School Violence-Spring 2001 Essay, Research Paper

On April 20, 1999 Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold opened fire on Columbine Highschool killing twelve fellow classmates and one teacher. School violence changes our youths morals. From bullying to peer pressure, youth are exposed to school violence everyday. What is school violence? School violence varies from accounts of “death, homicide, suicide, weapon related violence, in the US.” (c1) School violence can occur to and from school, while attending a school sponsored event, on a bus, or at an activity.

Violence in school goes back to the 1800s’. The first publicly funded schools for delinquents was built in Massachussettes during 1847. In 1899 Illinois “established the first statewide court for children”. During the 1900s’ “progressive education movements challenge, emphasized on strict discipline in public schools”. (b19) In the 1940s’ teachers still supported the use of progressive education, but there was an uproar in juvenile delinquency after World War Two. The 1960s’ courts expanded the use of human rights and process protections to students. School began to hire security, and monitoring devices, to protect schools from vandalism, and burglary. The 1990s’ sparked congress to create a “gun-free school zone”(b18), by making it illegal to bring guns within 1,000 feet of any school. In 1995 violence for juveniles reached the top at a rapid growth, then declined.

Violence has become the growing problem in the United States today. School violence is the second leading cause of death among students. Statistics state that “a school crime is committed every six seconds”. (d1) The National Crime Victimization Survey states that nearly two point seven million violent crimes take place each year, on school campus, or near school campus.

Most children and teens are left home alone and unattended after school between three and seven pm. The current generation today are “latchkey children”. When a child is left without adult supervision the child has the opportunity to get into trouble easier. Violent video games teach children to “kill or be killed”.(b14) Modern entertainment allows youth to play games with cutting edge graphics and digital technology to enhance the realism of the game. When no parents are around to supervise the television it is not being monitored properly. The NIA has found that the ratings system is weak and parents are still complaining. Children see violence occurring in television, and also in movies. Movies depict scenes of violence whether it be , violent scenes, or violent action heroes. Some children do not understand reality vs. video game and movie fantasy. Problems and issues at home are commonly found when families suffer from family violence, divorce, drug abuse, poor income, unemployment, and illness.

Bullies at school cause an impact on youth. Children and teens are harassed verbally and physically. Bullies usually suffer from a “delinquency case before age 13, low family income, poor school performance, psychomotor clumsiness, low non verbal IQ, sibling convicted of crime, physical or sexual abuse”. There are also several ways to prevent bullying. The first step is to ask several questions to determine the problem. Communicate clearly, and then monitor closely, also record incidents when bullying occurs. Provide both students with time to discuss the problem. Never overlook abusive acts, and be sure to contact both parents of the bully and victim to make them aware of the incident. Establish a special meeting to sort out the problem, and also make sure to encourage the parents to participate and show support for both students.

School violence can happen between two people who are a student and a student, student and a teacher, teacher and a student, or even a student vs. the school. School violence does not always occur with students from the school. Sometimes students who attend another school, previously expelled or adults commit acts of school violence. Outsiders participate in school violence by robbing, attacking, kidnapping, rape, and even murder. Violence in schools can happen randomly or when revenge is the result.

Taunting can occur when a student does not dress in fashion and does not wear name brand clothing. Taunting and humiliation come from such words as “gay, fag”, homosexual, dike, lesbian, and slut. “If you didn’t dress like them then you were an outcast”. (a10) Peer pressure can occur when someone has higher power than their victim. Peer pressure can cause the victim to feel lonely and insecure. Today if students are outsiders they are viewed as a “sign of danger, and derangement”. (a6) Cliques determine a students status in school. A war has been going on with the jocks, cheerleaders, and preps vs. the nerds, geeks, freaks, and homosexuals.

The “Trench coat Mafia” were verbally and physically harassed in the hallway by jocks, and cheerleaders. When students are pushed to the extreme they will do anything to make the harassment come to an end. Even when the result means murdering them in revenge.

Schools in America are enforcing a zero-tolerance policy. Teachers are to directly report any students mentioning violence. Society feels as if taking away guns, trench coats, pornography, video games, and music the violence will suddenly come to and end.