of the proposals of that research referred to the preparation of a documentary video, in which several actors, involved with the theme, could speak. In the video, teenagers, specialists and educators compose a round table and they discuss the subject matter at the current school environment. Young people speak about what they think and feel regarding that cruel practice and they tell their experiences as from the standpoint of someone who suffers or the person who practices the *bullying*.

The methodological path, that was utilized up to reaching to the *bullying* theme, passed through several stages, particularly due to the transdisciplinary characteristics of the project and the multidisciplinary profile of the team that was organized at that time, which welcomed researchers of various lines: information scientists, psychotherapist physicians, researchers in public health, social communicators, cinematographers, advertising professionals and people specialized in the production of videos on health matters. Consequently, the discussions, that guided the selection of the mental perturbation, started during the first meeting of the project team. For the first time, as suggested by one of the psychotherapist physicians, the *bullying* concept came to sight. According to the statement by this professional, who has an active practice at a clinical center, especially regarding the private and individual care to teenagers, that was a theme still not accepted by the public health care system. The method, that was adopted, was the systematic holding of meetings with thematic groups involving educators, health professional who work with teenagers, *bullying* victims, specialists who deal with the subject matter and, finally, a group of teenagers, aiming at discussing the issue as from various standpoints and perspectives.

The option for the audiovisual program, as a divulgation medium of the information, was decided taking into account that qualitative researches in the field point out that tool as one of the most effective communication strategies, in addition to showing a better cost/benefit relationship. As regards to the publics, the researchers point out that those publics, focused on the teenagers at the school environments, stand out as the most effective ones for getting information and changing the behavior regarding the mental perturbations, and the researchers also point out that the awareness changes show clues of being more effective and long lasting referred to the production and understanding of contents. Consequently, the proposal is transforming the video not just becoming an education tool, but an instrument of audiovisual dialectics.

The preparation of the screenplay had as the narrative proposal including all of the people who were involved in the research process mainly focusing the negative impact over the mental health, an approach based on specialized literature that points out that *bullying* victims tend to develop psychic problems that, some times, are irreversible. Being structured in three acts and considering aspects such as: "intentionality", "repetition" and "power unbalance", the first act presents adults who suffered *bullying* in the adolescence and the psychological consequences of the event along the adult life; during the second act, the teenagers speak about the phenomenon and their relationship with that practice at the school environment, having their talks intercalated by what educators and specialists speak and the last act has as main protagonists the teenagers who emphasize the importance of the family and the friends as a way for overcoming the problem. The issue of the mental health permeates some of the talks regarding the involved actors, with the exception of the last act, it is intended to transmit a message of solidarity by means of the concept referred to the peace culture that is discussed by the focused group of educators. Another challenge, duly overcome in the video, was adjusting the research to the communication language of the video medium that could be understandable and attractive for a differentiated public, having an accessible, engaging and agile language, aiming at aspects such as: pointing out that the complexity of the relationship process at the school can, eventually, reach a seriousness with risks for the physical and mental health; calling the attention to the transdisciplinary characteristics of the theme; pinpointing the aspects that allow the identification of the *bullying*, and the attitudes of the individual / the group to resist / to avoid the exposure (preventive posture); pointing out the care that is available at the public network (at units of clinical care/internment, such as hospitals, and enlarged and on-going care as the Psychosocial Care Centers).

Basically, the video intended to show a general vision of the phenomenon and its implications, organizing a round table by using the talks of the specialists and the main target public, the young people, allowing to speak to people who passed through the experience (in the past and at the present time, having or not, as a consequence, the mental perturbation, in order to show the two possibilities) and being careful not to issue opinions about the attitudes/the solutions found out by

the people who are the protagonists in the video, but presenting them to be analyzed by the viewer in order that he/she knows the multifacet characteristics of the phenomenon. Finally, the *bullying* concept and its protagonists (limited by the project to teenagers at the school) are presented with simple and clear language by the talks of the protagonists and the specialists in the theme, showing that the phenomenon is current and recurring, it may cause serious consequences for the mental and physical health, but that there are ways for minimizing it, treating it and preventing it, inclusively at the public health care network. The purpose is to present these points in up to 20 minutes, having developed a agile and objective play, but not superficial.

Taking advantage of the theme, there are two films within that context, among a long list, that deserve being pointed out and that should be mandatory at the schools; they are: *Bang! Bang! You Died*, an American work of 2002, and a Spanish film of 2009, titled *Bullying- Provocations Without Limits*. The first film was based on a theater play that was presented all over the United States of America and that, in spite of pinpointing a tragic outcome, brings a message of hope. In the contrary case, in the second film, very definitely, the school is not a welcoming place and there is no hope that it will so become. The protagonist, a 15-year old young fellow, is a victim of every type of persecution and violence, inside and outside the school and he discovers, as an actual experience, how much teenagers can be cruel. That should be a warning to the society in order to face that question in a serious way as it has already been fully proven that *bullying* is not a joke.