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PEER VIOLENCE: RECOGNITION, UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONSE FROM THE ATTACHMENT THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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Milica Tošić Radev, Ivana Janković

University of Niš, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Psychology, Serbia

Abstract. *Violence in schools is one of the biggest problems faced by children, parents, schools, and society as a whole. The causes of violence are multiple, and the consequences numerous, so it is difficult, and at the same time very important, to find potential strategies to prevent and handle this problem. One of the solutions for prevention and treatment can be derived by the application of the attachment theory, which represents a useful theoretical framework for recognizing and understanding the development of violent behavior, and for dealing with it more effectively. The paper will show how some of the important antecedents of peer violence are formed in the context of early interaction with the primary caregiver. The paper summarizes the research indicating that children with a secure pattern of attachment commit peer violence less often, while children with an avoidant and disorganized attachment pattern are the most common in the group of children who behave aggressively and violently towards others. The negative model of others and the underdevelopment of the capacity for mentalization, as a consequence of rejecting caregiving or mothering in which the mother is perceived as fearful and helpless, are key in understanding the inadequate, often reactive and defensive problematic behaviors of these children. The paper will represent the point of view that in the process of preventing peer violence, a positive, sensitive and empathetic relationship that develops between teachers and students is of great importance, and that a teacher's capacity for mentalizing is an important segment for developing mentalizing in children*.

Key words: *peer violence, insecure attachment patterns, capacity for mentalization*.

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Corresponding author: Milica Tošić Radev
University of Niš, Faculty of Philosophy, Ćirila i Metodija 2, 18000 Niš, Serbia
E-mail: milica.tosic.radev@filfak.ni.ac.rs

1. INTRODUCTION

The family represents one of the most important agents in the process of the development and socialization of children. The family climate and mutual relationships that create a sense of security, acceptance and understanding for family members contribute to the achievement of these important goals. Functional families are those that successfully respond to all developmental and non-developmental needs, adapting in terms of the cohesiveness and flexibility of family relationships (Olson 2011). However, in many families, at various stages of life cycles, family relationships can take the form of dysfunctionality, which can negatively affect the development of family members. In such families, children are often most sensitive to these negative influences during early childhood. The dysfunctionality of family relationships is reflected in problems in expressing and showing love, attention, acceptance of the child, as well as in too strict or lenient rules of behavior (Olson 2011; Olson & Gorall 2006). All of these can result in a child feeling insecurity and non-acceptance. There is a large body of research that documents the negative consequences that dysfunctional family relationships have on children's development (e.g. Flores et al. 2014; Janković et al. 2019; McAdams et al. 2009; Todorović & Simić 2013). One of the consequences of dysfunctional family relationships and inadequate caregiver-child relationships is the occurrence of peer violence among children.

2. PEER VIOLENCE

Peer violence is a burning problem present in schools and societies worldwide. Peer violence is often referred to as bullying and is defined as any physical (e.g. hitting and pushing), verbal (e.g. threats) and psychological violence (e.g. spreading rumours) or relational aggression (e.g. actions aimed at disruption of the relationship) of one or more pupils, necessarily characterized by the intention to injure or harm another pupil, an imbalance of power (strength or skill) between the bully and the victim, and the repetition of violent behavior (Kaltiala-Heino et al. 2000; Nansel et al. 2001; Olweus 1995). Today, there is also a new form of violence – internet violence or cyberbullying, which is characterized by its manifestation through the Internet or other electronic media (Tokunaga 2010). When it comes to the prevalence of these forms of peer violence, in a comprehensive meta-analysis on a sample of over 300.000 youth from different contexts, aged 12 to 18, it was found that the average prevalence of peer violence is around 35%, while the prevalence of abuse via the Internet is twice as small, with a high correlation between the tendency towards peer violence in the traditional way and through new technologies (Modecki et al. 2014).

