Name of Student

Name of Professor

Name of Class

Day Month Year

**How should students respond to cyber bullying?**

**Introduction**

 Cyberbullying is the form of bullying that takes places over the digital platforms, using digital devices i.e. computers, laptops and mobiles. It refers to the spreading of harmful, dangerous information about the target on the media platforms. It includes sharing, sending or posting the humiliating or false news about any person that is harmful to his physical and mental health, property, reputation and property. Cyber bullying has appeared as the most common and damaging form of bullying due its level of influence and scope. With the internet everything’s circle of impact has bigger and the damage radius has also increased. Cyber bullying is impacting people from different demographics equally. Children are becoming the biggest target of such incidents. Bullying has always been the biggest issue in our society. And children were the biggest sufferers of it in educational institutions. But now it has taken a new form that is proving to be far more damaging then the other forms of bullying. This research paper aims to discuss the methods and ways that students can adapt to combat the Cyberbullying.

**Literature Review**

 According to stats of Pew research study, around 32 percent of the teens become the victim of the cyberbullying. But according to the national Crime prevention council, this number is far higher, around 43 percent. Cyberbully research data reveal that this number double in a period of five years by 18 percent. These figures are alarming.

**Cyberbullying a crime:**

 Cyberbullying is the form of bullying that takes an indirect approach towards the targets by using technological means. Social media platforms are used in manipulating the victims. Cyberbullying is considered a crime by the federal and state authorities. Depending upon the intensity of the offense different states have different levels of the punishments and law order to deal with the criminals(“Bullying and Cyberbullying Laws Across America”).

**Confusion between free speech and cyberbullying**

 It is a known fact that cyberbullying is more common than the other forms of bullying that require face-to-face interaction. Social media platforms are mostly used by these bullies to promote their agenda. Often freedom of speech is mixed with the hurt comments that are passed on targets by the bullies. They usually take the shield of free-speech while expressing their hate for other people. The North Carolina legislators passed a cyberbullying bill that declares it illegal for anyone to use a computer network to encourage others, or post any personal, sexual information pertaining to minors. Also, many schools have included anti-bullying codes in their institutions regarding social media policies, and 18 anti-cyberbullying laws exist. Media platforms are also raising voice against the cyberbullying, but it is becoming difficult to separate the concept of free speech with the hate through cyberbullying. Free speech advocates put the blame on the breadth and vagueness of the statuary language used in the many bills and laws as the cause of such confusion(Journal).

**Students facing cyberbullying**

 Cyberbullying is a result of an imbalanced power dynamic. It always has been like that, but the internet has made it easy for the bully to save his face. Most widely used social platforms that are used to attack students are Facebook and Instagram. From spreading wrongly edited pictures of minors to harassing them through fake accounts and to the kidnappings. Cyberbullying is giving rise to the new set of dangers for teenagers. Nowadays teenagers like to follow random people and like to get followed by strangers. The number of friends or followers have become the new "cool" trend for the new generation. According to stats one-third of teen girls meet strangers through internet platforms(*Teen Girls Engage in Risky Online Behaviour | CTV News*). Many of such children fall into the wrong hands of the kidnappers and pedophiles. Alicia kozakiewica, a 13-year-old teenagers, was kidnapped and raped by a pedophile that she met online. There are many children like who meet similar fate by the strangers. Many of such bullies threaten kids and blackmail them to get the wrong favors(*Kidnapped by a Paedophile I Met Online*). A study conducted on the behavior of teenage children of school-going age at Children's Hospital Medical Center revealed that teenager with neglected childhood engages with the strangers online then the other children.

