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Youth violence is a revolving issue in our society. Generation after generation is influenced by it. It is very hard not to be affected or influenced by youth violence. Everywhere in our media there are stories of shootings and dangerous events that have involved a youth to either get injured or killed. Some of these events are school associated, but most of them are not. Violent deaths that are school associated accounted for less than one percent in homicides and suicides of kids in the age range 5 – 18. A lot of these killings are tied back to home issues in that child's life. Divorce, fighting and abuse are all factors that can contribute to these violent acts. Many of these killings and violent events could have been prevented by the right understanding in what is going on in the perpetrator's and/or victim's life.

I have been influenced by youth violence directly and personally. I was bullied and beaten down by my peers. I have been punched and kicked, but I have also been assaulted by words. A story was spread around my elementary school about me and it was disgusting and hurtful. I heard this story from one of my classmates, but she did not use my name. She used a "code name," as they called it. I later found out that the story was really about me and I was hurt so horribly that I cried for 3 days. I felt like no one cared about me and I was not cared about or loved. People like my mom and siblings told me not to listen to the people who came up with the story and that I am beautiful and loved.

I finally listened to them and started to believe that I was loved and I did have a purpose on this world. I believed this until I started middle school. I had just moved to a new house and area before I started middle school, so I did not know anybody at my new school. I made friends with people, but one person in particular I should have not made friends with. I learned this the hard way. This person started to bully me not only verbally but also physically. This person would punch me and kick me and slap me. I put up with it all because he told me if I told anyone that I would regret it. So, I kept it to myself. I should not have though, because I started to have suicidal thoughts and the feeling of no one caring about me or loving me came back. I never committed suicidal actions but I still always thought about it. I would try to imagine how much the people around me, lives would improve if I was not on this earth anymore. I then started to get text messages from this person trying to beat me down and abuse me. This person would tell me that none of my friends really cared for me or even liked me, and that they are only my friends out of pity. This person would also tell me that my own parents are embarrassed to be my parents because I was not beautiful and a good person. After these texts started coming, I started to cry myself to sleep every night. I also began to fear going to school. I was afraid of what this person might say to me or do to me that day. That's when I decided enough is enough and I told my mom. She took me up to the school and we talked to the guidance counselor. We then went on from there and talked to the police officer. The officer asked me if I still had the text, but I didn't. I was so mad that I did not want to see them so I deleted them. I now know that if this happens again, that I need to save everything the perpetrator sends me. The school took over from there and took care of the issue at hand.

Being so affected by youth violence, I tried to come up with ideas to help prevent it from happening to other people. Nobody deserves to think that they are not loved or cared for or that they are not beautiful. Everybody is beautiful in their own way. So now, when I see people getting hurt or their spirits trying to be beaten down, I help that person. I direct them to the right people to talk to about what has happened to them. And, if they need help with their journey back to recovery from the abuse, then they can know that I will be there for them. I also direct them to the right people to tell about the issue so it can be brought to a stop. But, one way anybody can help prevent it is that if someone thinks someone else is being bullied or abused, they can reach out to that person and try to understand their situation and help in a way that they can. The victims are not the only ones that need help. The perpetrators need to be understood as well. They are committing these vicious crimes for a reason. If people see someone who looks violent or is having issues at home or in school that might cause them to do something they might regret, try to get them help and direct them to the right people that will help them get through their problems without being judged. Some people are not good with talking directly with people, so another way to stop youth violence is: people can make blogs or websites on youth violence. These people could post how it has affected them and what they think others could do to help prevent it.

Youth violence is always going to be in the media and our society, but we can help make it less common and violent. There is something everyone can do to help prevent it because everyone has been affected by it. The devastating tragedy that happened in Connecticut affected everyone, whether it was within your family or not. That event should not have taken place, but it sadly did. So, that is one major reason why this society and everyone in it needs to do everything in their power to prevent something like this tragedy to ever happen again. Students in school that see violent things happening need to tell a trusted adult and get the people involved the help they need. It is in our hands to keep devastating tragedies from happening. Whether it is the death of one child or the death of an abundance of children, it affects us and our society. So, don't let them happen.