The findings of numerous studies confirm that peer violence is associated with the negative physical, social, and psychological development of children. Depression, suicide, social anxiety, non-acceptance by peers, low self-esteem, delinquency, abuse of illicit substances, and academic failure are just some of the negative outcomes of involvement in peer violence (Baldry & Farrington 2000; Estevezet et al. 2005; Friedman et al. 2006; Kuntsche et al. 2007; Marini et al. 2006; Rigby 2000; Totura Green et al. 2008).

Having in mind these outcomes, it is important to identify factors that may predispose some children to violent behavior. Summarizing the findings of numerous researches, Marković (2020) connects numerous risk and protective factors of peer violence with individual characteristics (e.g. gender, age, temperament, personality traits such as: empathy, resilience, prosocial orientation, etc.); family functioning (e.g. family structure

and functioning, parenting styles, etc.); school and peer group (e.g. school size, negative school climate, (dis)connectedness with school, emphasis on student achievement), and the characteristics of the community and wider society (e.g. economic and political circumstances, norms and value system, representation of violence in the media, etc.).

Numerous studies confirm the importance of factors originating from the family on the development and manifestation of violent behavior in children. For example, families of bullies are characterized by insufficient family cohesion, a poor family climate, inconsistent discipline, inadequate family activities, ineffective parental supervision, physical punishment, rejection of the child, and insecure attachment between the parents and children (Curtner-Smith 2000; Dekovic et al. 2003; Idsoe Solli & Cosmovici 2008; Kim et al. 1999; Stevens et al. 2002). Also, children's violent behavior at school can be a consequence of the children's exposure to violence between their parents (Baldry 2003; Espelage et al. 2012; Holt et al. 2009), as well as the consequences of their own neglect and abuse by their parents (Baldry & Farrington 2000; Duncan 2004, Espelage et al. 2000; O'Leary et al. 1999; Tanrikulu 2015).

Several theories offer different explanations for the development of violent behavior in children. Thus, according to the theory of social learning, the children's social environment (e.g. family) can contribute, through model learning, to the development of attitudes that violence can be used to resolve peer conflicts (Bandura,1973, 1986). Social control theory (Hirschi 1969) points out that connection and attachment to prosocial adults and institutions is most important in promoting positive behavior in youth. Thus, adolescents who feel disconnected from conventional institutions, such as school, may exhibit antisocial behaviors, including peer violence. One of the particularly notable theories that explains the origin of peer violence is attachment theory. Bearing in mind the importance of the quality of early attachment on socio-emotional development, some authors have hypothesized that the quality of the attachment relationship between the caregiver and the child can be linked to the antecedents, and consequently to the perpetration of peer violence as well. So, attachment theory can be an excellent theoretical framework for recognition and understanding of the development of violent behavior (e.g. Walden & Beran 2010), as well as a framework for designing prevention programs.

3. ATTACHMENT THEORY

Attachment theory is one of the most influential, elaborated and empirically verified theories that postulates that the child's relationship and experience with the primary caregiver in early childhood, usually the mother, has a long-lasting impact on almost all aspects of development (Bowlby 1969). Today, the basic tenets and principles of the theory are applied in a wide variety of fields, including pedagogical psychology. An increasing number of authors also consider the role of teachers as potential alternative attachment figures in a child's life. Namely, the teacher-pupil relationship is referred to as attachment or an attachment-like relationship (e.g., Pianta 1997; Verschueren & Koomen 2012), while attempts are made to interpret the pupils' behaviors by using the assumptions of attachment theory.

The theory of attachment provides an explanation of individual differences among children regarding the quality of attachment through the description of four attachment patterns: secure, insecure-avoidant, insecure-ambivalent and insecure-disorganized (Ainsworth 1978). Almost as a rule, more than half of the pupils belong to the normative

