

Cyber Bullying

Do you know someone who has been the victim of cyber bullying? Chances are, you do. Cyber bullying is defined as the usage of communication technologies to intentionally harm another person. This, of course, is not physical abuse, but rather a powerful attack upon the emotions that can lead to lifelong complications, depression, or even suicide for the victim. It is a huge problem in today's world, and it is only continuing to grow. Although much legislation, awareness campaigns, and other measures have been taken to alert the public of the problem and attempt to stop it, only marginal success has been made. Large amounts of people, especially young people, continue to be abused by cyber bullies.

If cyber bullying is such an enormous problem that many officials are working hard to prevent, then why does it still occur? Why does it even occur in the first place? Cyber bullying commences for reasons very similar to those that traditional bullying does. When people feel insecure about themselves, they sometimes make an effort to attack others to convince themselves that they are superior, make themselves feel better, or divert others' attention from their own flaws to those of their victims. However, unlike standard bullying, cyber bullying is much easier to execute. Through the usage of modern technology, one can easily discover contact information of his or her victim, and even attack while remaining anonymous. Social networking websites make it very easy for a cyber bully to contact almost anyone, either through the website itself or through other contact information provided through the website. It may appear that cyber bullying, therefore, is easy to avoid because a person could simply hide his or her personal information or avoid social networking websites. However, this is not at all the case, because a cyber bully can still post defamatory messages about a person on any website, and this gossip can and will easily spread. In this manner, cyber bullying occurs without the victim even being directly contacted. Bullies are also drawn to using the internet as a tool for attack because once something gets on the Internet, it practically never leaves it. Any information, even deleted information, is usually stored in databases, and any person can download or screen cap messages before they are deleted. The law could take action, but results of the bullying will persist.

What, then, are the results of this terrible crime? If you've ever been bullied, there's a strong chance that you understand the negative feelings that follow. Victims become unsure of themselves, become upset, and feel alone. These feelings are intensified because, like all forms of bullying, bystanders have a tendency to side with the bully in fear of being attacked next. With seemingly all people turned against them, victims feel overwhelmed and unable to seek support. They may undergo personality shifts, become increasingly depressed or angry, or even contemplate suicide to escape the situation. Research has also shown that victims of cyber bullying are twice as likely to suffer from mental illness as those that are traditionally bullied. Cyber bullying has resulted in multiple instances of suicide, as well.

Why hasn't cyber bullying been stopped? What can the public do to help stop it? As mentioned, legislation to protect victims from cyber bullying and awareness campaigns to prevent it have occurred, but it is evident that these approaches are not working. Speakers travel the country and lecture school students of the problems caused by cyber bullying, but it continues to occur. Like all animals, humans have a desire to assert dominance over each other. However, humans are capable of love, caring, kindness, and compassion, but these emotions are often not felt by immature children and teenagers; these are the prime perpetrators in the cyber bullying world. As long as humans remain the way they are, cyber bullying will continue. Lectures may inspire some children to stop cyber bullying, but many will continue the practice. Legislation can continue to pass, but the Internet is like a separate world that is much more difficult to monitor. Victims are often embarrassed to report their troubles as well, weakening the effectiveness of legislation further. The methods that are being used to combat cyber bullying are primarily directed towards the bullies, attempting to reach out to their hearts and stop them from partaking in the evil act. This is the major problem, in order to stop cyber bullying for good, we need to focus our efforts on educating the victims, not the bullies. Victims of cyber bullying have a huge advantage that they often do not realize over victims of traditional bullying: it is purely a mental endeavor. Generic bullies can physically harm a victim, but what truly happens in the case of cyber bullying is that the victim is mentally being coerced to hurt himself or herself. Because the situation is entirely focused on the mind, a victim can avoid all negative effects of cyber bullying simply by using logic. What is the purpose of being depressed? Why would anyone even think of committing suicide and wasting the life that has been given to them just because of what someone else thinks? There is no reason for one to feel ashamed when they are insulted, whether this occurs on the Internet or not. Humans are very intelligent creatures, and they most certainly possess the capability to block out unwanted emotions by understanding that those emotions are pointless for logical reasons. Does anyone ever want to be sad? Most do not, but they would argue that sadness is inevitable. But if one understands that there is no reason for sadness when one can be happy, then he or she can push that sadness away. Victims of cyber bullying must be informed that they have this power. This is the only true way to combat cyber bullying, because the bullies will only cease their actions when society can reach a state where their actions are completely ineffective.