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# Teens' mental health and social media

June 7, 2023 by [Guest Commentary](#)

Aditya Shrivastava

The latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics have brought attention to the continued high rates of mental health problems among teenagers in the United States, particularly among girls and those who identify as LGBTQ+. Cyberbullying has been a big contributor to this worrying trend that has been on the rise in recent years.

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second most common cause of mortality for adolescents aged 15 to 24 is suicide.

According to a recent report from the CDC, mental health issues are becoming an even bigger concern among teenagers. Nearly three in five (57 percent) American teenage girls reported persistent sadness or hopelessness in 2021, which is double the rate of boys and represents a nearly 60 percent increase and the highest level recorded in the past 10 years.

Adolescent respondents reported rising mental health issues, violent encounters, and suicidal thoughts and actions. Girls performed worse than boys on almost all measures.

The latest study also reveals that adolescents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning (LGBQ+) continue to experience severe suffering.

These concerning figures highlight the need for more assistance and support for young people dealing with mental health problems. Resulting in heightened stress and anxiety due to social isolation, distance study, and economic insecurity, the COVID-19 pandemic has only made matters worse.

Results by race and ethnicity suggest that persistent melancholy or hopelessness is widespread and getting worse across all racial and ethnic groups, and that reported suicide attempts have gone up among both Black and white youth.

“Young people are in a state of distress that requires us to act with urgency and compassion,” Director of the CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health Kathleen Ethier, who holds a doctorate in social psychology, said.

Schools have a special capacity to support the development of our youth when the appropriate programs and services are in place.

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behavior, and uploading embarrassing images or videos are just a few examples of cyberbullying.

One of the worst characteristics of cyberbullying is its anonymity, which makes it challenging for victims to track down the harasser and get support.

Cyberbullying can have a severe negative effect on young people's mental health. Victims may struggle academically and have sleep issues, and they are more prone to experience sadness, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Cyberbullying poses a severe public health risk, since it can occasionally result in suicide.

Studies show that teenagers who have been victims of cyberbullying are more likely than those who have not to express depressive symptoms, consider suicide, or hurt themselves. This demonstrates the devastating effects that cyberbullying has on young people's mental health and the urgency of taking preventative measures.

Teenagers' increasing use of digital technologies is one of the reasons cyberbullying has grown. In the U.S., 92 percent of teenagers say they use the internet every day, and 71 percent say they use multiple social media sites.

Although these technologies have numerous advantages, such as chances for social interaction and self-expression, they can also be used to harass and bully other people.

The problem of cyberbullying requires a multifaceted strategy to be solved. This entails educating kids about the negative effects of cyberbullying, offering help and resources to victims, and holding offenders accountable.

An important part of combating cyberbullying is education. Teenagers must be taught to treat people with respect and empathy and be made aware of the potential effects of their online activity. By setting an example of responsible online behavior and having open discussions

Schools have a significant role to play in reducing cyberbullying. A lot of schools have adopted rules and procedures to deal with cyberbullying, such as conduct codes and disciplinary actions for offenders. For students who might be coping with the effects of cyberbullying or other mental health difficulties, schools can also offer mental health services.

It's critical to offer resources and help to victims of cyberbullying in addition to prevention efforts. It's crucial to provide victims with a secure and encouraging environment where they can seek assistance, because they may feel abandoned and alone. This could include peer support groups, counseling programs, or internet tools like chat rooms and forums.

Finally, it is crucial to hold offenders responsible for their actions to stop cyberbullying from happening in the future. Cases of cyberbullying that entail threats or other illegal activity may involve law enforcement officials. Schools and other organizations can also take action, such as suspending those who engage in cyberbullying.

Parents, educators, mental health specialists, and policymakers must work together to address teenage mental health challenges, especially the effects of cyberbullying. Together, we can make the world a safer and more encouraging place for kids, empowering them to develop the skills and resilience they'll need to face challenges throughout puberty and beyond.

*Aditya Shrivastava is a Lynnfield resident and a freshman at Governor's Academy in Byfield. He wrote this piece as part of a course at North Shore Community College in Lynn.*

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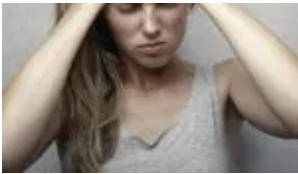
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