– secure pattern of attachment (Stefanović Stanojević 2015). All children whose mothers are consistently available, sensitive, and responsive will certainly be securely attached and will develop positive working models of themselves and others. A group of children whose mothers are inconsistently available, in the sense that they respond only to certain, specific emotional needs of the children or do that anxiously, insecurely, intrusively, overprotectively, and with disrespect of the child's autonomy, will develop an ambivalent attachment pattern. Based on this experience, ambivalent children will form a negative image of themselves and a positive model of others. Although the caregiver is unreliable, and the relationship with him is full of ambivalence, he is still very necessary and important because the child is insecure, unconfident, and dependent. Insecurely avoidant children will build a positive model of themselves and a negative model of others because their caregivers consistently did not respond to their emotional needs, but despised their emotional outbursts, punished or taught the child to minimize and control them. Accordingly, the avoidant child becomes self-sufficient and closed to further closeness in order to avoid repeating rebuff. The responses of ambivalent and avoidant children, although uncertain, represent adaptive strategies because they were developed as a meaningful response to everyday interaction with a not so sensitive and responsive mother (Ainsworth 1978, Stefanović Stanojević 2015). Finally, a fourth group of children was subsequently discovered (Main & Solomon 1986) who did not have the opportunity to develop any meaningful response to the profoundly disturbed interaction with the primary caregiver for a variety of reasons: his mental health, addiction, propensity for violence, helplessness, etc. This attachment pattern is called disorganized because although these children can function like other children, in stressful situations they show helplessness, complete inhibition of behavior, unexpected changes in behavior or other forms of destructive or even bizarre behavior. In fact, in situations when the attachment system is activated, the fear of disorganized children has no resolution - there is no way to reduce stress and ensure safety because they are characterized by a negative model of themselves and others (Stefanović Stanojević et al. 2018).

4. PEER VIOLENCE AND ATTACHMENT: RECOGNITION

Every pupil belongs to one of the four attachment patterns and is characterized by positive or negative working models, i.e. view of oneself and others. Also, within this relationship some very important school related competencies are more or less developed. Certainly, secure children are better adapted and more successful in the cognitive and socio-emotional domain during schooling, have better school achievement and more appropriate behavior (Aviezer et al. 2002; Cassidy 1994; Granot & Mayseless 2001; Kerns & Brumariu 2008; Moss & St-Laurent 2001; Van Ijzendoorn et al. 1995; Zsolnai & Kasik 2014). Ambivalent children can have problems at school caused by being overwhelmed by emotions and excessive dependence on the caregiver or teacher such as: decreased exploration of the environment, poorer attention, awkwardness in the testing situation, inability to delay gratification, and, in general, the inability to use their capacities (e.g. Bergin & Bergin 2009; Jacobsen et al. 1997; Tošić et al. 2013; Van Ijzendorn et al. 1995). Ambivalent children are often clumsy in their relationships with others, but they do not have serious problems in peer relations, unlike avoidant and disorganized children, who are characterized by the most severe forms of problematic

relationships such as aggression and violence (Granot & Mayseless 2001; Shulman et al. 1994). When it comes to peer violence, ambivalent children are more likely to be victims than perpetrators or bullies (Troy & Sroufe 1987).

Bowlby (1944) emphasized the influence of rejecting, hostile, and even aggressive parenting on the later appearance of problematic behavior in children. The result of a comprehensive meta-analysis shows that secure children are not prone to externalizing behavior problems (Fearon et al., 2006), while insecurely attached children are characterized by more frequent maladjustment, behavioral disorders, aggression, a propensity for violence, and even delinquency (Bergin & Bergin 2009; Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz 1999; Moullin et al. 2014; Smallbone & Dadds 1998). Within the group of insecure children, children with an avoidant and disorganized attachment pattern are singled out as those who are particularly prone to antisocial, aggressive behavior and delinquency, starting from the preschool period until adolescence (Goldwyn et al. 2000; Granot & Mayseless 2001; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 2006; Pasco Fearon & Belsky 2011).