 Other forms of cyberbullying include Flaming, Outing, masquerading and exclusion. Exclusion is the most common form of cyberbullying in which students bully their other friends or classmate to exclude them from groups and chat rooms. The affected child finds himself alone and excluded from his peers due to this form of bullying(“5 Different Types of Cyberbullying”). Sending dirty messages, sexually explicit content in messages to harass the other person is also very common. Setting up a fake profile of the classmate to achieve evil purposes is also very common in teenagers and students. Often it is done to destroy the image of another person. Slut shaming, body shaming, or wrongly editing the photograph is another form of cyberbullying(Gordon). According to research conducted on the school children to find out the prevalence of cyberbullying their associated social stress it was found that total 15.8% of the students reported cyberbullying and 25.9 % reported regular bullying, the period of one year. About 59.8% of the cyberbullying victims were also the school bullying victims(*Cyberbullying, School Bullying, and Psychological Distress: A Regional Census of High School Students | AJPH | Vol. 102 Issue 1*).

**Effects of cyberbullying**

 Cyberbullying causes numerous effects on the physical and mental health of the target. Children who suffer from bullying losses their self-confidence that leads to higher levels of depression. Children and adults who have self-esteem issues and lack of confidence are the major targets of the bullying. As it is easy to manipulate such individuals. Depression and anxiety are the most common health effects of cyberbullying. Victims suffer from lack of self-confidence and tend to avoid social situations.

 Victims of the cyberbullying stop feeling safe, as this form of bullying even invades their homes and the episode of bullying never leaves their minds, due to the constant availability of the bullying stimulus, in the form of cell phones and computer. Additionally, cyberbullies are normally anonymous, which creates the fear in the hearts of the victims(Physician).

 Body shaming is the most common form of cyber bullying, which not only causes depression but victims also develop eating disorders, which not only effects their physical health but also mental health, obesity and anorexia are the two most common examples. Such effected individuals also tend to affect their careers and the personal relationships due to developed levels of depression. Cyber bullying can be linked to the increasing suicide rates in the school students, and other teenagers. According to another research there is a robust relation between the cyberbullying, its victimization and the other mental distresses. When three groups of cyberbullied victims were examined, it was revealed that the victims of the cyberbullying reported more distress in comparison to other victims of bullying in the school. Also the risk of psychological distress was most high for the victims of both cyberbullying and school bullying.

It was also revealed that the ones who mostly suffered the bullying are 4 times more likely to experience depressive symptoms and 5 times more likely to attempt a suicide(*Cyberbullying, School Bullying, and Psychological Distress: A Regional Census of High School Students | AJPH | Vol. 102 Issue 1*).

 All the suicides are result of a mindset that finds no interest in life. Such individuals stop finding meaning in the life activities. And start to feel alone and isolated. In academic life it is crucial for students to have friends and when they can’t find as product of bullying they start to feel secluded. This creates more room for suicidal thoughts to invade their brains.

Falling grades are another impact of the cyberbullying. Victims often become so depress that they feel unable to focus on studies. Such students often stop attending classes, and start to avoid the social interactions of the school due to humiliation. Falling grades is really common in the victims of cyberbullying(Iqbal).

**Research methodology**

 Research method that will be used in this research paper will be based mainly on the surveys and the secondary research resources. Other methods that will be used to conduct research will be by examining the reports available in the library and online.

**Questions For the research:**

 After reviewing the literature available online, it has been revealed that cyberbullying has become the most common form of bullying in the teenagers in the students. It is more common than the other forms of bullying. The governmental policies are not enough to tackle the problem. Awareness regarding the cyberbullying lacks in the students. In majority of the cases incidents of the cyberbullying can be controlled easily if the students and teenager know how to tackle the situations. Response of the students is really important to combat the cyberbullying.

It is a responsibility of the elders, teachers and parents to educate students about the forms of bullying that takes place over the internet and the possible dangers that are attached to this form of harassment. \this will enable students sense the danger and decide appropriate response to the danger. Also academic institutions need to form strong anti-cyberbullying policies for the institutions and informal al the students about them, so that all the victims feel free to contact the higher authorizes.

 Many of the cases of cyber bullying, go unreported due to lack of awareness among students the measure that they can take to tackle the issues. Research paper will discuss all the possible ways that students can adopt to combat the prevailing cyberbullying(“What Kids Can Do”).

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