

Katy was a 10th grader at a high school in Minnesota during the early 1990's. At the time, schools were not required to have sexual harassment policies to protect students.

Story:

"You're such a nice girl", a senior guy told Katy Lyle, who was a sophomore at the time. "Do you know what's written about you on the bathroom wall?"

Katie Lyle is a slut.

Katy Lyle sucked my _____.

Here's Katy's phone number.

These are some of the things written on the walls of the 2nd floor boys bathroom. Two walls covered with obscenities about Katy. The guys called it "Katy's Stall". When Katy heard this, her heart sank and a sadness fell over her that wouldn't lift. She had loved school until then, but at that moment she began to hate it. "I was really shocked when I found out", Katy says. "It felt like a big knife stuck in my stomach. I felt totally stepped on. I felt violated almost, that people were writing these things and thinking these things about me, really gross things."

How do you think Katy was feeling?

Morning meant a struggle. Her mother called into her bedroom but Katy never wanted to go to school.

"Oh Katy, are you as good as everyone says?", was the greeting on the bus. The Lyle's lived way out from town and Katy would laugh off the comments for the hour and fifteen minute ride to and from school. She cried everyday. She was terrified to go to class. She would burst into tears when she got home. She thought about taking spray cleaner to school but was afraid she would get in trouble for going into the boy's bathroom.

What are ways Katy may have acted when she was at school? At home?

To Katy, this was the worst two years of her life. Gina, Katy's best friend, noticed Katy went from being outgoing to withdrawn. Whenever, Gina would ask Katy to do something with a group of friends, Katy would say no because she thought everyone was talking about her. Katy started to complain of stomach pains and headaches. She wondered which boys at school had read the walls, wondered what people thought when they heard her name.

What can we do to help a friend who is sexually harassed?

Ending:

Katy finally told her parent's about the sexual harassment. Katy and her parents reported what was going on to the Principal. He said it was almost the end of the year and they would be cleaning and painting the bathrooms over the Summer, so that should take care of the problem.

Over the Summer, Katy thought everyone would forget about the nasty stories and rumors and things would be alright. However, when school started in the Fall, students took advantage of the clean walls to start writing things all over again. Katy went back to the Principal for help. The Principal was not interested in finding out who was writing the graffiti. Instead, he told Katy he could not post a custodian in the bathroom to clean it every 2 minutes and she would just have to deal with it. Katy and her parents decided this was not good enough and sued the school district. Katy's case finally came to court after 2 years. The court agreed with Katy and said school's must keep students safe and that includes protecting them from sexual harassment in school. It is because of Katy's case that schools are now required to have a sexual harassment policy to protect students.