The results of studies aimed at examining the relationship between the quality of attachment and peer violence suggest that securely attached students are less likely to be bullies than children insecurely attached to their primary caregivers (Kokkinos 2013; Walden & Beran 2010). Namely, insecurely attached children are much more often bullies and victims, as well as in the position of a bully-victim compared to children who had a quality relationship with a sensitive and responsive caregiver in early childhood (Eiden et al. 2010; Liu et al. 2012; Marini et al. 2006; Murphy et al. 2017; Walden & Beran 2010). When only insecure children are compared, the results show that children prone to committing violence generally have a pronounced avoidant (Kõiv 2012; Kokkinos 2013; Monks et al. 2005) or disorganized attachment pattern (Lyons-Ruth et al. 1993; Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz 1999). Particularly illustrative is the finding that among bullies, the violence was more pronounced if they described their mothers as more rejecting or contradictory (Esbensen et al. 1999; Marcus & Gray 1998).

However, there are influential longitudinal and meta-analytic studies that have not confirmed the association between disorganization and violent behavior (e.g. Belsky & Fearon 2002; Van Ijzendoorn et al. 1999). This means that avoidant and disorganized children can function in different ways, although dysfunctionally, not necessarily violently. For this reason, it is necessary to be very careful with expectations and predictions based on children's different family histories. Nevertheless, among problematic children, the proportion of children with a negative model of others is high, which allows understanding of their behavior and designing interventions that respect the needs, possibilities, and specific ways of thinking and reacting of these children.

5. Peer Violence and Attachment: Understanding

If we want to understand the behavior of children with externalized behavior problems, including peer violence, it is important to pay attention to maladaptive early experiences that usually underlie them. What avoidant and disorganized attached children have in common is a negative model of others and low mentalization (Protić 2016; Stefanović Stanojević 2015). These characteristics can provide an understanding of these children's actions and guidelines for our adequate response.

A negative working model of others will shape the way a child perceives and interprets other people, the way it treats them, and consequently the way others perceive it (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999). Early formed working models usually persist over time, so avoidant and disorganized children will avoid closeness with others at school and build superficial and even problematic relationships with teachers and peers. Because they do not have positive expectations of others and are prepared for rejection, these children either withdraw or act aggressively (Jacobvitz & Hazen 1999; Sroufe et al. 1999). In fact, the avoidance strategy is a form of coping with repressed anxiety, fear. As such, it has anger and rage at its core, hence the connection with aggressive outbursts (Cummings-Robeau et al. 2009). In addition, avoidant children may project their own unacceptable traits and intentions onto others (Mikulincer & Horesh 1999). Research of individual and family antecedents of peer violence indicates their connection with the avoidant and disorganized attachment and characteristics of parenting in which certain traits are (not)developed. For example, earlier findings show that children prone to violence are characterized by a higher level of aggressiveness, impulsivity, weaker emotional control, egocentrism, insensitivity to the needs of peers, a lower level of empathy and shame, a negative image of others, worse processing of social information and a lack of prosocial behavior (Bosworth et al. 1999; Crick & Dodge 1996; Cook et al. 2010; Fanti & Kimonis 2012; Garner 2010; Noorden et al. 2015; Popadić 2009; Reijntjes et al. 2016; Tanrikulu 2015; Noorden et al. 2016; Veenstra et al. 2005; Viding et al. 2009). One of the most important developmental outcomes that mediate the relationship between attachment and peer violence is the underdevelopment of the mentalizing capacity. Mentalization is the ability to understand, interpret, and even predict one's own and other's behavior based on the underlying mental states (Fonagy & Target 1997). Avoidant children usually have lower mentalization, i.e., hypomentalization and they interpret other people's behavior very concretely and egocentrically. This is not surprising, since they are not taught to deal with their inner world or are even forced to deny and suppress their emotions (Cassidy 1994; Protić 2016). On the other hand, disorganized attached children, faced with unresolved fear, stop the development of mentalization because thinking about deeply damaged family relationships would lead to extremely painful insights (Stefanović Stanojević et al. 2018). They cope with fear by leaving the situation or fighting, even freezing, rather than trying to understand and solve the problem (Geddes 2018). In both of these cases, underdeveloped or blocked mentalization (the inability to understand their own and other people's thoughts, intentions and feelings) was the price these children had to pay in order to avoid further and deeper rebuff (avoidant children), or the penetration of traumatic material into consciousness and retraumatization (disorganized children).

