

Full name: Rebecca Qiao

Age: 14

School & Year Level: Diocesan School For Girls, Year 9

Email: 73345@diocesan.school.nz

Topic: The Power of Words

Word count: 593

The Power of Words

As technology rapidly advances in the past centuries, the use of social media between teens quickly escalated into a scene the world has not witnessed before. Social media allows communication between individuals around the globe despite their nationality, and it's fun and entertaining. However, all mentioned before were the tip of an iceberg. The platform itself is engaging although the anonymous users may cause distress for victims of cyberbullying. According to the Social Media Health Statistics of 2023, 1 in 6 teens experienced expression of harassment while accessing media. The power of words can be a remedy or a blade, when used impulsively it causes others negativity and hopelessness, whereas by using words to build an inclusive community online we embrace the difficulties one faces and cultivates a sense of belonging.

By amplifying into the eyes of those who are victims of cyberbullying, we discover that in extreme cases cyberbullying can lead to anxiety, low self worth and isolation. With multitudes of hideous messages, the fear of being targeted and belittled by others can contribute to a sense of humiliation. The shame and embarrassment cannot be erased easily instead the pain is carved permanently into their heart. The persistent criticism can lead to anxiety and fear due to the unwillingness to interpret the pessimistic feedback. Under various circumstances cyber bullying can be attributable to depression. On a daily basis, being reminded of how worthless you are is significantly lowering one's confidence in themself furthermore their overall self esteem. Research shows that 41% of adolescent victims report that the result of cyberbullying led to social anxiety.

Therefore what actions can we take to intervene with scenarios like these? Personally in my opinion, to improve the overall quality of our online environment we need to begin with the actions of ourselves. Instead of being a bystander, arise as an upstander. Speak up and support the victim by showing empathy and acknowledge their feelings matter. By advocating for a healthy online community, I would educate and inform others about the consequences to cyberbullying and the long lasting effects. In general, promoting a safe diverse environment whilst encouraging others to join in creating change.

One major factor that differentiates cyberbullying from traditional bullying is its anonymity. Bullies often undergo reduced repentance because of no physical interaction. In addition, the assumption of being shielded from being discovered for their acts since without knowing their real identity it is challenging to hold the bullies accountable. The untroubled sense of extraneousness is a reason why discrimination online can be more detrimental and brutal. Repercussions wouldn't come no matter when according to the minds of some individuals. The lack of empathy can also play a critical role in cyberbullying, because anonymity prevents the perpetrators from observing the reaction of their victim.

To conclude, we all have the ability to choose our words, however we can't choose the effects it has on the target. Online disinhibition can leave emotional scars, the key is to have an expectation of treating others with respect whether it's online or in real life. The achievement of unlocking a supportive online community doesn't just require the effort of ourselves, instead our strength comes from a collective. The use of words can foster connection, showing understanding, and expressing empathy. We are the generation to dominate society in the future, let us use the power of technology for the greater good and leave no space for anonymity discrimination. Thrive for a virtual platform where we rescue those in darkness and persist to chase the light.