

Violent culture



Media Violence Adolescent violence has become a major issue in today's society and " can take many the form of nonphysical (verbal harassment, verbal intimidation, blocking one's access to escape) and physical (hitting, choking, biting, sexual abuse, use of a weapon, murder, suicide) (Greydanus, 2000-2005)." Violence has lead to deaths in teens ranging from age 15 to age 24 and the leading cause of death is car accidents due to drug and alcohol abuse. " The second and third leading causes of death for males aged 15 to 19 are suicide and homicide, which are the third and fourth leading causes of death for females of the same age group (Greydanus, 2000-2005)." So why are teens becoming more violent There are four factors that can influence violent behavior in teens - " environmental, biological, genetic, and psychological (Greydanus, 2000-2005)."

One major environmental factor that influences violent behavior in teens is the media, which includes television, Internet, music, and videogames. " The American Academy of Pediatrics reported that children between 2 and 18 years of age spend 6. 5 to 8 hours a day watching television, videotapes, movies, and videogames. The average young person, by age 18, has seen 200, 000 acts of violence on television alone (Lavers, 2002, 68)." Television has become a major part of our children's lives and violence from programming is becoming embossed into the psyche of children. Cartoon violence and fictitious movies with shoot-them-up antics are not the only problem. News reports also play a major role in brocading violence to our children by glamorizing school shootings and showing images of American soldiers fighting and dying in Iraq. These reports give children the idea that if you bring a gun to school then you will become famous and that it is all right to hurt people that hurt you because the American government are killing

the terrorist that hurt the country. Music lyrics have gotten more violent over the decades as well. Artist like Eminem and Insane Clown Possie talk about killing people they don't agree with like homosexuals or artistic rivals.

Videogames like Grand Theft Auto also encourage violence. In this game, the player must steal cars and shoot gang members on missions. " Links to a bloody new flash videogame called Border Patrol, whose objective is to kill as many illegal immigrants as possible, are making rounds through e-mail forwards (Reno, 2006, 17)." This game encourages violence toward immigrants based on new governmental policies. The Internet provides a source of information for teen that need to know how to obtain guns or build bombs in order to carry out an act of violence.

" The National Institute of Mental Health reported that " television violence is strongly correlated with aggressive behavior" (Dudley, 2005);" however, the media is not completely to blame. There are other factors that attribute to teen violence like genetic, biologic, and psychological factors. A major mental disorder that falls under these three factors is depression.

Depression, which often occurs simultaneously with generalized anxiety disorder, is a psychological disorder caused by a biological chemical imbalance in the brain and can be genetic. " We have to acknowledge upfront that untreated mental illnesses can be frightening and that it can be associated with violent acts. Indeed, we know from many studies that 50% of manic episodes are characterized by at least one act of physical violence.

We also know that moods are contagious. Hypomania and depression can spread across members of a group like wildfire (Jamison, 2006, 533). "

Depression can occur from environmental factors as well like physical and mental abuse or a traumatic life event. Untreated depression can lead to the

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" act of physical violence (Jamison, 2006, 533)" or even suicide.

This said, not all violence in teens can be attributed to violence in the media alone. Other factors can like mental illness, abuse, or trauma can trigger violence in teens. In order to address the issue of violence, we must address all factors that can lead a person to commit an act of violence. We cannot blame the media alone and expect censorship to solve the problem. Parents must be able to determine the signs that children radiate when a violent act is in the midst and then determine the appropriate help to seek. Violence in the media may be responsible for real-life violence but it is just one of many reason a person performs violent acts.

References

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