Empirical evidence confirms that problems with peers are mediated by poor processing of social information, mainly low mentalization that leads to failure to understand the causes of behavior, one's own and other's (Beck et al. 2017; Losel et al. 2007; Venta & Sharp 2015) which often undermines social functioning in various ways (Eisenberg et al. 1998; Hubbard & Coie 1994), including antisocial and aggressive behavior (Abate et al. 2017; Ensink et al. 2016). For example, children with low capacity for mentalization lack the ability to recognize and regulate their own emotions and impulses, as well as to accurately assess how other people feel. At the same time, they often inappropriately attribute malicious intentions to others and are rigid and inflexible in terms of their expectations of others. In peer relationships they fail to find appropriate solutions in conflict situations, but mostly follow only their own point of view and focus solely on their own well-being (Twemlow et al. 2005a). A

prementalizing way of thinking (the belief that emotions and thoughts have no real effects in the real world) disables these children from seeing alternative views of the situation and feeling the pain of the victim, which leads to selfishness and aggression (Twemlow et al. 2017). At the same time, due to oversensitivity to danger, many behaviors of others are perceived as a potential threat, so their inadequate response is actually reactive, and experienced by themselves as appropriate and convenient (Losel et al. 2007; Schwartz & Proctor 2000; Shahinfar et al. 2001).

6. Peer Violence and Attachment: Prevention and Treatment

Pupils' behaviors tell us about what they think, feel and expect. This is of particular importance in understanding children who have not learned to recognize, name, show or control their emotions or those who have learned to seek attention through undesirable behaviors (Allen et al. 1998). Supporters of the implementation of attachment theory in the school context advocate the idea that problematic student behaviors are a reflection of some unsatisfied emotional need or the consequence of underdeveloped important skills, not the child's desire to hurt others, to misbehave or in any way intentionally use dysfunctional behavior patterns. Accordingly, in interaction with problematic insecurely attached children, progress is possible only when the meaning of misbehavior is understood and responded to with understanding and empathy (Allen et al. 2007; Taylor 2010; Youell 2006). This is evidenced by evaluations of numerous programs based on the attachment theory, e.g. *Attachment aware schools – AAS* (Parker et al. 2016; Zsolnai & Szabó 2020*)* and *Thought in Mind Project* (Bak 2012) implemented in schools around the world. They confirm that recognizing the problem of attachment, paying attention to pupils' emotions and promoting mentalization in both pupils and teachers results in a significant increase in the pupil's capacity to mentalize (Valle et al., 2016), which further leads to almost halving the frequency of conflicts, acts and exposure to violence and other problematic behaviors (Bak et al. 2015; Fonagy et al. 2009; Rose & McGuire-Snieckus 2014).

According to the *Attachment aware schools program*, it is necessary that attachment theory be implemented in the school ethos (Parker et al. 2016; Zsolnai & Szabó 2020). The key to the solution is that the reaction of all school staff is adapted to each pupil and is based on an understanding of the history of his emotional development. The most important thing is, in fact, for the teacher not to maintain or reinforce the pupil's negative internal working model. In order to achieve this, it is important that teachers understand that the interaction of their and their pupil's internal working models determines their relationship and recognize the importance of a positive teacher-student relationship, especially with difficult, vulnerable, and sensitive children (Leiberman & Zeanah 1999).

Authors indicate specific, and at the same time, easy to implement changes in the daily work of teachers with children that can give long-term results. What is important is that the teacher empathizes with the pupil, appreciates, verbalizes, interprets, and processes the mental states of the student. In addition to this, in working with insecure children, especially disorganized ones, an important task is related to: setting clear rules, structure and boundaries; identifying and preventing the triggers of inappropriate, often reactive, behavior; helping the child to find acceptable alternatives to undesirable behaviors; creating a response plan in case of escalation of disruptive behavior; designing an appropriate reaction of the teacher, where the punishment should correspond to the

