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Humanities-1/2

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**Help Prevent, Not Spread**

Mahatma Ghandi once said, “We must be the change we wish to see in the world.”  This quote explains that in order to change or prevent something from happening, people need to start making the changes themselves.  Bullying is one serious issue in today’s world that needs to change because it is effecting teens nationwide.  Bullying is when someone continuously badgers a person who is smaller or weaker than them having negative results.  For example, “Kids that are bullied are likely to experience anxiety, depression, loneliness, unhappiness, and poor sleep” ("Cyber-Bullying and").   The fact that parents and adults tend to dismiss teenage bullying makes it seem like it is less of a problem when, in reality, it has damaging mental and physical effects on teens.  To prevent teenage bullying from being an extreme situation, parents and teachers should help prevent it by finding a solution.

         Teens bully their peers for many reasons. Some of the causes of teen bullying include, they want to improve their reputation or status at school and are not accepted from their peers.  Teens are often pressured into bullying others because their friends do it and they do not want to be kicked out of the group. For instance, “Some are well-connected to their peers, have social power, are overly concerned about their popularity, and like to dominate or be in charge of others” ("Risk Factors”).  This quote shows that teens who want are seen a certain way at school, will treat their peers if it is what others are doing. Teens feel that in order for people to like them, they need to put down the people that will not stand up for themselves.   In order to feel accepted, they will do what they think they need to do, to gain others approval.  However, this is not the only reason way teenage give for bullying others.  For example, “Others are more isolated from their peers and may be depressed or anxious, have low self-esteem, be less involved in school, be easily pressured by peers, or not identify with the emotions or feelings of others” (“Risk Factors”).  This explains that teens who do not feel appreciated from their peers or are isolated, feel the need to make sure that they do not feel that way and show their emotions by being aggressive.  There are many reasons to explain why teens bully others, but some of the most common are to improve their social status and because they have been bullied themselves.

Teenage bullying has very damaging effects on teens.  The people who are bullied are likely to suffer from low self-esteem and feel unsafe going to and from school.  For example, “They tend to act anxious and appear less confident.  They may become quieter in class and, as a result, the bullying can become a hindrance on their academic success” (“Cyber-Bullying and”).  This states that teens who are bullied seem to feel out of place and become less engaged in their school work.  This affects them to the point where their GPA decreases and makes them not want to be involved in any school activities.  However, this is not the only reaction of teens who are bullied.  For instance, “Those more likely to admit “packing” for school said they had missed school because they felt unsafe either there or on the way to school; had property stolen or damaged; had been threatened or injured with a weapon; or had been in a physical fight” (“Many Bullied Teens”).  This fact shows that teens who experience bullying have missed school or are afraid to go to school because of what has happened to them.  This can also affect them to do poorly at school or to bring weapons to school for protection.  Teenage bullying affects teens in many different, but all negative ways.

There are some solutions to prevent bullying from happening.  One solution is to tell the school about the situation.  For example, “If your child is being bullied at school, the best strategy is to contact the school and share your concerns about bullying with them.  Ask about what types of programs, policies or culture changes are in place to counteract bullying, and insist that protective measures be in place.  No one can stop bullying alone - it takes a group effort from teachers, school administrators, community members, parents/guardians, extended family members and kids/youth” (“Bullying Prevention and”).  This states that once an adult or the school is informed about the teen who is being bullied, they should find a way to end it.  Such as a way that will help stop the bully and for others to feel safe, when the situation is introduced to the school’s staff, administrators, etc.  The school, and/or adults, should become aware of any other signs of bullying so it will not happen again.  Even though, addressing the situation is one solution to prevent bullying, there are other solutions as well.  Another solution is for the victim to keep their confidence and speak up to the bully.  For instance, “It takes confidence to stand up to a bully - especially if he or she is one of the established group leaders,  But chances are that other students witnessing the bullying behavior feel as uncomfortable as you do - they just don’t speak up” (“Dealing With Bullying”).  This explains that peers are not helping on purpose, because they are usually afraid of the bully as well.  But in order to let the bully understand that their behavior needs to stop, the victim and their peers have to speak out and not be afraid.  For the bully to stop, they have to see that everyone is against it and not just one person.  The bully will then know that not just one person cares but everyone else does and that is a less of a chance for the bully to harass others.  Therefore, addressing the situation to the school and teaching teens to have confidence to stand up for themselves and for others are two solutions to stop bullying.

Teenage bullying needs to be addressed as a serious problem.  Causes of bullying can be the bully being abused themselves and wanting to keep their reputation.  There are negative effects bullying has on teens that have a lot of impacts, but the two most common ones are likely to suffer from low self-esteem and feel unsafe going to and from school.  Addressing the school and staying confident are ways to help prevent and or to stop bullying behaviors from happening.  In order for society to understand that teenage bullying is a situation that needs to be stopped, people need to actually take a stand and not let the bullying continue.

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