

The effects of being bullied for sexual exploitation



Sexual Exploitation can be defined as "... an act or acts committed through non-consensual abuse of another person's sexuality [or gender] for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage, or any other non-legitimate purpose" (" Sexual Harassment/Assault Resources ; Education"). This definition may seem simple, but it is quite complex and burdens the victim with lasting effects, some of which will be discussed below. There are many behaviors that can be deemed sexual exploitation, including "...transmitting a live visual depiction of a minor engaged in any sexually explicit content, or intentionally exposing another to a sexually transmitted disease without them knowing" (" Sexual Harassment/Assault Resources ; Education`").

This report will focus on bullying to sexually exploit someone, as well as the bullying that may ensue after someone has been sexually exploited. Bullying occurs in many ways, including face-to-face and electronically.

Electronically bullying someone is known as " cyberbullying" and according to the Oxford dictionary is defined as, " The use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature" (Oxford University Press) According to dosomething. org, an organization that looks to prevent bullying from a global standpoint, "...nearly 43% of kids have been bullied online. One in four has had it happen more than once" (" 11 Facts About Cyberbullying"). This paper will focus on the victims of bullying by someone for sexual gratification or personal gain and the emotional, social, legal, physical, and financial effects they may face.

In each section below, I will reference a hypothetical situation, in order to help demonstrate the emotional, social, legal, physical and financial effects. In the hypothetical situation, I will refer to the victim as " V" and the perpetrator as " P". The scenario consists of a party held at someone's house. V and P were at the party together P liked V. V was performing sexual acts while under the influence of alcohol. V was unaware that P took a picture of V and sent it to all of the people at the party.

To P, his actions may not have seemed like a big deal at the time, but it certainly is for V and V may encounter many difficulties in her life, based on what P did to her. First of all, according to the definition of sexual exploitation in the first paragraph, P is guilty of sexual exploitation because P used photos of V, without her consent, for a " non-legitimate purpose" (" Sexual Harassment/Assault Resources ; Education") If he forced V to commit the sexual act, he is also considered a bully. By sending the photo and video to other people, he has cyberbullied V.

There are many different ways someone who is bullied for sexual exploitation can feel, and the emotional toll on the victim can be significant. P's actions by simply taking a photo are enough to effect V, for life, but V may feel additionally violated knowing that the pictures were distributed and could even be further distributed or posted on social media. There is no control on what will happen to the pictures.

A person being exploited can be either male or female and the same goes for the person doing the exploiting. In more cases than not, the victim is female, and the perpetrator is male (" Bully Victims"). People being bullied for sexual

exploitation typically experience one or more of the following emotional problems: " anxiety, depression, addiction, low self-esteem, self-harm, eating disorders, PTSD, self-image, depression, nightmares, flashbacks, attachment problems" (" The Impact of Child Sexual Exploitation"). All of these effects can potentially require a lifetime of emotional treatment and long-term psychological help.

Not only are there emotional difficulties for the victim, but there are often social difficulties, as well. The social effects of being bullied for sexual exploitation, can consist of, and are not limited to the following: " isolation from friends andfamily, education, hobbies and interests, risky/dangerous situations and people, difficulty developing and maintaining relationships, avoiding certain places and people, moving areas, and social isolation" (" The Impact of Child Sexual Exploitation").

In the hypothetical, after V found out that her photo was distributed via a phone app to her classmates, she may have experienced a self-image problem. In the current world, social media is one of the main ways to communicate between people. In 2018, there are nearly 2. 62 billion users of social media (" Number of Social Media Users"). This widespread means of communication can cause significant harm and it happens very quickly, sometimes with the push of one button. V would fear that she'd gain a negative reputation on social media and her self-image would likely suffer, causing a whole host of social difficulties.

Perhaps she would not want to go to school or show her face in public because she believed that her reputation to other students or teachers had

changed. Maybe she would try to avoid social situations altogether in order to avoid confrontation with P or others. These are just a few of the many social impacts of sexual exploitation. Just as she would for the emotional effects of being bullied for sexual exploitation, V could spend the rest of her life socially scarred and may not participate in the same social events as she would have before the incident, for fear of reoccurrence. Maybe she would no longer want to return to parties or talk to different people. Again, the act by P may have seemed small to him, but his actions were a life-changing ordeal to V that can affect her for a long time.