nature of the offense (Gus & Wood 2017; Pearce & Pearce 1994). Instead of reactions such as setting limits or sanctions, which usually intensify the child's aggression and defiance (e.g. Gilbert & Procter 2006; Greene 2014; Taylor 2010), it is more important to understand the mental states that underlie the displayed behavior (Gottman et al. 1997) and explain the reason for the introduction of some rules, as well as indicate the consequences of their violation (Bergin & Bergin 2009). In fact, coercion cannot be seen as a caring reaction of the teacher, while referring to the mental states of the pupils, especially explaining how a child feels due to someone else's behavior promotes the development of mentalization and prosocial behaviors. If we have a student whose violent and aggressive behavior is the result of a lack of love and a negative working model of others, punishments and sanctions have no capacity to solve the problem because the child is sanctioned for behavior over which it has no control (Geddes 2006). The rude behavior of the teacher and not taking this fact into account only increases the anger and feeling of rejection of these children, thus confirming their negative expectations that lie at the root of the problematic behavior.

Just as good mentalization is the basis of pupils' coping in social interactions, so is the teacher's capacity for mentalization, which allows insight into the mental states of students, important for the appropriate response to the behavior of problematic students. Intervention programs that are based on rigid and often punitive disciplinary measures (Twemlow 2000; Twemlow et al. 2001) or are based on the so-called dynamics of power and shame (Twemlov et al. 2017), are counterproductive. In the absence of mentalization, which is typical for children prone to violence, this treatment arouses emotions of shame and humiliation, and is perceived as an attack, to which the child reacts aggressively in self-defense, thus forming a vicious circle. On the other hand, the CAPSLE program (Twemlov et al. 2005a; 2005b) advocates the idea that the problem of violence can be solved exclusively by promoting the development of mentalization among teachers, and at the school level, and consequently also among students. They state that a parallel can be drawn between the individual and the school level - just as violent individuals have problems mentalizing, in non-mentalizing social systems (schools), which are based on power dynamics, there is an additional collapse of mentalizing resulting in reactive violent reactions (Twemlow & Sacco 2012). In a system that does not take into account the mental states of pupils, stereotypes are encouraged in favor of a social role (e.g. bully, victim) where each child loses their individuality (Twemlov & Sacco 2012). On the other hand, in an environment where the emphasis is on mentalization, the rate of violence is reduced, and this is achieved by flexibility instead of rigidity, playfulness, and understanding instead of distance and shaming students, by describing one's own experience instead of defining other people's experiences, etc. (Twemlow et al. 2017).

A trauma-informed approach to supporting children and young people (PACE; Hughes, 2004; Hughes & Golding, 2012) offers a similar way of thinking and acting. According to this approach, changes in dealing with problematic pupils, most often highly traumatized, i.e., disorganized children, are possible only when the child feels safe. The four key elements in promoting a close teacher-student relationship are the attitude of playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy. Only this approach ensures cooperation and relaxation of the problematic child, reduces his defensive behavior, and increases reflexivity and a willingness to accept the advice of an adult. Openness with the pupil, spontaneity, interest, especially which treats the child as a thinking being, and accepting the pupil and sympathizing with him, even when his behaviors are unacceptable, leads to his feeling of security.

7. Final Considerations and Conclusions

Research shows that many children who are faced with various adverse conditions during childhood manage to develop their potential and adequate patterns of behavior in their relationships with others (Masten & Coatsworth 1998; Werner & Smith 1992). The question arises, what contributes to their resilience, i.e., what makes them resistant to stress?

One of the important factors contributing to their resilience is the connection with an adult "protector". "Resistant children" had at least one teacher who showed interest and concern for them, talked with them about their problems and listened carefully to them (Masten & Coatsworth 1998; Masten 2001). Numerous authors emphasize that educators and teachers are the most important figures in children's lives after the parents and state that teachers are secondary, temporary or ad hoc figures of attachment at least in the early elementary school period, especially for vulnerable and at-risk children (Rudasill et al. 2010; Zsolnai & Szabó 2020).

