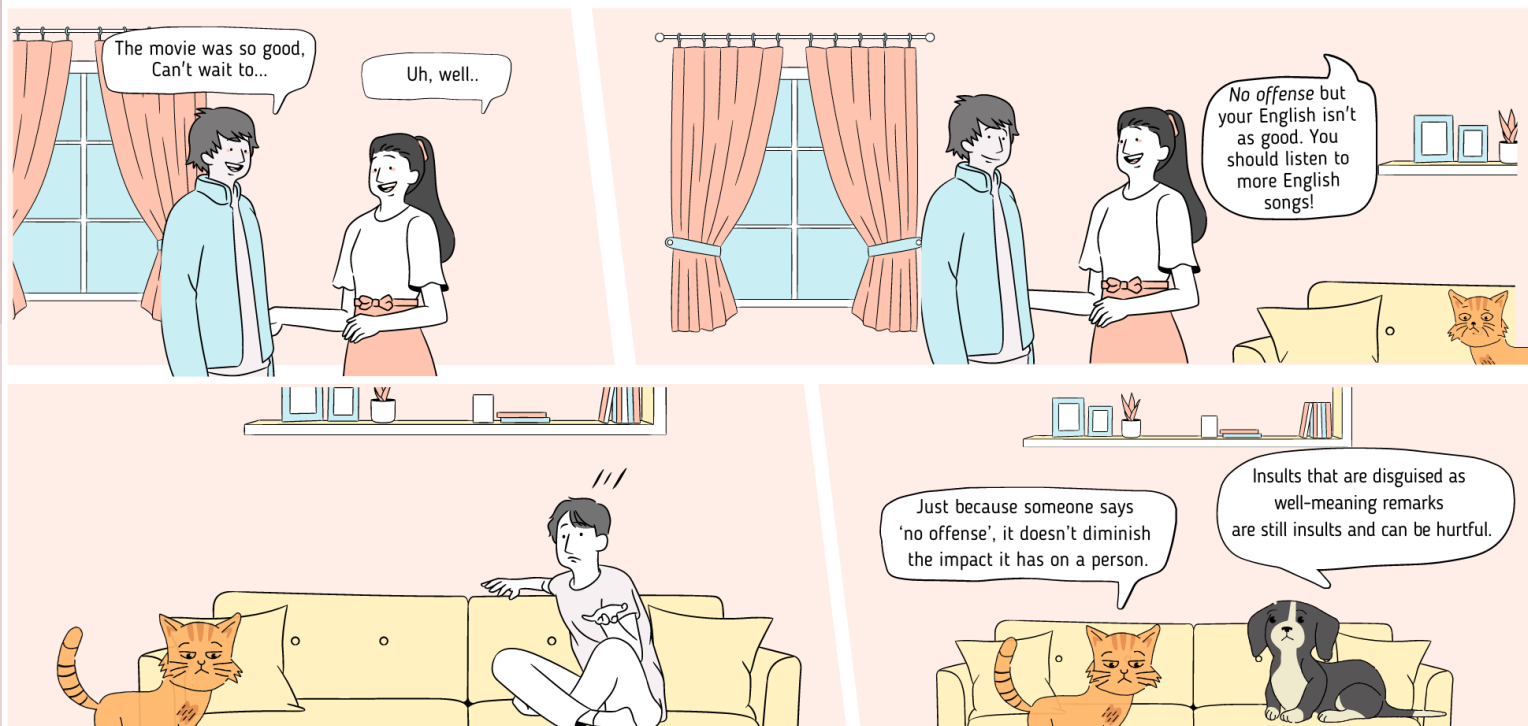


Unlearn with FSI

BULLYING



TW: Violation of boundaries; mentions of bullying



When we hear the word '**bullying**' we often tend to think of a scenario where a bunch of people are standing around a smaller, weaker person who can't fend for themselves against the bullies. However, bullying also refers to any attempt by anyone to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone. This could include hurtful jokes, making attempts to isolate someone, creating hurtful rumours about someone, harassing or intimidating a person to do something against their will, physically assaulting them and many other situations.

Physical Bullying: This refers to a type of bullying that uses physical means to try and intimidate, hurt or control a person. It can result in physical harm including injury. Although the emotional harm caused by physical bullying is often overlooked, it can have serious consequences on the victim.

Emotional Bullying: These are statements or actions that intend to emotionally manipulate, coerce someone into doing something that they may not be comfortable doing, or harm them. Words and painful statements are usually used by the bully or bullies to shame the victim(s). It exists on a spectrum ranging from insults disguised as well-meaning remarks to scathing demeaning statements, both of which can have a negative impact on a person's self-worth.

Bullying Ourselves: We usually do not consider negative self-talk as a form of bullying. Although we may not consciously decide to bully ourselves, it can have severe consequences on our mental health. Negative self-talk refers to a self-deprecating inner dialogue that makes us question our worth. Bullying ourselves could also include holding ourselves to unrealistic standards and punishing ourselves for not being able to reach them.

HOW IS BULLYING NORMALIZED?

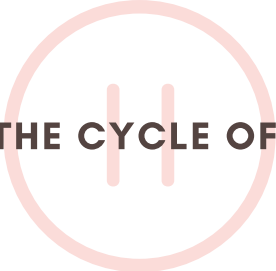
Bullying is often portrayed in media as something that's just a part of the high school experience. This normalization could lead to people not questioning the way they're being treated or the way they're treating others.

Another harmful narrative that mainstream movies and shows tend to depict is that the victim has to change an aspect of themselves to stop the bullying *as if it was their fault they were treated so bitterly*. In reality, the victim is not at fault at all and shouldn't have to change who they are.

Often, we also see bullying being normalized in familial settings. For instance, siblings being compared to each other or relatives making hurtful remarks disguised as 'concern' or meant to be taken "lightly".

Parents invalidating their child(ren)'s feelings/experience is frequently taken as a normal aspect of the parent-child relationship but it is also a form of emotional bullying. This is also the case in situations where the child comments or jokes about an insecurity the parent has. For example, in the Hindi movie English Vinglish, Sridevi (Shashi) is constantly picked on by her children and her husband for her English speaking skills.

The seemingly insignificant things we do or comments we make can have a severe impact on an individual's life. We should actively reflect on the things we say or do as bullying is so normalized in the interactions around us that we may not realize we're taking part in it.



BREAKING THE CYCLE OF BULLYING

Reflecting on our own behaviour is an important step towards breaking the cycle of bullying.

The cycle being referred to here is the **bully-victim cycle**; where people bully others because they have been bullied in the past. People may not associate their behaviour as problematic thinking "the same happened to me so why not do the same". While our past experiences may explain our behaviour, they in no way justify it.

The victim of bullying should never be put in a position where they are forced to sympathize with the bully. The only way to break this cycle is to unlearn certain behaviour and reflect on how we treat the people around us.

**Its time we Unlearn and support those in the process
to create a safe and warm environment for all of us.**



"Would I feel hurt if someone said this to me?"

"Is it my place to comment on this?"

"Even though I'm saying this in a lighthearted manner, is this joke hurtful?"

"Is the person comfortable with me saying this?"

"Am I offering constructive criticism or simply ridiculing the other person?"

When online:

"Am I considering the fact that there is a human being on the receiving side?"

"Is it my place to comment on strangers' appearances or bodies on the internet?"

"Can this hurt the person's reputation?"

**FOR CONTRIBUTIONS & SUGGESTIONS, WRITE TO US AT
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