

THE NEED TO ADDRESS CYBERBULLYING IN SCHOOL

by:
JERSON F. TUANG, MAEd
Head Teacher VI Bataan School of Fisheries

The holistic learning development of the students is greatly aided by having a healthy learning environment at school. Therefore, keeping students informed about their academic and extracurricular success while ensuring that they are not hindered by things like cyberbullying is a top priority for the school community. OECD (2019), students need support in developing not only knowledge and skills but also attitudes and values that can guide them towards ethical and responsible actions. Students need opportunities to expand their creative ingenuity that is helpful in advancing towards a better future.

Cyberbullying can happen anywhere through social interaction over digital devices. It is defined essentially as an extension of bullying, a phenomenon as any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomforts on others, Tokunaga (2010). Electrochromic aggression or cyberbullying is now considered as a modern form of bullying that poses a serious public health threat resulting in psychological and somatic symptoms of unclear etiology or drop in academic performance, Ferrara, P., et.al., (2018).

Literature revealed that victims of cyberbullying manifested great emotional stress, (Akcil, 2018), emotional and physiological damage, (Akbulut and Eristi, 2011), high risk of depression and suicidal ideation, (Maurya, C., et. Al., 2022), family tension and academic underperformance, (Beebe, 2010), and low commitment to academics, (Ybarra and Mitchell, 2007).

A student cannot fully develop the learning potential once hampered by problems like cyberbullying. This can be agreed by Hureya, (2012) that academic performance of students is greatly affected as it resulted in inattentiveness to schoolwork, lower grades, and even absenteeism.

In Philippines, eighty percent (80%) of young teens experienced cyberbullying, aged 13-16 have been cyberbullied through social media, about 60 percent of their counterparts in the age 7-12 suffered the same abuse, in a survey participated about 1,268 school children aged 7-13, and 1,145 aged 13-16 in `2015 conducted by the Child-care nonprofit Stairway Foundation Inc.

Since educational institutions need to establish an environment of learning that is free from discrimination and biases, it is therefore significant to provide programs or interventions where students can engage in a positive psychosocial interaction. This can be in consonance with the government mandates to mitigate problems of bullying through Republic Act No. 10627, otherwise known as Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 requiring all Elementary and Secondary Schools to adopt policies to prevent the acts of bullying in their institutions.

Cyberbullying could occur at any time on any social media site. Cyberbullying perpetrators frequently are acquainted with or even related to the victims. Thus, action might be initiated in schools to lessen cyberbullying occurrence.

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