Research findings on the pupil-teacher attachment show that children in their relationship with the teacher repeat the quality of attachment from early childhood, but also that the quality of the teacher-student relationship is not entirely determined by the family experiences of the children, but also by the sensitivity of the teacher himself. For example, the results show that when the teacher's sensitivity is low, there is continuity in the quality of the relationship. Also, a bad relationship with the teacher predicts additional problems in the children's behavior, while when the teacher is extremely sensitive, insecure children are no longer at risk of having a low-quality relationship with them (Buyse et al. 2011; NICHD ECCR, O'Connor et al. 2012).

Being a good teacher is not just about caring about a child's academic achievement, but also about its overall well-being and development. A good teacher is characterized by sensitivity and empathy, one who when faced with problematic student behavior will not react with anger and punishment but with understanding. Such a teacher will think about the cause of such behavior, the inner experience of the child and will try to understand the child's history that could have led him to violent behavior. Only through consistency, mentalization and empathy can a teacher develop the same qualities in children who exhibit violent behavior. If we want these children to behave more appropriately, we must first understand them, and then show that different behaviors are possible and more useful, both for them and for others. Also, understanding that the pupil's behavior is not always malicious, or even conscious, but rather the result of a painful emotional history, is the only way for the child to understand himself, the motives and causes of its behavior, to mentalize them through a secure relationship with the teacher. This is sometimes the only tool to process undesirable experiences and adopt healthier patterns of behavior.

In situations where children do not find their safe haven in their parents, the teacher is in a position to take on that role. Therefore, an important element of a quality school is a quality teacher, and an indicator of the teacher's quality is the child's feeling that the teacher cares about him and understands him (Noddings 1999). Such a feeling is of particular importance for children who do not find that kind of support in their primary caregivers. In situations where children are exposed to unfavorable influences within the family, it is the teacher who can develop in children the feeling that school is a "home away from home". All this points to the necessity of operationalizing the affective role of the teacher, as one of the key roles for achieving quality teaching and learning (Ivić et al., 2003; Tošić Radev, 2016) and that the development of the emotional competences of

teachers and pupils is an important way to reform the education system, which will then be capable of responding to the new needs and challenges of the contemporary world.

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VRŠNJAČKO NASILJE: PREPOZNAVANJE, RAZUMEVANJE I REAGOVANJE IZ UGLA TEORIJE AFEKTIVNE VEZANOSTI

Nasilje u školama je jedan od najvećih problema sa kojima se suočavaju deca, roditelji, škole i društvo u celini. Uzroci nasilja su višestruki, a posledice brojne, tako da je teško, a istovremeno i veoma važno, pronaći potencijalne strategije za prevenciju i rešavanje ovog problema. Jedan pristup vršnjačkom nasilju nudi primena teorije afektivne vezanosti, koja predstavlja koristan teorijski okvir za prepoznavanje i razumevanje razvoja nasilnog ponašanja, kao i efikasnijeg suočavanjq sa njim. U radu će biti prikazano kako se neki od važnih antecedenta vršnjačkog nasilja formiraju u kontekstu rane interakcije sa primarnim starateljem. Pregled dostupne literature ukazuje na to da su deca sa sigurnim obrascem afektivne vezanosti ređe nasilnici, dok su deca sa izbegavajućim i dezorganizovanim obrascem najčešća u grupi dece koja se ponašaju agresivno i nasilno prema drugima. Negativan model drugih i nerazvijenost sposobnosti za mentalizaciju, kao posledica odbacivanja ili majčinstva u kojem se majka doživljava kao uplašena i bespomoćna,

ključni su za razumevanje neadekvatnih, često reaktivnih i defanzivnih problematičnih ponašanja ove dece. Rad će zastupati stanovište da je u procesu prevencije vršnjačkog nasilja od velikog značaja pozitivan, senzibilan i empatičan odnos koji se razvija između nastavnika i učenika, te da je sposobnost nastavnika za mentalizaciju važan segment za razvoj mentazacije učenika.

Ključne reči: *vršnjačko nasilje, nesigurni obrasci afektivne vezanosti, kapacitet za mentalizaciju*