Adolescent Interview and Paper

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**Introduction**

Adolescence is a very sensitive age which includes a lot of learning along with a bundle of enjoyment (Rice & Dolgin, 2005). It is a transitional phase of a person’s life that includes physical and psychological development. Usually, the period from 12 to 18 years is considered as the adolescent period (Rice & Dolgin, 2005). This period holds great meaning and importance in the life of an individual, as he learns the most valuable lessons of his life in this phase. The friendships made in this period go a long way and the lessons learned in this phase of life are always remembered by the person.

 Although adolescence is a colorful and happy phase of life for most teenagers, some of them don't enjoy it as much as they should. For some, this colorful and joyous period turns into a dark, gloomy and depressing phase and leaves horrible memories in their mind which can never be forgotten. Several problems can be faced by a young adult when they enter the phase of adolescence (Knight, Nordhus, & Satre, 2003). As already discussed, they undergo several physical and psychological changes with do not only affect their body but their brain as well. This makes some of the young adults very angry and aggressive and some of them, sensitive and depressed (Rice & Dolgin, 2005).

One of the major issues currently faced by teenagers is peer pressure and bullying (Clasen & Brown, 1985). Peer pressure is a concept according to which the individual works under the influence of his or her friends or the social group. On the other hand, bullying is referred to as the use of force, coercion, abuse or threat to dominate or intimidate someone aggressively (Clasen & Brown, 1985). The act of bullying is carried out by individuals who consider themselves more powerful than the rest of the people of the society and are victims of a superiority complex (Smith, & Thompson, 2017). Bullying behavior is usually repetitive and it becomes a habit of the person who does it.

Many adolescents or young people fall prey to the evil of peer pressure and bullying every year. According to the data collected and published by National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] in 2018, almost 5 million students become a victim of bullying every year and most of the times; the issue starts in middle school. The students of 6th grade complained the most about being bullied (Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, & Runions, 2014). As per the figures presented by CDC, 2018, the youth who are bullied in their adolescent years are more likely to have stress, anxiety, depression, sleeping difficulties, lower academic performance, and higher dropout rates (CDC, 2019).

I recently came across a troubled youth who had faced a lot of difficulties and issues due to both these evils. She had seen a dark phase of her life and had faced peer pressure and bullying issues recently. I came to know that she had also attempted suicide. The teenager, chosen for this interview, was a young girl from high school. Her name is Anne (name has been changed to keep the identity of the interviewee hidden) and she is identified as an African-American. She was born and raised in the United States of America but according to her, no one accepts her as an American citizen. Anne has faced severe bullying issues in the recent past and is still in psychotherapy as a result of this issue. The details of this interview have been mentioned as under.

I started off the interview with some light and simple questions, like introduction and daily activities. Then I came towards the main topic; I first chose to ask about peer pressure**.** I started the discussion with the question that what did the interviewee (Anne) feel about peer pressure. She told me that according to her, peer pressure is such a force that makes you do something very awkward and unsafe which you would never think of doing otherwise. Upon asking that how does she thinks peer pressure works, she told that it involves a more popular or famous person of the group set up a trend and the less popular ones following it, most of the time blindly (Bursztyn, & Jensen, 2015). One of the most prominent examples in this respect, which was quoted by her was the issue of drinking and using drugs. At the end of this section, I asked Anne whether she still came under the pressure of her peers, like friends, colleagues, and even acquaintances. She laughed and told me that she had grown out of it. She further added that she no longer cares what people think or do and she does what needs to be done.

Coming towards the topic of bullying, there were several questions I wanted to ask the interviewee but this is a painful topic. I did not want to hurt her or make her go through all that pain through which she had previously gone through. I started by asking what she thought bullying was and how she was bullied. She told me her bullying story in a very confident yet painful manner. Anne told me that being an African-American, she had to face issues at many places but the worst she had was in high school, where she always had to hear rude comments about her skin color or appearance. Anne told me that there was a group of seniors in school who used to tease her by calling her different names and comparing her to different objects and even animals. This was extremely insulting and derogatory.

Upon asking about how she used to cope with this issue, she told me that at first she used to be extremely sensitive about it and used to cry. She used to cry for hours and one day, when she reached her limit, she tried to take her life. Fortunately, she was discovered in time and her life was saved. From that time onwards, her sessions with the psychologists started, which, according to her, also helped a lot in drawing her towards life and thinking positive.

 **Conclusion**

In the end, it can be concluded with a clear observation that peer pressure and bullying are serious issues that need to be addressed on a priority basis. No doubt Anne was a strong girl and she got over her issues pretty quickly, but not everyone is strong and brave like her to speak against the evil doings going against them. Hence, there should be proper policies, rules, and regulations that define how this crime can be stopped. Moreover, there should be proper training sessions in high schools and coaching classes that teach how to identify whether a fellow is going through some serious issues like bullying, mental stress, depression, anxiety and stress, and immediately report it. This would help save the lives of many innocent young people and prevent them from falling into the dark pits of depression.

**Appendices**

The questions that were asked during this interview session are listed below:

1. So Anne, Tell me something about yourself.

2. What are your daily activities?

3. What do you think about peer pressure?

4. How do you think peer pressure works?

5. Can you clarify the concept of peer pressure with the help of an example?

6. Do you still face the issue of peer pressure?

7. What are your thoughts about bullying?

8. Can you share your own story or experience of bullying with me?

9. How did you handle the comments and remarks of the bullies?

10. How has psychotherapy helped you with coping with the stress and tension of bullying?

11. What would you suggest to a teenager who is going through the same phase?

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