

Bullying and Suicide

<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/bullying-and-suicide.html>

There is a strong link between bullying and suicide, as suggested by recent bullying-related suicides in the US and other countries. Parents, teachers, and students learn the dangers of bullying and help students who may be at risk of committing suicide.

In recent years, a series of bullying-related suicides in the US and across the globe have drawn attention to the connection between bullying and suicide. Though too many adults still see bullying as “just part of being a kid,” it is a serious problem that leads to many negative effects for victims, including suicide. Many people may not realize that there is also a link between being a bully and committing suicide.

The statistics on bullying and suicide are alarming:

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people, resulting in about 4,400 deaths per year, according to the CDC. For every suicide among young people, there are at least 100 suicide attempts. Over 14 percent of high school students have considered suicide, and almost 7 percent have attempted it.
- Bully victims are between 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims, according to studies by Yale University
- A study in Britain found that at least half of suicides among young people are related to bullying
- 10 to 14 year old girls may be at even higher risk for suicide, according to the study above
- 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 fear of bullying

Bully-related suicide can be connected to any type of bullying, including physical bullying, emotional bullying, cyberbullying, and sexting, or circulating suggestive or nude photos or messages about a person.

Some schools or regions have more serious problems with bullying and suicide related to bullying. This may be due to an excessive problem with bullying at the school. It could also be related to the tendency of students who are exposed to suicide to consider suicide themselves.

Some of the warning signs of suicide can include:

- Showing signs of depression, like ongoing sadness, withdrawal from others, losing interest in favorite activities, or trouble sleeping or eating
- Talking about or showing an interest in death or dying
- Engaging in dangerous or harmful activities, including reckless behavior, substance abuse, or self injury
- Giving away favorite possessions and saying goodbye to people
- Saying or expressing that they can't handle things anymore
- Making comments that things would be better without them

If a person is displaying these symptoms, talk to them about your concerns and get them help right away, such as from a counselor, doctor, or at the emergency room.

In some cases, it may not be obvious that a teen is thinking about suicide, such as when the suicide seems to be triggered by a particularly bad episode of bullying. In several cases where bullying victims killed themselves, bullies had told the teen that he or she should kill him or herself or that the world would be better without them. Others who hear these types of statements should be quick to stop them and explain to the victim that the bully is wrong.

Other ways to help people who may be considering suicide include:

- Take all talk or threats of suicide seriously. Don't tell the person they are wrong or that they have a lot to live for. Instead, get them immediate medical help.
- Keep weapons and medications away from anyone who is at risk for suicide. Get these items out of the house or at least securely locked up.
- Parents should encourage their teens to talk about bullying that takes place. It may be embarrassing for kids to admit they are the victims of bullying, and most kids don't want to admit they have been involved in bullying. Tell victims that it's not their fault that they are being bullied and show them love and support. Get them professional help if the bullying is serious.
- It is a good idea for parents to insist on being included in their children's friends on social networking sites so they can see if someone has posted mean messages about them online. Text messages may be more difficult to know about, so parents should try to keep open communications with their children about bullying.
- Parents who see a serious bullying problem should talk to school authorities about it, and perhaps arrange a meeting with the bully's parents. More states are implementing laws against bullying, and recent lawsuits against schools and criminal charges against bullies show that there are legal avenues to take to deal with bullies. If school authorities don't help with an ongoing bullying problem, local police or attorneys may be able to.

People who are thinking about suicide should talk to someone right away or go to an emergency room. They can also call a free suicide hotline, such as 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Friends and relatives of suicide victims also need to find someone to talk to as they grieve, especially if they are suffering from depression or suicidal thoughts themselves.

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