

Parent Presentation Overview

There will be a brief introduction of me usually performed by an administrator or a PTA member. I will provide a script. I will then welcome the parents and community members and thank them for taking the time in their busy lives to come and hear this presentation. I explain right up front that this presentation is very different than what their child saw or will see. I further explain the student presentation is a storytelling format that is far more effective than a power point type approach that lectures them about the proper use of technology and to not bully. My goal with the students is to reach their minds through their hearts and allow them to receive the valuable lessons with a more emotional connection. I then share Ryan's story in a very concise way so I will have more time to get into the lessons learned by a parent in this predicament using the typical power point format approach.

The table of contents of my presentation is the following:

- Ryan's Story
- Lessons Learned
- What Is Bullying?
- What is Cyberbullying?
- Current Social Media Teen Issues
- Depression and Suicide Statistics
- Recommendations

I'm continually updating the contents of this presentation, especially the social media concerns because there are new ones every school year. Parents will get a clear message they need to step it up regarding limiting access and monitoring use. I always stress to parents that there should be zero cyberbullying cases in grades 6 and lower if parents are doing their job and adhering to the COPPA (Children's On-line Protection Act) law. That law was passed in Congress in 1998 prohibiting websites, at which personal data is collected, allowing minors (under 13) to sign up. I always stress there has to be a partnership with the school to address these issues and parents should not just toss this one over the fence and expect the schools to do the parenting job for them. Had we been monitoring and limiting Ryan's access during the middle school years, we feel his depression and mental health issues would not have been exacerbated. He spent a lot of unhealthy time behind a closed bedroom door trying to deal with the bullying and getting awful advice from peers. More face time and conversation with Mom and Dad would have been far healthier.

The overall presentation will last the fully scheduled 90 minutes. I do not have a public Q&A with the audience because I found in the past, too often, a highly emotionally charged parent would get right into their own child's situation and create an uncomfortable moment. It's not appropriate for all involved, in particular for the school officials who cannot explain their past decisions/positions publicly due to FERPA restrictions. Instead, I tell the audience that I will stick around if they want to come up to me with a question or feel a need to share something with me.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at johnhalligan@ryansstory.org