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Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has become one of the biggest problems on social media in recent years and has led to numerous problems. Cyberbullying is, “bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, etc. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content”[[1]](#footnote-1) The main goal when it comes to cyberbullying is to humiliate and embarrass another person or a group of people. This problem in social media has become for apparent in recent years since younger, or school age, kids have made social media profiles. People’s online identity have begun to form at an earlier age lately and with this, the protentional for cyberbullying has increased. Some of the effects of cyberbullying can be very harmful and very negative in peoples lives. In recent years more reports of suicide connected to cyberbullying have been reported, but can there be a solution to cyberbullying? In this proposal to the schools and parents that I would recommend stricter consequences for students found cyberbullying other students and this could even extend to the parents of those students. Another important idea is that in each school there is more education on what is considered bullying and the appropriate ways to use a computer.

Cyberbullying has been on the rise in the past few years and continues to grow as social media and the internet grow. Kids and adolescence are starting to enter the world of social media at an earlier age and from this cyberbullying has thrived. While cyberbullying is well known for accruing on social media outlets like: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. It can also accrue through text and email as well. According to the statistics from i-SAFE foundation, “over 25 percent of teens and adolescence have been bullied repeatedly through their cell phones or the internet” and “well over half do not tell their parents” [[2]](#footnote-2). With these statistics we can see that cyberbullying is becoming a very major issue specifically among teens and adolescence. Also, that parents may not be as aware of what is going on as much as we wish that they may. Many kids do not feel as though they can go to their teachers and parents about the issue of bully, because they believe that it will get worse or nothing will happen. If they do tell their parents about being a victim of cyberbullying even less are reported to law enforcement.[[3]](#footnote-3) With this information we can see that cyberbullying is increasing among teens and adolescence, but there seems to be no consequences behind cyberbullying.

I have personally never been a victim of cyberbullying in my past years of school however, my brother has been in recent years. The cyberbullying that affected my brother did not last too long and it could have been worst, but it still had a negative impact on his life for a time. Even though he was bullied in person by another kid he also received a few text messages from this kid as well. He was bullying my brother about his weight that only lasted about a month before they both got in trouble. One day at school the bully was again making fun of my brother and he ended up pushing the bully and they got into a pushing match. Later, in the day he was called to the principal’s office, because another student told the principal and both my brother, and the bully got into trouble. When questioned about what happened my brother told the principle what had been happening and the principle asked why he did not tell anyone earlier. His said, “If I told someone then it would have gotten worst”. This is a common thought among teens and adolescences that if they get the bully into trouble than the bully will become worst when their punishment is over. The schools can only punish them for so long and when they return it would be bad again. However, with new technology and social media even if the school suspends a student the bully can still reach other students through different types of technology.

Cyberbullying is arguably having an increasing link to suicide among teens and adolescence in recent years. However, it is important to remember that bullying is not a sole factor behind suicide and there are many other factors. Cyberbullying has been one of the factors that has gotten more attention lately. In 2003, there was a total of 41 suicides that were linked to bullying in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. However, they were not only cyberbullied but bullied at school and may also have had a mental illness like depression.[[4]](#footnote-4) All of those factors combined led to the act of suicide. One of the biggest cases that led to interest in cyberbullying was the case of Amanda Todd. Amanda Todd was young teen that took her life, but before posted a video on Youtube expressing that she was being bullied and also suffered from depression.[[5]](#footnote-5) After, she took her life there was a worldwide outrage and concern about cyberbullying.

There are some laws that are around to help stop the increase in cyberbullying and to protect teens and adolescence. Schools have some rules and authority when it comes to thinks that happen at school or when using school technology like: computers and emails. However, when students leave the school or use other forms of technology and social media schools do not have much authority over what students do.[[6]](#footnote-6) This is what needs to be improved and changed to help with ending cyberbullying.

I am suggesting that students are held accountable to their actions more online and that parents and the schools should have more authority to punish students that are caught bully. It is important that the school and parents work together. If the bullying is threatening then the bully should be able to face some serious punishment, maybe even with the law. However, it does not always have to lead to that and in some instances the punishment may have to only come from the school or the parents. It is a lot to think about and to work on, but there needs to be a stricter change when it comes to cyberbullying. Also, there needs to be more education by the schools. I propose that at each school in the district there should be a one week “class”, during an elective period, that outlines what it means to be a cyberbully. Some kids may not even realize what they are saying can be considered bullying. It is important that students realize the dangers that cyberbullying can cause and that it is not a joke. Also, in this class there can be talk about the appropriate use of a computer. For this class a resource office and teacher can team up to teach it.

Some people that may dislike this proposal would be the students, resource officer, and teachers. The students would obviously rather be in their elective than sitting in a lecture, and the teacher will not like it because it will be extra work for them. However, it would be good for the students and it would only last for a week. The teachers could even take turns teaching the class so one teacher does not have to do it all the time. If the school does not have a resource officer the school could ask if they could borrow a police officer for that week, but if they cannot then it would be fine for one or two teachers could teach it. I believe that it would be a more powerful message if a resource or police officer was there to give insight as well.

In conclusion, cyberbullying has become a major problem with the increase in activity in social media by teens and adolescence. Cyberbullying can be just as harmful as bullying in real life because with cyberbullying the victim cannot get away from the bully. The internet and social media have become such a big part of peoples lives that if you say something to embarrass someone that it can o viral and everyone will know. Also, people tend to become braver when they can hide behind a screen and never have to talk to the person. To help end or lessen cyberbullying there needs to be a change in the punishment or consequences that the bully can face. Finally, it is important that students lean that cyberbullying can be very hurtful and even harmful to other students lives. In each school there should be a mini-lesson about what a cyberbully is and what some of the harmful side effects of a cyberbully. It is important that students are aware if they have been cyberbullying people and what the consequences could be.

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2. “Cyberbullying Statistics”, *bullyingstatisics*.com, Accessed January 9, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “Cyber-linked Suicides Rising, Study Say, *CBC News,* Last Modified: October 20, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “The Unforgettable Amanda Todd Story”, *NoBullying.com,* Last Modified May 19, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “Cyberbullying Statistics”, bullyingstatisics.com, Accessed January 9, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)