

Security education as part of the fight against aggression

Tomasz Czura¹, Aleksander Sapiński¹

¹Bielsko-Biała School of Finance and Law
Tańskiego 5, 43-300 Bielsko-Biała, Poland

Abstract— The presented article is an attempt to show the application of Positive Discipline in solving the problem of aggression among children and young people. The author presents the definition, sources, forms of aggression and refers to the ICD-10 classification.

Further on, the article presents the method of Positive Discipline, which, according to the author, can contribute to the reduction of aggression among the young generation. These principles were introduced to psychology by Alfred Adler. Then they were applied in the Positive Discipline method developed by Jane Nelsen.

The author not only presented the possibility of using modern educational methods to combat the threats of the modern world, but also made a substantive assessment of one of these methods. It is the Positive Discipline, which meets the necessary criteria to effectively reduce aggression among children and youth.

Index Terms— security, education, aggression, method, Positive Discipline

XI. INTRODUCTION

The modern world is becoming more and more violent - we often come across such a diagnosis. It is enough to have a look at the first better web portal to see that there is most information about violence, aggression, wars, accidents and natural disasters. A man feeds on bad information as if he needed to make sure that he is not threatened with anything bad, that accidents happen, but to others and elsewhere. The situation is similar in computer games. Most of them contain elements of violence, aggression, attacks, war, crime. Do children really like aggression? Does violence become a discreet part of the child's world? Can children's imagination no longer function without entertainment in which aggression occurs? What can we do to protect our children?

This article will not answer these questions exhaustively, but it will attempt to reflect on how to prevent aggression among school-age children. In the second section we will discuss the phenomenon of aggression. We will reflect on its definition, sources and forms. In the third section we will present the

method of fighting aggression in Jane Nelsen's excellent Positive Discipline educational program. Finally, in the fourth, we will reflect on the purpose of using positive-discipline educational methods. Finally, we will discuss the characteristics of a mature personality, as the goal of safety education is to promote mental health among children and young people.

Therefore, the aim of these analyses will be to introduce an educational method based on renunciation of violence. Besides, attention will be paid to the effectiveness of the fight against aggression among children and adolescents.

XII. AGGRESSION - DEFINITION, SOURCES, FORMS

At the beginning of this point, it is worth making a small clarification. The topic of aggression is very difficult because, on the one hand, it is impossible to imagine life without aggression, it is a companion to our life, and on the other hand, its excess is something pathological, requiring treatment. Aggression accompanies above all certain professions such as the army, police, security, certain sports.

As it has been said, an excess of aggression or its use in inappropriate circumstances causes suffering. How to recognize pathological forms of aggression? According to the ICD-10 classification (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health Problems, prepared by the WHO), aggression is a mental disorder characterized by "repeated, sustained reactions characterized by dissociality, aggressiveness or rebellion". (Schulte - Markwort, p. 34). Dysocial children and adolescents do not abide by the rules, they violate not only moral but also legal norms, they see the environment as a threat, they want to defend themselves against it.

So how is aggression defined? Wilhelmina Wisińska writes: "Aggression is a physical or verbal behavior intentionally oriented to damage an object or injure a person. Hostility is an act of aggression motivated by anger; the task of damage is an end in itself". (Wolińska, 2004, p. 434).

The most important forms of aggression include: symbolic, instrumental, passive and sanctioned aggression (Wolińska,



2004, p. 434-436). Of course, for formal reasons, we will not describe here all forms of aggression. From the point of view of our analysis, instrumental aggression, which is not an act of violence aimed at aggression itself, seems especially important. The subject acting through aggression pursues other goals. In the case of children and young people, aggression is an attempt to draw attention to some emotional, personal, material and other deficits. The child sends out a signal to adults through an act of aggression, as it often cannot do so in other ways.

