



Teen Suicide Linked to Bullying? Or to Mental Health?

There is a strong link between bullying and suicide, as suggested recent bullying-related suicides in the US and other countries.

-www.bullyingstatistics.org

Last week a 15 year old girl from Vancouver committed suicide. Amanda Todd was a victim of cyberbullying and real time bullying and she died alone feeling worthless and hated. Her death has caused a lot of pain and sorrow and soul searching across the country. I can only try to imagine how her parents must feel.

There is plenty of evidence that bullying and suicide are linked. Victims of bullying are between 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims, according to studies conducted by Yale University. A Toronto chaplain, Diane Weber Bederman, does not look at this question from the same viewpoint.

“She didn’t kill herself because she was being bullied. The vast majority of children who are bullied don’t kill themselves. She killed herself because she was in the middle of a mental health crisis that should have been treated.”

Bederman describes Amanda as having a “textbook case of depression.” She cut herself and cried all the time and she had attempted suicide on other occasions. She treated her pain with drugs and alcohol. Bederman goes on to ask, “Why wasn’t she placed in a psychiatric unit? She would have been safe there. She
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would have felt protected. She would have received all types of therapies in one place: cognitive, talk, medication and spiritual issues. A multidisciplinary approach is the best. Amanda would have left with the tools needed to stand up for herself.”

Suicide continues to be one of the leading causes of death among children under the age of 14.
-www.bullyingstatistics.org

This is a complex question. Many studies show that being bullied can cause mental illness in children. A study done in Britain in 2009 found that children who get bullied are often less confident and more emotional than their peers who aren't victimized. Researchers found a relationship between bullying and psychotic symptoms. “The greater the severity of bullying, the stronger the link - suggests that bullying actually helped cause children’s psychotic symptoms, rather than vice-versa.”

Regardless of whether or not Amanda Todd exhibited mental health problems because of bullying, the point is she needed treatment. She was crying out for help and not enough came.

By Heather Frenette



References
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<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1273041--amanda-todd-s-death-was-more-about-mental-health-than-bullying>
Bullying and Suicide. www.bullyingstatistics.org

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You Are Invited
CMHA-Kings invites family and friends of people living with mental health issues to a consultation with Mental Health and Addiction Services of the AVDHA on Thursday, Nov 22 from 4:30-6:30 p.m., Kings Riverside Court, Kentville. See more info at Events www.kingsns.cmha.ca

Standing Up to Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is something all teens experience. It sounds like this: “C’mon. Everyone’s doing it. So why shouldn’t you?” You receive an invitation to a party where drugs and alcohol will be used. A friend of yours cuts class. You are offered a smoke. Friends engage in conversation about sex with their boyfriends or girlfriends. What is your response? Do you play along or do you take a stand for your beliefs?

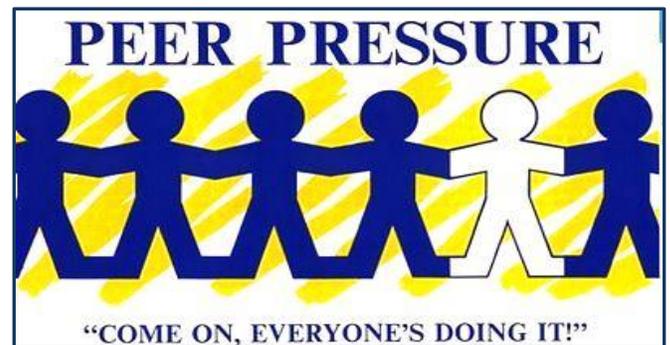
Everyone wants to belong to a group. You are likely to look for a group that is interested in the things you are. Sometimes your group might want to do things that are not good for you. They might pressure you into doing things that you do not want to do. This is peer pressure.

According to **Teens Health**, “This pressure may be expressed openly: Oh, come on, it’s just one beer, and everyone else is having one, or more indirectly, simply making beer available at the party, for instance.” Peer pressure may be subtle. The group doesn’t necessarily have to express anything in words. Their actions influence you. The pressure to give in to the group can be strong and difficult to resist. In determining what is right and what is wrong in a social situation, many people look to the group for guidance.

It is not easy to be the only person who says no, but you can do it. Knowing your feelings and beliefs about what is right and what is wrong can help you say no. It

helps if you have another peer or friend in the group that says no too.

You have heard the saying “choose your friends wisely.” If you have used good judgment to choose friends who don’t do drugs, drink alcohol, smoke, and other things that are not good for you to do, there is a good chance you will not do them either, even if others in the group do.



If the group begins to do things that make you uncomfortable, seek out other friends who have the same values as yours. If you do have difficulty resisting peer pressure, find a trustworthy person with whom you can talk. If you do make mistakes, don’t go on a guilt trip. Talk to your Mom, Dad, teacher, or counselor and they can make you feel good and help you be prepared to say no when you are faced with peer pressure the next time.

By Tony Legere

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The 2012 Tools for Life Conference & Exhibit: A Review

Horton High School hosted the seventh annual **Tools for Life Conference and Exhibit** showcasing exhibits from hundreds of groups, organizations and businesses dealing with seniors, people with disabilities and others that face barriers to education, employment and daily living as well as workshops dealing with issues of interest to these communities. Once again I had the privilege to attend and participate in this informative event.



Kings Transit provided free transportation from the front of Zellers in New Minas. The bus was almost full of people taking advantage of the free bus ride. By nine o'clock the parking lot was almost full. After registration, I attended the opening ceremonies featuring speakers James Roy and Judy Heffern of the Kings Rehabilitation Regional Centre, Vic Fleury of the Annapolis Valley School Board and Kings South MLA Ramona Jennex.

The first workshop I attended, "Understanding LD and ADHD Behaviours," was conducted by Angela Rudderham of Turning Tides. The presentation was comprehensive but rushed but she told us that we could request a copy of the presentation if desired. The next workshop was "Elephant in a Shopping Bag: Moving Forward on a Provincial Community Transit Strategy" done by Kathryn Gamache of Community Transit Nova Scotia. The presentation was well done, presenting the issues of public transit in Nova Scotia and how community members can help solve them. I have both the copy of the presentation and the official report that the presentation was based from.

My third and last workshop was "Introduction to the Culture of Autism: Supporting Adults on the Spectrum to use Strengths to Overcome Challenges" done by Carol Bowlby-Sifton of the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre and Wendy Haydon of Cambridge Community Outreach Centre. Despite being rushed as well, I found the physical differences between the autistic and neurotypical brain very interesting. The Youtube video on Carly Fleischmann, a person with non-verbal autism who learned to communicate via computers, was touching.

The exhibit area and the cafeteria area was almost full as the conference attracted over a thousand people with over 800 people registered for workshops but the exhibit area itself was open to everyone. Traffic was the big issue this year as more people meant a problem for people with mobility issues. Hopefully this would be addressed next year. I collected a lot of information from local and provincial groups that I hope to be a basis for future articles. Overall, though, the conference was great and I look forward to attending next year.

By Melinda Cadarette

<http://www.tools4life.ca/>

A Mental Health Perspective Mission Statement:

The purpose of this newsletter is to bring faith, hope and courage to members of the local mental health community of Kings County, Nova Scotia, as well as others who are involved with a mental, emotional or psychological condition.

Donations to support this newsletter and other important programs and services can be made to CMHA, 11 Opportunity Lane Suite 3 Box 10 Coldbrook NS B4R 0A5
(Cheque or money order will be accepted).

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