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## OPINION: Combating college bullying

Anna Dollar, Correspondent Oct 16, 2016

Everyone has dealt with a bully at some point in their life, whether it be in person or online. According to the website, Do Something, over 3.2 million students are bullied each year, while 17 percent of all students claim to have been bullied two to three times or more a month. Of course, with a campus and student body as large as NC State's, it's difficult to constantly seek out someone to purposely bully them. However, this does not mean that bullying doesn't happen or that it stops after high school. A USA Today College article states that 22 percent of college students reported that they were victims of online bullying, while 15 percent reported that they were victims of traditional bullying. Surprisingly enough, 15 percent of students reported that they had witnessed a professor bullying a student or multiple students.

Cyberbullying is the most common form of bullying for students nowadays because it is extremely easy to sit behind a screen and ridicule someone. Even though the app Yik Yak seems to be losing popularity amongst NC State students, it is still a well-used app for many other colleges. According to an article published by "The Fire," the problem with the application is that it has caused concerns about harassment. The article continues to list other reasons why the app is "banned" on many college campuses, including threats to the student body or individual groups. Other social media sites that are notorious for reporting cases of bullying are Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and, as our campus has recently seen, GroupMe.

Earlier this week, I was scrolling through my Facebook news feed when I came across a post about a girl that had been bullied over having pink hair. Someone had taken a picture of the pink-haired girl and uploaded it to Facebook with a crude caption thinking that the girl in the picture would never see it. Unfortunately, the pink-haired girl did see it

and shared it to her own page which caused an uproar amongst her friends and family. However, the way her friends and family “defended” her was completely unnecessary. The phrase, “fight fire with fire,” came to mind instantly as I was reading the comments. Instead of listing all of the wonderful qualities about the pink-haired girl and standing up for her, the friends and family of the girl went straight to attacking the original poster. With comments like, “Wow, she’s an ugly slut,” to, “I hope she loses her job and dies a slow death.” The commenters even went on to threaten the original poster’s children. Screenshots were posted of actual hateful messages that had been sent to the original poster as if to validate that they were being a good friend to the pink-haired girl by attacking another.

I completely understand the actions of the friends and family of the pink-haired girl because someone that they love and care for was being ridiculed over something so harmless. However, I do not agree with the way they went about handling their outrage. I don’t want to say that there is a right way to defend someone, but the way they responded definitely wasn’t it.

The reasons behind bullying in college can span anywhere between race, sexual orientation, gender identification, and socioeconomic status. Brian Van Brunt, President of the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association, says that students in their first year of college are more susceptible to being bullied. No offense to my first-year students, but it’s really easy to tell who is new to campus and who is not. This makes it simple for bullies to target their victims, which is absolutely ridiculous because those same upperclassmen bullies were in the same place as the first-year students at one point. Van Brunt says that those involved in Greek life are more susceptible to experience bullying as well. Hazing is illegal, but that does not mean that it doesn’t happen. Even if the situation doesn’t go far enough to be considered hazing, it is still bullying.

Unfortunately, bullying is not going to end anytime soon. So, if you or someone you care about is a victim of bullying whether it be from a family member, friend, peer, professor or from someone online, report it. If the first person you report it to does not listen, continue to report it. Talk to your Resident Advisor, Resident Director, someone at the

Counseling Center, someone with campus police or anyone else. Someone is bound to listen because you are important. There is absolutely no reason why bullying should still be an occurrence, especially among college students and adults.