Aggression is not inborn. Like many other factors in our mental repertoire, aggressive impulses are created under the influence of individual development. It is on the basis of our injuries and feelings of rejection that pathological aggression arises, as a certain defence mechanism against too difficult experiences or unacceptable situations. In other words, it can be said that aggression belongs to the basic mental inventory of every person. The problem occurs when people are unable to sublimate the aggression, unable to express it in a socially acceptable way. Such a way of expressing aggression are such sports like boxing, MMA, judo, karate or activities that require a lot of energy. Then we learn "constructive" aggression, one that is socially recognized and does not destroy relationships, people, values.

Sources of aggression among children and adolescents should be sought at many levels. It can be a trauma, so in this case the aggression will be the result of the Posttraumatic Stress Syndrome. A child who has survived an event that far exceeds his or her resistance to stress will react with aggression towards his or her environment (Schulte - Markwort 2019, p. 30). Another source of aggression is the lack of a positive relationship with the person closest to him or her. A child who does not have a safe and secure relationship with a parent, guardian or other significant person will react with aggression. Ultimately, the source of aggression will be uncertainty due to a lack of a secure and clearly defined relationship with caregivers (Schulte - Markwort 2019, p. 33).

Ultimately, however, the common denominator to which we can reduce all potential sources of aggression is fear. In the case of aggression, we are dealing with a spiral driven by fear. When we feel that the violence is constantly increasing, we are triggered by fear, which gives rise to even greater layers of aggression. As the level of anxiety increases, we become more aggressive (Schulte - Markwort, p. 45). This also applies to children and youth. Among them too, fear causes defensive actions based on violence.

Therapeutic methods are used to limit the spread of aggression. One of them is understanding. A young person cannot be helped to manage violence unless he or she understands the difficult experience. Aggression is born of wounds, trauma, but also of rejection, abandonment by loved ones and the resulting enormous emotional deficits. Hence the task for therapists is primarily to understand the rebellious child (Spock, Rothenberg 2000,p.41). Only by finding the thread of understanding can therapeutic success be ensured (Schulte - Markwort p. 40).

However, there are extreme situations in which the enforcement of established boundaries requires the

involvement and cooperation of many specialists and even the police. An aggressive young man must be aware that if he crosses the boundaries set by society, he may be subject to direct coercion. This is undoubtedly a difficult experience for all parents, educators and teachers, but sometimes there is no other solution (Schulte - Markwort p.44).

XIII. POSITIVE DISCIPLINE - ASSUMPTIONS AND MAIN PRINCIPLES

Positive discipline is a method based on practice. It contains a number of advices, ideas and tips on how to raise a young person. Nevertheless, it is based on theoretical foundations, taken from the psychological thought of Alfred Adler. As a student of Sigismund Freud Adler, Adler abandoned that part of his master's work which was based on the concept of sexual domination and created his own theory of individual personality. According to Adler, from his earliest childhood, man has a sense of the small value of his "self". That is why people strive to dominate over others and thus add value to themselves. Therefore, according to Adler, the aim of education is to overcome within oneself the desire to dominate, aggressiveness, fight with another person for influence, and consequently to gain a sense of value, resulting from the very fact of being human. His concept is based on one basic assumption, which was introduced to the method of Positive Discipline by Jane Nelsen.

At the root of this assumption is a mild thesis that a child must be acquired and not defeated. As Nelsen writes: "Beating children makes them losers. Losing generally makes children rebellious or blindly obedient. None of these qualities are desirable. Winning over children means gaining their voluntary cooperation". (Nelsen 2015, p. 60). The author of the positive discipline speaks directly about the educational goal, which is to invite the child to voluntary cooperation. In this way the child from the subject of education becomes the subject of upbringing. This is a great and, in my opinion, the greatest achievement of this method. The child, knowing that he or she has an influence on the educational process, that his or her actions are causal in the educational model, will approach the principles as if they were consistent with his or her beliefs and not as if they were imposed from outside. In the context of our analysis, a sense of causality in following the principles can bring serious results in the process of self-control of aggression. The child, being aware that controlling aggression is his own idea and task, will do everything to keep the aggression at a level acceptable to society. Achieving a level of aggression that is on a scale acceptable to society is the goal of every parent, educator or teacher.

