

The Harmful Effects of Bullying

Statistics reveal that more than 3.2 million students are victims of bullying every year (DoSomething.org). In addition, sixty-seven percent of scholars believe that schools respond poorly to bullying; as a result of repetitional bullying, one out of every ten pupils drops out of school (DoSomething.org). These facts truly exhibit how many people are deeply affected by bullying. Bullying is when someone in a position of power purposefully harms another less authoritative person through mistreatment, physical harm, mental harm, intimidation, coercion, or abuse. It is a cruel, inhumane act that is a significant problem in our society. The damaging impacts of bullying are shown through research studies, celebrity stories, and personal examples. By addressing bullying, it will hopefully come to an end.

Several negative impacts of bullying have been identified by researchers (such as Hurley and Gordon) who have studied this topic. Some examples of the short term effects on victims and bullies include poor school performance, low self-esteem, and difficulty maintaining social relationships (Hurley). A few types of long term effects include spousal abuse, child abuse, and substance abuse (Hurley). Family, friends, teachers, employers, and anybody close to the victim or bully suffer from the effects of bullying too. Some of these impacts include being physically ill, having depression, and harboring stress-related conditions (Gordon).

Gabby Douglas, a celebrity known for her gymnastic skills, is an example of how bullying can affect a victim. After she came home as a gold medalist from the Olympics, Douglas expected social media to be thrilled at her accomplishments. Instead, cyberbullies commented about how she was unpatriotic, too muscular, and jealous of her teammates. These comments made Douglas lose part of her self-confidence and harbor hurt feelings.

I personally have been a victim of bullying too. At the beginning of my first grade year, I did not have any friends. I asked my classmates if they wanted to play with me, to talk to me, to sit next to me, or to do anything with me; I kept getting rejected or promised a fictional “tomorrow.” Eventually, I gave up. At the time, I did not realize I was being bullied. I thought I was a normal first grader. I believed I did not need any friends because I had my books and my family to keep me company.

Gabby Douglas and I both suffered from the negative effects of bullying; however, we both found ways to overcome them. In Douglas’ instance she decided to team up with Hack Harassment, an organization that works to reduce cyberbullying, and talked to young adults to give them more self-worth. In my experience, someone else helped me. My new teacher realized that I was lonely, and introduced me to a friendly group of girls. These girls taught me how much joy a simple friendship can bring to a person’s life.

Individuals like my teacher and organizations like Hack Harassment who take actions against bullying are called anti-bullies. Being an anti-bully is not limited to certain people; everyone can be an anti-bully. Like Douglas, you could join an organization to help yourself or others overcome the negative effects of bullying. Another way you could be an anti-bully is by letting everybody in your community know that you care and are there for them. Like my new friends, you could be an anti-bully by being friendly and by offering ways to get professional help to victims, bullies, and anybody involved. By making the simple choice to not be a bystander, you are already helping millions of people.

Bullying is when someone who has power chooses to harm another less dominant person. It is cruel, inhumane, and destructive. The effects of this act are visible through research studies, celebrity examples, and personal stories. Many individuals and organizations are setting great examples by being anti-bullies. They are giving opportunities to people like you and me to help

put an end to bullying. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said about bullying, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” So, the important question is, are you going to be a bystander or an anti-bully?

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