

The short and long-term impact of cyber-bullying on people

[Sociology](#), [Bullying](#)



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Did you know that, “ Over half of adolescents and teens have been bullied online, and about the same number have engaged in cyber bullying” (“ Bullying Statistics” 1). Teens are affected everyday by bullying on social media; this form of bullying, called cyber bullying, has become more of a dilemma within the last 10-15 years as technology continues to advance and more and more people start to use these social media sites. Scott Meech states that, “ this form of harassment is worse than physical bullying because it subjects the victim to humiliation from a large audience, since embarrassing pictures or taunts are typically spread throughout a peer group.” He explains more by saying that, “ victims have no safe haven from cyber-bullying because it reaches into homes and invades the technologies most children now depend for communication.”(Meech) Cyber bullying needs to stop and more awareness, education and laws need to occur and be created due to the fact that social media and bullying have a tremendous impact on teen’s physical and emotional health and the way it affects people and the way society views cyber bullying as acceptable or as wrong.

The first tremendous impact that cyber-bullying has on teenagers is how it affects them emotionally and how it impacts their emotional health. In the article, “ Social Media Created a New Environment in Which Bullying Is Extremely Difficult to Contain”, the authors Wency Leung and Dakshana Bascaramurty state that, “ Although high-school bullies may lose interest after graduation, the effects can be long-lasting. Lindsey Belaire, 23, of Edmonton, says the social isolation, taunts and online badgering from her high-school years still haunt her; after graduating five years ago, she continues to suffer from anxiety and depression”. This shows that the affects

of cyber bullying can remain with someone even after the bullying has stopped and can affect a person's emotional health for a long time. In this article, it also states that, " Shannon Freud, a counselor at the Kids Help Phone – which receives about 5, 000 calls and emails a week from youth across the country – says girls who reach out to her service often say that bullying has contributed to depression, self-esteem issues, self-harming, eating disorders and feelings of suicide." (Leung & Bascaramurty) This is another example of how cyber bullying can affect a person emotionally and change how they feel about life and themselves. One thing that stood out the most was what researchers in the article, " The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families" written by ' Clinical Report' a phenomenon was created which is called Facebook depression, in the article Facebook depression is described as, " depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, such as Facebook, and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression." (" The Impact" 802) This is another example that shows how social media can affect a teen's life emotionally and what it can do to teenagers if they spend too much time using social media sites.

Another way that cyber bullying has a tremendous impact on teenagers is how it affects them physically and their physical health. Scott Meech stated that, " Although [cyber-bullying] is less physical than traditional forms of bullying, it can have more devastating and long-lasting effects." He furthermore provides information on how cyber bullying is more of a problem by explaining that, " Even though cyber bullying isn't direct because a

person can be anonymous or hide on the internet, the effects are more overwhelming because people can use harassing pictures or write harassing things that everyone will see and won't go away unless the person who posted them, deletes them.." A prime example is shown in the article, "Cyber-Bullying Is Worse than Physical Bullying." of how cyber bullying has more of an impact when Meech says:

On January 14, 2010 fifteen-year-old Phoebe Prince hung herself from a stairwell in her home. Phoebe was a freshman at South Hadley High School located in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Phoebe and her family had recently moved to Massachusetts from Ireland. Phoebe was driven to suicide due to relentless bullying via Facebook, Twitter, and Formspring. On these social networking sites Phoebe was called names including "Irish slut" and "whore".