However, to achieve this level of aggression, it is necessary to invite the child to cooperate. Based on Adler's thoughts, Jane Nelsen lists four steps of good cooperation within the framework of Positive Discipline. The first is to express understanding for the child's needs. A good educator is the one who has the capacity for empathy, i.e. he or she can accept the perspective of the pupil. Only when we have the ability to enter the emotional world of the child will we be able to understand

him or her. It is also important to express this understanding in dialogue with the pupil. Our communication skills are important in this activity. The second step is to show empathy. The ability to enter the emotional world of the child alone is not enough. We need to communicate to the child that we penetrate his or her experience. Let us notice that this model is compatible, in the first step we show our understanding, so we show that our child is an intellectual partner for us. In the second step, it is about our emotional abilities, about permeating the emotional world of our pupils (Nelsen, p. 62).

The third step is to share your experience with your child. It is about showing the child that we also had a similar situation, that similar mistakes also happened to us. This is quite risky because it exposes our weakness to the child. However, in relations full of love, such action is something desirable. If I don't trust our children, how can we expect this from them!

The fourth step is to encourage the child to solve problems. Inactivity can develop over time into a learned helplessness, which impoverishes the personality of children. Based on our own experience, we can show how we have found a solution. It is worth noting that in the third step we opened a field of action to encourage children to be active in finding solutions. This will allow them to gain the necessary experience to avoid future threats (Nelsen, p. 63).

Mutual trust and dialogue can lead to a deescalation of conflict, rebellion and aggression. It is worth betting on methods that prevent the emergence of uncontrolled aggression that is unacceptable to society. To achieve this goal, in addition to the four principles of cooperation, it is worth highlighting the truths that Alfred Adler introduces in order to introduce the necessary harmony into the upbringing of children.

XIV. PRINCIPLES BASED ON POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

As it was said, Alfred Adler presented principles for the proper functioning of children and youth in society. Jane Nelsen then used these principles to create an educational model called Positive Discipline. In our opinion it is an excellent method to use in the fight against aggression, brutalization of social life. The only chance to stop the pressure of violence is to introduce methods in education that will reduce the causes of violence. It is therefore worth quoting and briefly discussing the principles introduced by Jane Nelsen to the Positive Discipline method (Nelsen, 2015, s. 67-73):

- The child is a social being. This means that the child should be addressed in a subjective way. The subjective approach to the child is connected with the fact of social functioning of the youngest generation. Children are observers of social life and on this basis they build their system of values, they learn to react appropriately to threats, they learn social attitudes. It depends on the observation and creative processing by children of attitudes occurring in a given community, whether the child develops pro-social or anti-social attitudes. In this context, Jane Nelsen proposes to move from a *how*

to survive upbringing to a *how to realize oneself* upbringing.

- The behavior is intentional. Our action has a specific purpose. Of course, children are not always clear about what their purpose is. Hence Adler's student Rudolf Dreikurs used to say that *children are great observers, but poor interpreters*. Nevertheless, the main task of education should be to help in the interpretation of the goals that children and young people set for themselves.
- The primary goal of a child is to belong and feel important. The sense of belonging supports children's sense of identity. A child who knows who he or she is, has a support in the community, can more easily overcome fear and danger, and thus becomes more resistant to the temptation to use force. His or her social position also increases, which gives young people self-confidence, which then allows them to give up using violence. Wojciech Eichelberger writes about the need for belonging: *Thanks to this community we can more easily transcend fear and do what we think is right. The reward becomes a sense of internal coherence and autonomy, that is, a situation where what we feel, say and do is compatible with each other. This coherence is the basic condition for mental and physical health. This is yet another reward for courage* (<https://zwierniadlo.pl/psychologia/jak-zaspokoic-potrzebe-przynaleznosci>).
- A child who behaves rudely is a child who is discouraged. A child's rebellion is signalled by inappropriate behaviour. In this way children signal that something difficult is happening, that their basic needs are not being met. One of these needs is the need for belonging and social importance. Aggression is therefore a recitation for the child's unrealized needs!
- A sense of community (taking up social responsibility). This is Adler's concept of caring for others. From an early age children should be taught to care for other people. Young people need to develop a habit of caring not only for themselves but also for everyone else.
- Equality. It is not about treating children and adults identically. Of course, children and adults have different rights and obligations. What we are dealing with here is an approach to equality that speaks of the same right of every person to dignity and respect.
- Errors are a great opportunity to learn. We usually forget about this principle. It happens very often that mistakes made by children are treated as a tool to gradually overcome the child and prove that adults know better. But our erroneous attitude towards a child's mistakes may consist in the fact that we will protect the child from wandering around at all costs.

