

BULLYING IS YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL: A VICTIM?

Here are some helpful signs for parents of teens to look for that may indicate their teenager might be a bullying victim.

- Coming home from school with damaged, ripped, or missing clothes, books or other possessions.
- Having cuts and bruises that are not explained.
- Isolating from friends and family members.
- Seeming afraid of going to school, whether it be walking to and from school, riding the school bus, or taking part in school activities with other teenagers.
- Lacking interest in schoolwork or having failing grades.
- Complaining often of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical problems.
- Having trouble sleeping or suffering from bad dreams.
- Lacking an appetite.



GET SOME HELP! IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO

**USA NATIONAL
SUICIDE HOTLINES**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

**NATIONAL RUNAWAY
SWITCHBOARD**
1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)

**NEW YORK STATE
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE**
1-800-942-6906
1-800-942-6908 (SPANISH)

**NYS CHILD ABUSE
& MALTREATMENT REGISTER**
1-800-342-3720

**NATIONAL DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE HOTLINE**
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
1-800-787-3224 (TTY)



Dear Friend:

The tragedy of suicide is magnified tremendously when it involves a young person taking his or her own life. The loss and sadness it causes family and loved ones is unimaginable.

We are hearing more and more these days about the problem of teenage bullying both in person and in cyberspace – and the significant role it has played in cutting short so many young lives so tragically.

Indeed, some recent studies suggest that there is a strong correlation between bullying and teen suicide. A series of bullying-related suicides, including many we have recently heard or read about right here in New York, has drawn much attention to the connection between bullying and suicide.

This brochure contains valuable information about teen bullying, including cyberbullying and its link to the alarming rate of teen suicide. It also helps explain how to recognize the signs of bullying, and what you can do to help prevent it. Additionally, some important contact information is included concerning suicide prevention.

I hope you find this information helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Roxanne J. Persaud".

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TEEN BULLYING & SUICIDE

What You Should Know



Senator Roxanne J. Persaud
19th Senate District

Bullying and Suicide

The statistics on bullying and suicide are alarming.

The National Center for Disease and Prevention Control (CDC) reports that suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people (ages 15-24), and accounts for 20% of all deaths in the United States annually. For every suicide among young people, it is estimated that there are at least another 100-200 suicide attempts.

The CDC's 2012 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, a nationwide survey of youth in grades 9-12, reveals these startling statistics:

- 20.1% reported being bullied on school property;
- 16.2% reported being bullied electronically (e-mail, chat room, website, texting);
- 26.1% of students had had their property (e.g., car, clothing or books) stolen or deliberately damaged on school property one or more times;
- 28.5% of students had felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities;
- 15.8% of students had seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey;
- 12.8% of students had made a plan about how they would attempt suicide; and
- 7.8% of students had attempted suicide one or more times.

Everyone should take an active stance against bullying including parents, teachers, school administrators and teens themselves.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Some Warning Signs of Suicide

- Be mindful. If your child appears to display any of the following personality characteristics, it may indicate that there is a deeper problem that may lead to suicidal thoughts.
- Showing signs of depression like ongoing sadness, withdrawal from others or losing interest in favorite activities.
- 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 their favorite possessions and saying goodbye to people.
- Making comments that things would be better without them.

Some Useful Tips

Encourage kids to follow these simple rules if they are faced with a cyberbully:

- Tell someone about it. Find a trusted adult – either a parent or a teacher – and report the incident.
- Do not delete the bully's messages. Save them somewhere on your computer or cell phone where they are easily accessible, should you need them as evidence of wrongdoing.
- Do not open messages from others that have sent you previous bullying messages. If you receive a message from someone you know is a cyberbully, ignore it.
- Block cyberbullies who attack you during chats and other social media.
- Never agree to see someone you just met online in person, without talking to or bringing a trusted adult along.



SOME TIPS ON HOW TO PREVENT TEEN BULLYING

If **TEENS** see an act of bullying in school, they should **IMMEDIATELY** report it to a teacher or other responsible adult at school.

PARENTS should encourage their own **TEENS** to notify them

IMMEDIATELY if they themselves become victims of bullying.

PARENTS should alert their **TEENS** about the harmful effects of bullying, and encourage them to be kind and understanding to others, regardless of the differences that may exist between them.

TEENS should step forward and speak up for a friend that is being bullied. They should let others know that bullying their friend will not be tolerated and will be reported.

Keep the lines of communication open. Regular communication between **PARENTS** and **TEENS** about the topic of bullying will make it more comfortable for **TEENS** to speak up about bullying.



What is Cyberbullying?

As the Internet and online social networks continue to grow, so does the phenomenon known as cyberbullying. This type of bullying occurs when a child or teenager is harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, threatened or tormented using digital technology. Emotionally, cyberbullying can be scarring, since it involves threats and humiliation.

Alarming Cyberbullying Statistics

- 58% of kids report that someone has been hurtful or mean to them online.
- 21% of kids report that they've received threatening messages.
- 42% of kids classify mean behavior towards them online as bullying.
- 53% of kids admit that they have said something mean to someone else online.