

THE CHALLENGE OF DEALING WITH BULLYING RELATED TO FACIAL DISFIGUREMENT: THE PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION ON SOCIAL INCLUSION

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: Craniofacial anomalies are commonly associated to facial disfigurement and communication disorders, increasing the risk for psychosocial problems. Individuals with disfigurement and/or unintelligible speech frequently experience teasing while growing-up, and have their educational and vocational opportunities marked by lower expectations and discrimination. The objective of this presentation is to address the strategies available to promote social inclusion and to prevent psychosocial problems related to facial disfigurement and communication disorders associated to craniofacial anomalies. **METHODS:** This presentation will address the importance of appearance and adequate speech in human interactions, focusing on strategies used by an interdisciplinary team in a large craniofacial center on teasing and bullying, discrimination and exclusion besides showing the role team members in empowering patients/caregivers to deal with psychosocial problems. Particularly, the role of support groups in providing information and fostering the development of more positive attitudes towards differences will be addressed. A program conducted by the social worker and psychologist guided to empowering individuals with craniofacial anomalies is discussed. **CONCLUSION:** the assistance rendered must be interdisciplinary where the patient is considered under a holistic vision, a person with multiple roles in society and a person who needs to be empowered to deal with many situations.