There are also physical effects on someone who is bullied for sexual exploitation. Under the definition of sexual exploitation (referenced in paragraph #1), sexual exploitation can take the form of physically endangering someone (" Sexual Harassment/Assault Resources ; Education"). Using the hypothetical above, while P did not seemingly physically harm V, he may have, indirectly if he threatened to hurt V if she didn't do certain things with him or if the photo fell into the wrong hands and someone else tried to exploit or physically endanger V.

What if V and P were in a long-term and what seemed to be a healthy relationship but what V didn't know was that P carried a sexually transmitted disease and did not tell. V contracted the disease at the party. This could cause horrible physical effects and it fits under the blanket of Sexual Exploitation, "[Sexual exploitation can be] knowingly exposing another individual to a sexually transmitted disease or virus without that individual's knowledge" (" Sexual Harassment/Assault Resources & Education").

Physically, V could end up facing "...pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, sickness..." (" The Impact of Child Sexual Exploitation").

V is likely to be bullied after the initial scenario, as a result of her pregnancy and or disease. Other physical issues can be experienced by anyone bullied for sexual exploitation and they could be "...frequent headaches, stomachaches and problems sleeping" (" Emotional Troubles for 'Cyberbullies' and Victims").

There can also be legal effects associated with bullying for sexual exploitation. Not only are there repercussions for the perpetrator, but there may be difficulties for the victim. Depending on the specifics of a case, the victim can actually push to get the perpetrator charged with an offense. Depending on the type of bullying, if it involved threats or annoying the victim, the perpetrator could be charged with harassment (18 Pa. Con. Stat. Ann. § 2709.). Involving law enforcement, may seem to provide relief for the victim, however, taking this route could cause new problems. The victim will have to re-live and revisit the traumatic experience he/she faced.

In Pennsylvania, the law states, " When a cyberbullying offense lands in criminal court, it may be charged as harassment if (among several specified behaviors), the defendant communicated with the victim in a threatening way with the intent to alarm or annoy the victim. (18 Pa. Con. Stat. Ann. § 2709.). This can also be taken to the next level, " Cyberbullying may also be charged as stalking when the underlying behavior includes repeated acts that show an intent by the bully to put the victim in fear of bodily injury or serious emotional distress" (18 Pa. Con. Stat. Ann. § 2809. 1.). In order to

pursue the perpetrator for these charges, the victim will most likely go to court and will have to speak, sometimes in front of a judge.

Currently, in the United States, CBS news reports that, "...nearly half of American young adults lack confidence in the nation's justice system..." (" Young Americans Have Little Confidence"). This could cause panic and lead the victim to not wanting to pursue the perpetrator, even though they may have committed a crime. Applying the hypothetical above, P may face charges, however, V has to re-live the traumatic experiences she faced throughout the legal process.

For victims of bullying, there may be financial difficulties that accompany the emotional, social, physical, and legal issues. After being sexually exploited, the emotional symptoms may require victims to seek professional help by a psychologist. Maria B. Cohen, PsyD, when referring to the cost of psychological help says, " Some therapists may charge as much as \$200 or more per session..." (" How Much Does Therapy Cost?").

Depending on the specific person, they may see a therapist for years, which could make the situation quite costly. Physically, after someone unknowingly receives a sexually transmitted disease, the cost for medicine is extremely expensive. For HIV, a sexually transmitted disease, "...the lifetime cost of treatment in today's terms is estimated at more than half-million dollars..." (" Cost of Treatment"). From a legal aspect, many lawyers cost a substantial amount of money as well, ranging from "...\$150-500 per hour" (" How Much Lawyers").

In conclusion, through the P and V examples and the definitions included in this paper, it is clear that a variety of different situations can be considered sexual exploitation and a variety of different hardships occur after someone is bullied for sexual exploitation. Ranging from financial struggles to emotional, social, and physical adversities, bullying for sexual exploitation should not be tolerated. Although "V" and "P" were used to represent the victim and the perpetrator, the situations illustrated above happen to many people worldwide and can cause long-term problems, stress, and trauma.

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