

Cyberbullying at Schools in the USA

Bullying in any of its forms is dangerous as it can target students' well-being at school. Due to the ubiquity of electronic communication devices, cyberbullying is present in almost any social group. Compared to traditional face-to-face bullying, electronic harassment gives the bullies additional advantages, such as anonymity and the victim's lower protective ability. As Marzano and Lizut claim, "The Internet gives perpetrators new and powerful means to harass their victims" (8). It is essential to combat all forms of bullying in legal and social scopes, but, considering the peculiar nature of cyberbullying, efforts should be taken to raise awareness of the problem's specificity.

The percentage of harassment through social networking sites, chat rooms, texting, or other electronic means of communication is continually increasing, concerning all the reported cases of bullying among school students. According to Lee et al., the studies of 2016 reported the rate of cyber victimization as 41 %, comparing to 15 % in 2015 (12). The main reason for this tendency is that cyberbullying does not require applying physical strength and close physical presence. The perpetrators use their familiarity with social media, anonymity, and the victim's inability to escape. Moreover, it is more difficult for parents and teachers to manage online bullying than the traditional one.

To effectively confront cyberbullying, it is vital to know how to identify one and spread this awareness among the children who may unwarily become participants. The tendency to raise this issue in the scientific and public scopes has positive dynamics. Smith and Berkkun demonstrate an "exponential increase" of the research during the last 15 years (qtd. in Baldry et al. 8). As the legal protection of cyberbullying victims is valid in the USA, it is vital to detect harassment cases. For this purpose, parents and teachers should cooperate to create trustworthy relationships so the child can ask for help from adults. Creating such relationships can decrease the probability of bullying as parental support "can buffer the

relationship between experiences in bullying and maladjusted behaviors, while negative associations can increase this relationship" (Lee et al. 13). That is why high emotional support from parents and peers is necessary to combat bullying before it has occurred.

As the number of cyberbullying cases increases, it is worth noticing that children tend to inform adults more about the harassment acts where they are victims or bystanders. One can interpret this tendency as the result of awareness rising work done by scientists and public writers. The problem is being vividly discussed, which is the first and crucial step to tackling it. When ignored, bullying can lead to catastrophic outcomes as the connection between higher rates of depression and anxiety and refusal to go to school and a decline in academic performance, are observed (Sathyanarayana et al. 3). When informed about the consequences of bullying, people are more eager to take action against it as they realize that the children's future and their current well-being are in their hands.

In the USA, most of the states have legal documents concerning bullying. Besides, many of them provide statutes on electronic harassment in particular. However, cyberbullying is a specific issue complicated by the ubiquity of the Internet and the anonymity of electronic communication. For tackling this problem, it is necessary to pay attention to its nature. The task of any teacher, parent, or other not indifferent people is to promote knowledge of the issue among each other and children. In addition to this, it is also necessary to build a healthy communication environment based on trust, respect, and cooperation.

Works Cited

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