Both attitudes prevent young people from developing and block their need to take responsibility for their actions. In the context of aggression, such an attitude causes children to become intolerant of mistakes made by themselves or others, which can lead to outbursts of anger.

XV. THE GOAL OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE - A MATURE PERSONALITY

The above principles have an important educational function - they allow for the development of a mature personality, taking responsibility for its actions. It depends on personal maturity whether the society will brutalize at the same pace as before. The correlation between personal maturity and aggression is obvious. Anyway, all pathological behavior has its source in personal immaturity. Bohdan Woronowicz in his book about addictions shows features of mature personality. According to him, a mature personality is characterized by the following features:

- He can take responsibility for his actions. This is a priority to teach the child a subjective approach to the course of events. Thus, the child should acquire the ability to recognize the action as coming from his or her will, to analyze it morally and to be responsible for what is done.
- He tries to stay calm even in difficult situations, knows how to plan and has insight into both himself and the circumstances. It is a skill that directly serves to limit aggression.
- He accepts criticism and does not treat it as an attack on himself. A mature person knows that criticism can be constructive, based on solid arguments, and consequently can bring development in the form of behavioural correction. It is important to teach the child to distance himself or herself, to accept criticism and to resolve conflicts constructively.
- He can respect the otherness of other people. When he meets the otherness he does not react with aggression.
- He does not lose control over himself, he renounces aggression. A mature person has an appropriate level of self-control.
- Can lose, does not try to find excuses and blame others for failure (Woronowicz, 2009, pp. 74-75)

The above mentioned features show that there is a symmetry between personal maturity and level of aggression. Aggressive individuals will not be characterized by personal maturity. Their actions will be based on impulses, instincts and emotions. It can also be said that people with a low, socially acceptable level of aggression are mature people

XVI. CONCLUSION

Summarizing these analyses, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the brutalization of reality is a fact that we

observe with great concern. The development of technology, computer games, films, pop culture, very often besides a positive impact on our lives, contribute to the development of pathological behavior among children and adolescents. Secondly, there is an urgent need to build education for safety, based on practical solutions. This is undoubtedly the method of Jane Nelsen - Positive Discipline. Thirdly, Positive Discipline is based mainly on the achievements of Alfred Adler, who claimed that a child should be acquired and not beaten. The principles of Positive Discipline allow to see the subject of educational activity in the child, which means that a young person can actively participate in the work of education. Fifthly, the subjective approach to education, based on understanding and perceiving the needs of the child, brings the young generation up to personal maturity. It allows to eliminate from education all the principles and actions that cause the increase of aggression among young people. Sixthly, promoting positive discipline among parents, teachers and educators in Poland is a duty for all those who want to stop the process of social life brutalization.

XVII. REFERENCES

- Nelsen J. (2015) *Pozytywna Dyscyplina*, Warszawa: CoJaNaTo.
- Schulte-Markwort M. (2019) *Zaburzenia u dzieci i młodzieży. Co obciąża nasze dzieci i jak im pomóc*, Słupsk – Warszawa: Dobra Literatura.
- Spock B., Rothenberg M. B., (2000) *Dziecko. Pielęgnowanie i wychowanie*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Lekarskie PZWL.
- Woronowicz B. T. (2009). *Uzależnienia, geneza, terapia, powrót do zdrowia*. Poznań: Media Rodzina.
- Wosińska W. (2004) *Psychologia życia społecznego*, Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Eichelberger W., <https://zwierciadlo.pl/psychologia/jak-zaspokoic-potrzebe-przynalezności>, dostęp 04.01.2021.