

Cyberbullying: A Real Discussion (The Amanda Todd Story)

TOPIC: ETHICS, ONLINE SAFETY AND SECURITY

GRADE LEVEL: 6-8, 9-12

LESSON DURATION: 50 MIN

SOFT SKILLS: EMPATHY, COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION

Introduction:

- This activity incorporates the story of Amanda Todd in order to facilitate a conversation with students about the harmful realities of cyberbullying. The teacher may feel more comfortable in having a guidance counselor lead this discussion.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will define the term cyberbullying and understand the difference between teasing and bullying.
- Students will be empowered to recognize and prevent the consequences of cyberbullying

Materials:

- Projection device
- The YouTube video regarding Amanda Todd
- Paper/pencil and/or online journal
- Internet access

Activities:

1. Begin the class by having students define cyberbullying. The discussion should include questions about the differences between cyberbullying and teasing; specific types of cyberbullying (shaming, harassment, stalking, forced sexting, etc.); stories about real life cyberbullying; action steps to respond to cyberbullying; ways to prevent cyberbullying; etc. The teacher can develop scenarios and ask for discussion. (For example; John posts a photo of Susie in which Susie thinks she looks bad-is this cyberbullying? John posts a defaced picture of Susie repeatedly on Snapchat and this behavior results in more students mocking and commenting on Susie's picture-Susie becomes too afraid to go to school-is this cyberbullying?).
2. If the teacher feels comfortable, ask students to share some real-life examples of cyberbullying. Discuss the possible impacts of cyberbullying (depression, withdrawal, running away, drop in grades, changing peer sets, suicide, etc.). Discuss the reasons why someone may be the bully (lack of self-esteem, making up for one's own weaknesses, self-gratification out of putting down others; modeling behavior of adults; sarcasm as a defense mechanism). Lastly,

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discuss with students the appropriate responses to cyberbullying (report to an adult; handle the issue face to face; block the agitator; display empathy; think before you respond; keep all evidence of bullying, etc.) Statistics on ways to respond to cyberbullying are available [here \(cyberbullying.org\)](http://www.cyberbullying.org)

3. Show students the [Amanda Todd clip](#). As they watch, have students write down their thoughts.
4. Share the thoughts as a class. Do not require students to share that appear uncomfortable.
5. To end the activity/segment; direct students to the online activity in which they reflect on their personal online actions. A “quiz” can be found at http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/tweens/are_you_a_cyberbully.html

Enrichment/Follow-up:

1. Have students write a thought piece on cyberbullying. After hearing the discussion and watching the video, allow them to journal their thoughts in a private manner.
2. Have students work in groups to develop an anti- cyberbullying PSA. Work with school administration to have the PSA’s broadcast on the daily announcements or have local community members come in to judge the PSA’s.
3. Have students develop anti-cyberbullying posters. Display the posters throughout the school or classroom.
4. Work with a local elementary school and have the students present information on cyberbullying to an elementary school class.
5. Using the website <https://cyberbullying.org/bullying-laws> have students explore cyberbullying laws in their home state. Students should read the law and also understand the punishment that can follow.
6. Institute a “Random Acts of Kindness” Day. This can be done in a variety of ways. One method used at the high school level involved each student selecting five individuals from a predetermined category (1-family member; 2-staff member; 3-friend; 4-random adult in the building that student does not know well; 5-random student in the building that student does not know well). The following day, each student was asked to bring in 5 treats of their choosing along with a note with an inspirational quote, message, or display of kindness. During the class period, students were dismissed throughout the school to share the treat and note with the 4 individuals in the building. When they went home, they were asked to share the kindness with their designated family member. Although simple, this activity shows students the positive impact they can have on a person with minimal effort.

