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# The Social Media Impact, Mental Health Problems And Access To Weapons As The Main Reasons For School Violence

Throughout the years, school violence has not only left scars in our society but in our entire nation. Other than home, schools are the single most important place in the development of teenagers and children, schools are supposed to be a safe haven. Teens and children are taught how to grow socially and school provides opportunities to reach milestones to become the people we will be today and in our future. Simple things such as religion, sexuality, and race can lead straight to bullying in today's society. More than one out of seven students have been victim to assault and physical assault in their own school. Even today the impact of school violence is not fully understood more than the cause. School violence such as bullying and school shootings puts all hope and development to an abrupt stop. School violence has become a leading concern in the 21st century, the current rise in school violence is caused by increased exposure to social media, decreased access to outside mental health resources, and simple access to weapons.

Social media allows us to have the social freedom we desire, but in this we find that many people take this to their own advantage to purposely hurt and bully others. From violent video games, violent media, to problems in their own home, teens have taken bullying to a whole other level. Teen brains are not fully developed until the age of 21 and what they see and take in now will forever affect the way they think. Most Media today focus' and often glorifies the violence going on around the world today. With millions of teens watching this, they absorb all of this information. Violent video games such as Grand Theft Auto, and Call Of Duty can, in some teens, trigger the emotional part of the brain called the amygdala which evokes feelings such as depression, anger, aggression, and impulsive behavior. These emotions can often take control for the better or worse. Aggression and impulsive behavior play a huge part in the bullying of others because of the way that the perpetrators think. "Brain changes, aggressive behavior, poor decision making." The things that teens or children take in play a huge part in their decision making, especially in school. Social media is the perfect platform for bullies to target others. 13.6% of teens and children are involved in some type of cyber bullying, whether they are the victim or the perpetrator.

There are plenty of methods of cyber bullying being used in and out of school in social media today. Beginning with harassment; the use of text messages, direct messages, or email are used to target or embarrass the victim. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook are the best places to spread rumors or create fake accounts to mock or ridicule others. Arising from these harsh comments and ridicule, children and teens become self-conscious and think that they will never fit in. These feelings usually lead to depression because the thought of people thinking badly or maliciously toward you is overbearing. The constant backlash from bullies leaves a bruise every time on those who cannot handle it, unfortunately there are many who have committed suicide because of this. Exclusion is another form of bullying, this makes specific targets feel like they don't belong anywhere or fit in to any group. Outing is the sharing of victims personal information or secrets. "Instead of controlling your child's online access, focus your efforts on educating your child about the risks of

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cyberbullying.” All of these types of bullying on social media may make a permanent mental imprint on some people, leading to various unwanted feelings. Many teens today may not be able to speak to anyone about it because they feel like they’re alone. Some can’t even afford to seek out therapy or mental health resources. It is of utmost importance that those being bullied have access to any type of help.

Mental health is important for adolescents because it helps them achieve wellbeing and helps to have a positive mentality throughout their years into adulthood. Teaching adolescents how to deal with coping, good judgment, bullying and resilience is important for the development of their character and how to handle issues that will come now or in the future. However, not many teens can have access to mental health resources due to various reasons. “Over 15 million children and adolescents need psychiatric help, but only about 8,300 child and adolescent psychiatrists practice in the United States.” There has been a shortage of psychiatrists in the US which means that not many adolescents can find mental help which is a huge problem. Acts such as the Affordable care act causes socialized health care, and in that, it has caused that type of environment. Therefore companies lack competition and have no necessity to outcompete one another causing rates to drive up and making people choose from few mental health care companies. Medicaid is not provided by the federal government like the affordable care act, Medicaid is provided from states themselves. It is funded through tax payer money and Medicaid helps promote those who cannot afford the healthcare options that don’t cover their symptoms or needed help. The real question is what can schools can do to prevent violence inside of school and how to provide help to those who need it.

Since teachers and faculty have the experience and training working with each other, they can play major roles in preventing school violence in their own school. Counselors and school officials can begin by addressing and trying to figure out the amount of bullying or violence happening in their school under the radar. They should also monitor and offer help to those who seem distressed so that their emotions do not grow into something that can potentially cause violence or harassment. Many schools do not offer or even pay much mind to the mental health of their students, it is a silent epidemic. “Up to one in five kids living in the U.S. shows signs or symptoms of a mental health disorder in a given year. So in a school classroom of 25 students, five of them may be struggling with many issues such as depression, anxiety, etc.” Research also shows that 1 in 10 students have severe emotional issues that may affect the way they act in school and at home. Teachers can inform and communicate with parents of anything they may come across so that parents can also be more vigilant with their child. By addressing the amount of violence and emotional development in school and putting in our part, we can reduce the number of violent cases in schools, especially with weapons.

In today’s society, access to weapons has become very easy in adolescents.” Almost one-third of all homes contain guns with estimates that 50 million Americans own 300 million guns. Despite continuing educational efforts, the majority of these guns are kept loaded, unlocked, and potentially accessible to children.” In homes, parents usually keep their weapons or firearms at hand, whether it be a kitchen knife, or a firearm kept under the bed or in the closet. Research has showed that if a gun is stored in a home, the risk of the child stealing it or even suicide increases majorly. Adolescents are prone to taking risks, at this stage of brain development it is shown that they are drawn to risky behavior. Therefore, keeping weapons at hand would not be such a good idea. Parents must play a part in keeping these firearms safe in their own house, they shouldn’t keep their weapons at hand for their children to get a hold of. It is as easy as storing it in a drawer unloaded locked with a key or simply keeping it u loaded

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wherever they are storing it. As previously said, adolescent brains are not developed until the age of 21, therefore the child or teens mindset is prone to making risky or curious behavior. Mental health is also something that has to be paid mind to in your child.

Teens may act without thinking in most cases. If teens have emotional issues they may see a gun or weapon as a easy way out or a way to harm others. Most mass school shootings usually come from troubled teens. Nikolas Cruz, 20, Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooter, has many bullying issues. Cruz was ostracized by his own classmates, made fun of, this turned him to become violent and volatile. His emotions and feelings became so overwhelming that he began practicing shooting whether it was in video games or make belief, but what led him to all of this was bullying, not enough parental guidance, and easy access to weapons in his own home. Adam Lanza, 20, Sandy Hook Elementary Shooter, was also bullied. When he attended Sandy Hook Elementary, he was taunted, and assaulted. This got so bad that his mother, Nancy Lanza, considered suing the school. All of this led up to him beginning to play violent video games, he racked up thousands of headshots in a couple days alone. He had many emotional issues such as aggression, depression, etc. He was prescribed medicine to help him with his emotions everyday. He also has easy access to his mother's multiple guns which is what led him to the shooting itself. All of these shooters were bullied in young age. It is very important to treat others kindly because you never know what one "small" insult can cause a person to feel or do. "Remember, you are responsible for the safety and well-being of your children. And since guns are found in more than one-third of all American households – even if your family doesn't have them, chances are your child will visit a house that does." Weapons are very dangerous and should not be exposed to adolescents in their own household or others. It is best to keep them concealed and away from young teens. It is always better to be safe than sorry.

In conclusion, school violence is caused by a variety of things, from social media, to no access to mental health, and easy weaponry access. It may leave scars in our nation, but as a nation all should learn how to work together to put all of this to a stop. The nation needs to learn all of the causes of school violence so everyone can make schools the safe haven they are supposed to be. Throughout the centuries school violence has become worse and worse, but everybody should put in their part to make this nation a better place for the children of the future. Through these experiences, there is always a lesson, free will does not come without a cost, the job is figuring out how to better it so bad things can be prevented from happening