

# Bullying and suicide

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



Suicide had become one of the leading causes of death for young people each year in the United States. “ More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease, combined” (The Jason Foundation). While experts try to find an answer as to why teens decide to take their own lives, many put too much attention on single factors such as bullying. Bullying is just one factor among many in the decision to commit suicide.

“ While bullying must be addressed, Reidenberg said there is no research to suggest it is any greater a risk factor than divorce, substance abuse, social isolation or other problems”(Olsen). Others experts say, “ Despite methodological and other differences and limitations, it is increasingly clear that any participation in bullying increases the risk of suicidal ideations and/or behaviors in a broad spectrum of youth” (Kim). So, is bullying a major cause of teenage suicide? Since suicide rates are on the rise, awareness should be made to teenagers to help cope with their suicidal thoughts.

What are the signs of a teen wanting to take their own life? If you saw a teen trying to commit suicide, what would you do to help? “ Bullying is an aggressive behavior in which individuals in a dominant position intend to cause mental and/or physical suffering to others” (Kim). Many people who bully probably do it because there is bullying in their household maybe by a parent, stepparent, or sibling. “ Each year, nearly one in six students in grades six to ten is a victim of bullying” (Kim). Bullying is no just someone punching you in the face or someone calling you names.

Bullying is a lot more than that. There are even different types of bullying such as: verbally, physically, indirect bullying, social alienation, and cyber bullying. Verbal bullying is name-calling, or making offensive remarks about a person's religion, ethnicity, sex, or the way they look. Physical bullying is any physical contact that would injure or hurt a person, for example, hitting, punching, kicking, slapping, and many more. Indirect bullying is when someone spreads rumors or stories told to you in private.

Social alienation is when someone excludes a certain person from a group on purpose. Cyber bullying is when a bully talks bad about you or sends you hate via social media. “ Young people who have been bullied or abused are more likely to experience low-self esteem. Victims of bullying and abuse feel that their opinions and emotions are not valued or important. Sometimes they feel powerless to improve their situations” (Powell, 16). Some teens are likely to commit suicide because they have been repeatedly bullied and cannot live with being bullied anymore.

“ Many children and teens are bullied at school every day. Some of these victims become depressed and lose interest in their schoolwork. There have been too many instances where young people have committed suicide to escape the torment of bullies” (ProQuest Staff: Bullying). “ Suicide, the act or an instance of intentionally killing oneself” (Dictionary. com). Suicide rates have been on the rise and the question is why? There is no one single thing that leads to suicide, but a lot of people look for an easy answer when suicide happens.

There are many reason teens decide to commit suicide, some of those reasons being: depression, parent's divorce, abuse, substance abuse, and

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bullying among many more. “ But in 90 percent of the cases, experts agree, there is an underlying mental-health disorder--depression or bipolar illness, which includes among its symptoms agitation, anger, distress, mood swings, and impulsivity. There is evidence, too, of a genetic component that suicide may run in families” (Hochman). Teens who are suicidal do not know how to cope with all the feelings they are experiencing and they think that suicide is the best way to get rid of the feelings.

“ Young people who have attempted suicide, report feeling of anxiety, loneliness, and hopelessness. Low-self esteem and feelings of powerlessness or failure are common factors. Some suicidal teens have long-term depression. Others have experienced a trauma, such as a family break-up or death of a loved one” (Powell, p. 31). Why don't suicidal teens ask for help, you may ask? “ Some experts estimate that 80 percent of all people who attempt suicide want others to be aware of their intentions. In these cases, suicide may be a ‘ cry for help’.

In many countries, suicide prevention programs train community worker, including teacher, school guidance counselors, social workers, and religious leaders, to recognize the warning signs of suicide” (Powell, 38). Everyone should take the steps to learn the warning signs of suicide to help prevent teens on taking their lives. “ People who are suicidal may feel unable to reach out for help. Young people who are considering taking their own lives often have a false belief that others will be better off without them” (Powell, 31).

We should learn the warning signs of suicide to help prevent it. They need to learn that there is help out there. Teenagers need to be more aware of the

resources they have to find help. “ We can't just hope that people who are at risk of suicide will find their way, because the majority of people who die by suicide never found their way to a psychologist or psychiatrist's office,” McKeon said. “ People need to be able to say the word 'suicide' and not be afraid to ask their loved ones the question.

