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Journal Entry 3 - Cyberbullying

When I think of cyberbullying I think of kids using social networks and other Internet sources to pick on or bullying other kids. Bullying is never okay and it can cause emotional harm that can sometimes later lead to physical harm to the victim. However, it's only after reading the August 22, 2010 article from Parade that I'm coming to realize the true severity of cyberbullying. To think that we have kids who are losing their lives due to this form of attack. The article found in a recent study that "80% of girls and 53% of boys said they'd been victimized by cyberbullies in high school", this is very disturbing. I think the worst part of cyberbullying is that the bullying doesn't stop online; most likely the victims have to deal with the abuse at school as well. After the suicide of Phoebe Prince, some states have begun to take legal action. Laws are now being put in place that actually has penalties for those who are guilty of such bullying. Something that some kids may consider innocent play can actually result in criminal charges; not so funny anymore.

The first website I visited was www.stopcyberbullying.org. The page starts with an intro that has information about what cyberbullying is and provides examples of what types of things are said and done. It also has what seems to be actual quotes of things children say or have been known to say. The intro gives a pretty clear introduction to cyberbullying, even for someone who is completely unfamiliar. You instantly get a sense of how severe this form of bullying actually is, it's actually pretty sad.

So I got past the intro and delve more into the site. The site describes what cyberbullying is, how it works, why it happens, preventive measures, how to take action and also talks about the law. As described on the website ""Cyberbullying" is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. " It seems with cyberbullying no one is safe; according to the site the kids often change roles and one can go from being the bully to being the victim at any time. The statement that hit the hardest was "Children have killed each other and committed suicide after having been involved in a cyberbullying incident." The site discusses two types of cyberbullying; direct attacks and cyberbullying by proxy. The first one involves messages sent to the kids directly and the other one involves using others to help cyberbully the victim, this can be with or without the accomplice's knowledge.

On Cyberbully's website it talked about the consequence some schools face when they

become involved. It seems unfair to me that when schools try to get involved they usually face law suits "for exceeding their authority and violating the student's free speech right". I actually believe that is nonsense because the bullying still goes on in the school, making it an hostile environment and effects learning.

The prevention of cyberbullying lies in the hands of the parents and schools. Kids need to be educated about the consequences of certain actions before it starts. Parents need to be good role models, it all goes back to the saying that "it starts at home". Kids need a good foundation to build on which allows them to use their better judgment when faced with challenges and peer pressure. The site goes on to provide additional information could help you determine if you're actually a victim of cyberbullying. The site also has resources for children of different ages to reference; kids, tweens and teens. It's nice how they target the different groups and take different approaches in the explanations.

In conclusion, cyberbullying is bad and kids of all ages should be encouraged not to engage in that sort of online activity. Parent and schools play a big role in educating our youth and making them aware of the consequences.

References

STOP cyberbullying: Cyberbullying - what it is, how it works and how to

understand and deal with cyberbullies. (n.d.). Retrieved from

http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/index2.html