This is just one of the many cases where a teen was affected by the harassment and humiliation on social media. This made her take her life, which is something that didn't need to happen but did just because these other teens thought it was necessary to bully her. Another example of a young child who took her life too soon due to cyber bullying was 12 year old Kennis Cady who went to East Rochester, in the article written by Justin Murphy said that, "After Kennis' death, though, four of her classmates readily identified the two girls as having picked on Kennis.. The classmates said they gave Kennis dirty looks, mocked her in gym class and had uninvited her from a party, and claimed they were the ones behind the lesbian rumor and malicious Instagram activity." (Murphy) Kennis wasn't even a

teenager and still very young and still had to not only got through problems with traditional bullying but also with cyber bullying. In the article her father said, “ At that point, for the first time, I really saw there was something troubling her different from regular childhood stuff,” Dan Cady said, “ She started crying and said she was sad, and I said, ‘ Why are you sad?’ and she said, ‘ I don’t know.’ Michaela and I had a talk that night about getting her help.” (Murphy) Both Kennis Cady and Phoebe Prince felt the devastating effects of cyber bullying which physically made them take their lives. This is something that no teen should ever have to do and is sad that someone pushed them to a certain point where they couldn’t stand living anymore and this was their only option. In the article, “ Media Violence” by Scott Meech, he explains that cyber bullying is worse than traditional bullying. Meech states that:

The long-term impact of cyber bullying is greater than with traditional bullying. Digital images, cell phones, and other electronic means can greatly increase the speed in which the bully ‘ s messages can spread. Strom and Strom write, “ Harmful messages intended to undermine the reputation of a victim can be far more damaging than face-to-face altercations. Instead of remaining a private matter or event known by only a small group, text or photographs can be communicated to a large audience in a short time.

This is an example of how people try to fit in with the rest of society or they change themselves by changing their physical appearance after someone bullies them. A person shouldn’t change based on someone’s opinion. Just because someone judges a person based on their looks or how much they

weigh or the way they dress, that should not change a person's view on themselves, people should accept themselves for who they are, often this occurs because of the long lasting affects bullying has on them, which changes them as a person physically.

A third example of a tremendous impact that cyber-bullying has on teenagers is how it affects a teenagers lives reguallary and the stuggles they generally go through everyday. This social problem shows how cyber bullying affects people and the way people look at social media and the way social media affects and changes their lives. In the article written by Renatta Signorini, she states that,

A study published Monday in the journal Pediatrics shows that more than 40 percent of teens seeking care at school health clinics said they are being cyber stalked, harassed via text messages and blackmailed with nude photos by boyfriends and girlfriends, not peers. A group of scientists at Children ' s Hospital of Pittsburgh who conducted the study said cyber dating abuse is common.

This is an example of how social media can change a person's life because without social media, these things like being cyber stalked and being blackmailed with photos wouldn't happen, but because we have social media, it is easier for these things to happen. This pathway can also affect parents as well because they have to help their kid get through this bullying and encourage their children to not bully too. In the article " Bullying Statistics", it states that a way parents could help reduce these cyber

bullying statistics is stated by, “ Teens should keep cyber bullying messages as proof that the cyber bullying is occurring. The teens’ parents may want to talk to the parents of the cyber bully, to the bully’s Internet or cell phone provider, and/or to the police about the messages, especially if they are threatening or sexual in nature” (“ Bullying Statistics” 2). By teens keeping these messages, parents can help their teenagers by reporting these things or even by talking the other parents of the kid who is posting or sending these threatening things. The article “ Bullying Statistics” also states that parents should, “ Talks to teens about cyber bullying, explaining that it is wrong and can have serious consequences. Make a rule that teens may not send mean or damaging messages, even if someone else started it, or suggestive pictures or messages or they will lose their cell phone and computer privileges for a time.” (“ Bullying Statistics” 2) By doing this, teenagers will learn what can happen if they cyber bully someone and that there are more serious consequences then they think there are. Parents can have more of an impact of their children by teaching them the negatives of cyber bullying and by helping them with their cyber bullying problems. In an interview with Cathy Stohr, a counselor at James A. Beneway High School, she explains that, “ cases with cyber bullying are becoming more of a problem and that she sees more and more of them everyday”. She also states that, “ sometimes parents can be a problem because they think their kid is innocent which then starts problems with the person who was bullying another person.” Parents don’t realize that sometimes they can start more problems and make teenagers lives more difficult than it already might be.