We may not want to believe that someone we love is thinking about killing themselves, but we need to ask the question and be willing to help,” (Cullota). The first step, in learning how to help prevent suicide, is knowing the signs. “ Warning signs that someone may be considering suicide can include a range of symptoms: loss of interest in hobbies, school, or work; neglect of person care and appearance; giving away of prized possessions; depression or anger; withdrawal from friends and social activities; difficulties eating and sleeping; and deliberately risky behavior” (Powell, 38).

Other symptoms include having an “ I don't care” attitude, increased irritability, and sudden increase or decrease in appetite. Now that you know the signs of suicide, here are ways to help prevent it: speak up if you are worried, “ If you spot the warning signs of suicide in someone you care about, you may wonder if it's a good idea to say anything. What if you're wrong? What if the person gets angry? In such situations, it's natural to feel uncomfortable or afraid. But anyone who talks about suicide or shows other warning signs needs immediate help—the sooner the better” (Smith).

Second, respond quickly in a crisis, “ If a friend or family member tells you that he or she is thinking about death or suicide, it's important to evaluate the immediate danger the person is in. Those at the highest risk for committing suicide in the near future have a specific suicide plan, the means

to carry out the plan, a time set for doing it, and an intention to do it” (Smith). Lastly, offer help and support, “ if a friend or family member is suicidal, the best way to help is by offering an empathetic, listening ear.

Let your loved one know that he or she is not alone and that you care. Don't take responsibility, however, for making your loved one well. You can offer support, but you can't get better for a suicidal person. He or she has to make a personal commitment to recovery” (Smith). Suicide rates have been on the rise. Once people find the resources to help prevent suicide, the rates may go down. “ Four out of five teens who try to commit suicide have clear warning signs” (The Jason Foundation).

The statistics on bullying and suicide are alarming and have been on the rise. “ In 1997, more than 30, 000 suicides were recorded in the United States; about 9 percent of those were committed by people age 19 or younger. “ Where it used to be your grandfather, now it's your son," said Tom Simon, a suicide researcher at the CDC. He added that more Americans under age 19 now die each year from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, pneumonia, lung disease, and birth defects combined” (Portner).

Bullying, now a days, has been know to be a leading cause of suicide. In the past few years, we have seen that bullying has increased; some people may even say that it is a major leading cause of suicide. “ Bully victims are between 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims, according to studies by Yale University. According to statistics reported by ABC News, nearly 30 percent of students are either bullies or victims of

bullying, and 160, 000 kids stay home from school every day because of bullying” (Bullying Statistics).

A question people may ask is, which teenagers are most likely to take his or her own lives? “ Federal statisticians say the surge in suicides among the nation's youths is fueled by unprecedented increases in such deaths in certain populations. For example, suicide rates among 10- to 14-year-olds have nearly doubled in the past few decades. And black teenagers are now more than twice as likely to kill themselves as they were just 20 years ago. But white teenagers, particularly boys, still tower over their peers in their rates of self-destructiveness” (Portner).

According to The Jason Foundation, each day in our nation, there are an average of over 5, 400 attempts of suicide by young people grades 7-12. When is this epidemic going to end? We should all join together to help create awareness to teenagers who need help as well as stop bullying. On the subject of suicide, according The Jason Foundation, there has been an alarming 128% increase in suicides since 1980, making it the third leading cause of death in ages 10-14.

While bullying has been getting much attention on being the leading cause of suicide, experts say mental illness is a major cause. Many people do not know when a teen is suicidal because they do not ask for help or show signs, but if you look closely, you might see changes in the teen. “ A suicidal person may not ask for help, but that doesn't mean that help isn't wanted. Most people who commit suicide don't want to die—they just want to stop hurting. Suicide prevention starts with recognizing the warning signs and taking them seriously.

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If you think a friend or family member is considering suicide, you might be afraid to bring up the subject. But talking openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings can save a life” (Smith). We need more awareness for suicide as there is for anti-bullying. Suicide is preventable. Educate yourself about the problems on bullying and suicide, know the signs of concern, and know the steps of prevention. What would you do if you came across a teenager who was being bullied? What would you do if you came across a teenager who was about to take their life? What will you do to help?