Teen Violence Essay, Research Paper

Teen Violence

Imagine being caught in the middle of a crossfire with two students shooting and you are

right in the middle of it. Well that is exactly what students and teachers in Littleton, Colorado

went through. On April 20, 1999, at approximately 12:20am, two students armed with

semi-automatic hand guns, shotguns and explosives conducted an assault on the Columbine High

School and the people inside. A total of 12 students, 1 teacher and 2 suspects were killed; 24

students were transported to six local hospitals; and 100 students were treated at the scene

(www.Littleton.org). Is this what is happening inside the walls of where America s youth is

suppose to be learning and in a safe environment. What can we do to prevent events like this

from happening? It s a question we are constantly searching for answers to. There seems to be

no concrete answers or solutions just certain explanations.

Many People, especially in their teens often turn to violence when it comes to solving

their problems and expressing their feelings. Violence can de demonstrated and seen in various

aspects of life. These include, school environment, television and media and home situations.

Each of these things can contribute to the many reasons why teens might turn to violence. They

often try and imitate what is seen or get their own ideas. The problem is what is violence really

solving and how is it harming the person inflicting it. Everyday researchers are trying to find

possible ways to try and stop this violence that is ruining our society.

The School has been one of the main scenes where violence has been increasing steadily.

There is some disagreement about whether the school causes of reflects violent behavior. Those

individuals who see the school as the source of aggression argue that the school in one setting

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fosters all of the necessary conditions for violence and vandalism (Apter, Goldstein). They say

the school labels various students as failures and by making their failures obvious to themselves

and to others, forces youngsters toward aggression as a face-saving response. These youngsters,

in turn, fulfill the negative expectations of their teachers and principles. On the other hand some

view the school as the victim of aggression rather than its provoker. Is the school really

provoking teens to act in the ways they do? It is believe, that this is not always true since we see

cases in which the violent acts are done in elementary schools where the children say they get

their examples from outside the school. So could it be that the violent offenders start at a very

young age to get influenced by their surroundings to then act upon them in the future?

Television and film violence have been the subject of the most of the imprical

investigations of the effects of media violence (Mosotti, Bowen). Many statistics support the

idea that male teenagers who had viewed a substantially greater quantity of violent programs

than males otherwise like the mis-measured characteristics and attributes committed a markedly

greater number of seriously harmful antisocial and criminal acts (Alderman). This is greatly

argued a lot because there seems to be many reports concerning the differences that might exist

between boys and girls. Exposure to violence in newspapers, comic books and theater films

were also positively associated with aggression and antisocial behavior. There are a lot of

effects that are generated from television. These can be acquired from protagonists displaying

great strength and power who defeat essentially weak villains. Violence with numerous victims

such as mass killings, violence that erupts among friends, allies or gang members. Violence that

is extreme compared to all events leading up to it and violence that is no easily dismissible as

fiction because of its great realism (Flannery).

Another Major influential aspect are the parents and the home situations teens are

brought up in. Neglected children from affluent families also express their anger through

physical violence. Increases in suicides, date violence, destruction of property, bullying,

robberies, vandalism, addictions to drugs, and homicides of ones peers suggest that the national

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pursuit of material goods is not adequately meeting the needs of youth (Flannery). In these cases

where parents are said to be involved, patterns of abuse are usually always present. There is a

transmission of violence inflicted by one generation on another. This transfer of violence occurs

when parents abuse their children, and those same children then go on to abuse others as they

become young adults (Flannery). It is very important for children to receive proper care from

their primary care givers. Any early signs observed in the children should be take into account

very seriously. They could be the linkage to what causes their futures acts.

There also exists other small factors contributing to violent acts. To specific forms of

antisocial and aggressive behavior, aggression in sports and playing, swearing and the use of bad

language, were associated with the use of violence. There was some possibility that these

associates could be explained by the seeking out of such entertainment as consequence of the

behavior in question, but the indication is that such a circumstance was not likely (NCES

webmaster @ed.gov). Being exposed to drugs and alcohol can be very harmful to teens. Much

of today s violence by young people is happening when our children are under the influence of

alcohol and other drugs (Flannery). There also seems to be another side to this. Are these teens

acting violently on purpose and have their own reasons for doing so? Violent behavior is one

way to be caught and punished, not only for the immediate act, but as a deserved outcome for

earlier transgressions for which they blame themselves (Apter, Goldstein). It seems as if they are

seeking out some attention from the people around them. It could be that the lack of attention

has caused them to feel alone and having a longing for reasons to obtain that attention.

Depression may lead to violence against others. The young person is angry with the adult world

or with peers over the perceived loss as being unjust. If the loss of self-esteem is seen to be

great, taking control of the situation through violence may be seen as the only way to gain the

respect of others again. In today s Society we can view personally how this violence is affecting

each and everyone of us.

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As stated earlier, the Columbine High School shooting, has become the long awaited

awakening we needed. Even after time has passed, that horrible day has not left our minds it is

so, that this tragedy has now claimed one more victim. At the end of October, the mother of one

of the severely wounded students could not deal with he strain and committed suicide. Another

incident occurred at Burlington, Wisconsin, where 5 students, all boys aged 15 and 16, were

arrested for conspiracy to commit murder. This happened on November 15, 1998, five months

before the Columbine tragedy. Two of the boys subsequently released as they had dropped out

of the conspiracy before the arrest. The plot to take the staff of the school hostage and kill

some of them, as well as killing 12 other children, came apart when police intervened and

arrested the boys the day before the plot was schedule to happen. Luckily this was prevented

from happening, which would of also been a tremendous tragedy

(www.angelfire./columbine.com). With the deadly results of the Columbine fresh in their minds,

many communities are no longer taking teenage threats lightly. In Texas for example, four 8th

grade boys were arrested after the police discovered bomb-making materials in he back seat and

trunk of the car the boys were in. This shows that the police are now looking at every detail to

try and protect our children from being injured.

Sadly, there are those who still think the above events are a joke. Everyday, schools all

over the country are being forced to interrupt their classes with malicious bomb threats, made be

deranged and unstable people who think is fun to cause pain, grief, fear and disruption. We

must not overlook any events that might seem irrelevant, because instead of the violence

decreasing it is only doing the opposite. Violence in he United States is increasing greatly since

the early 1960 s and has become a national public health epidemic. Crimes by young people are

no longer predominantly misdemeanors but now include the major felonies of homicide, rape,

robbery and serious assault.

The first impact of violence may be physical injury on dismemberment. Violent acts

may result in death, permanent disability, medical injury and legal expense (Flannery). Verbal

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conflict resolution, developing a range of alternative solutions for any given problem, learning to

negotiate and compromise are pro-social adaptive solutions that decrease the probability of

violence (Flannery). Talking to someone else can often help you work out your problems,

instead of finding a dangerous way out. The tool in human suffering and the risk for subsequent

violence illustrate the pain associated with both aspects of violence. In the absence of treatment,

neither aggression nor the victim is free (Apter, Goldstein). They just seem to be creating a trap

and creating more problems for themselves and others. Concrete solutions will not be found in

any tome soon because everyone is different and has a past behind them. Only explanations

from observations and events can be assumed to help find possible answers to these problems

that are affecting everyone.