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TEEN BULLYING & SUICIDE:

What You Should Know

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, have drawn much attention.

This brochure contains valuable information about teen bullying, including cyber bullying 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,



Jose Peralta
13th 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, resulting in about 44,000 deaths per year. For every suicide among young people, it is estimated that there are at least another 100 suicide attempts.
- Bullying victims are about five times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims, according to studies by Yale University.
- According to ABC News, nearly 30% of students are either bullies or victims of bullying, and 160,000 kids stay home from school every day because of fear of bullying.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Some Warning Signs of Suicide

- Be mindful. If your child appears to display any of the following behaviors, it may indicate 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.

What is Cyber Bullying?



As the Internet and online social networks continue to grow, so does the phenomenon known as cyber bullying. This type of bullying consists of a child or teen being harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, threatened or tormented via digital technology. Emotionally, cyber bullying can be scarring, since it involves threats and humiliation.

Alarming Cyber Bullying 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.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: *Some Useful Tips*

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

- 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 as evidence of wrong doing.
- Do not open messages from others that have sent you previous bullying messages. If you receive a message from someone you know is a cyber bully, ignore it.
- Block cyber bullies 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.

BULLYING IN SCHOOL: *Is Your Child 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 to go to school or take part in school activities with other teens.
- 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.

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

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.

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)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

1-800-942-6906
1-800-942-6908 (SPANISH)

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

THE TREVOR HELPLINE

National suicide helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender youth
1-800-850-8078

COVENANT HOUSE HOTLINE
1-800-999-9999

YAH! YOUTH AMERICA HOTLINE
1-877-968-8454