

Cyber Bullying: Bullying in the Digital Age

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Teens and Technology Use

- Teens spend an average of 27 hours online each week.
- Technology teens have or use:
 - 91% have an e-mail address
 - 73% have a cell phone
 - 60% have an IM Screen-name
 - 72% have a social networking profile

Cox Communications Teen Online & Wireless Safety Survey, 2009

www.cyberbullyhelp.com

If you lose access to technology, how do you feel?

- **Depressed**
- **Sad**
- **Angry**
- **Disconnected**
- **Isolated**
- **Lonely**
- **Lost**




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Sharing personal information on social networking sites

DOES NOT ACTUALLY RAISE TEENS RISK FOR VICTIMIZATION

Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Ybarra, 2008, American Psychologist




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According to research from the Crimes Against Children Research Center:

What actions place youth most at risk online?

- Talking about sex with strangers – particularly in chat rooms about sex and romance
- Agreeing to meet with someone they met online.
- Engaging in harassment of others online

Youth are at greatest risk from known peers rather than from strangers



Enhancing Child Safety and Online Technologies
Research Summary,
The Berkman Center of Harvard University

SEXTING

Slang term for using cell phones or webcams to distribute self-created nude or semi-nude images
(sex + text = sext)

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Cox Communications Teen Online and Wireless Survey, Dec. 2009

-Harris Interactive survey of 655 teens, 13 to 18 years old

- 9% of teens “sent a sext”
- 17% received a “sext”
- 3% forwarded a “sext”

What’s going on here?

Pew Internet Report: Teens and Sexting, Dec. 2009

- 4% of teens (12 – 17) have sent sexually suggestive photos
- **96% have NOT sent such photos!**
- *But of those who did, most felt “pressure” to send the photos.*



Talking to Teens About Sexting

- It could embarrass me or someone else.
- It gives someone else power over me.
- It could hurt my future career or opportunities.
- It could be against the law.

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Bullying and harassment,
most often by peers -

Are the most frequent threats that minors face, both online and offline.

Enhancing Child Safety and Online Technologies, Final Report of the Internet Safety Technical Task Force, 2009

Three Key Components of Bullying Behavior

1. Involves an aggressive behavior
2. Typically involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time
3. Imbalance of power or strength

© The Olweus Bullying Prevention Group, 2007


Cyber Bullying Defined

“Bullying through e-mail, instant messaging, in a chat room, on a website, or through digital messages or images sent to a cell phone.”


Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2008

Examples of Cyber Bullying

- Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages.



Examples of Cyber Bullying




- Distributing or posting derogatory information about another.

“I wish you would get in a car accident and split your head in two!...How does it feel to be so hated?”

“Is that a Halloween mask or your face?”


Examples of Cyber Bullying

- Posting or sending digitally altered photos.
- Impersonating another and sending offensive messages.
- Tricking someone into revealing embarrassing information and forwarding to others.




Examples of Cyber Bullying

- Recording and posting beatings
- Some forms of sexting
- New platforms - Formspring.me



Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

1. Cyber Bullying is involving increasing numbers of children and youth.


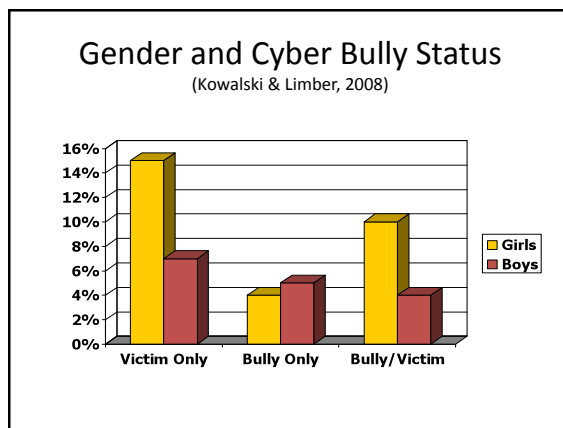


Teens Perceptions About Cyber Bullying – Cox Communications 2009

% strongly/somewhat agree	Boys	Girls
Bullying online is a serious problem with today's youth.	60%	76%
If someone is caught bullying online there are serious legal consequences.	45%	54%
There should be stricter rules about online bullying	70%	80%


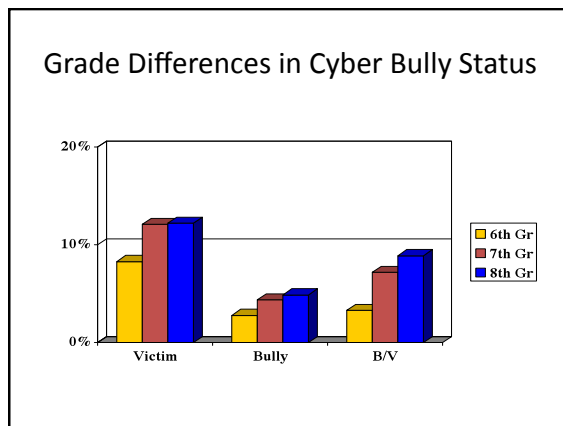
Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

2. Girls are more likely to be involved in cyber bullying than boys.

Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

3. Engagement in cyber bullying increases significantly among middle school-aged students.

Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

4. There are similarities and differences between cyber bullying and “traditional” bullying.



Cyber Bullying and “Traditional Bullying”

Similar characteristics:

- Aggressiveness
- Power imbalance
- Repetitiveness

Cyber Bullying and “Traditional Bullying”

Different characteristics:

- Anonymity
- Disinhibition
- Accessibility
- Punitive fears
- Bystanders

Relationship Between Cyber Bully Status & Traditional Bullying Experience (Kowalski & Limber, in submission)

Cyber Bullying Status	Traditional Victim	Traditional Bully
Victim	61%	39%
Bully	39%	55%
Bully/Victim	64%	66%
Not Involved	33%	25%

Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

5. Initial findings suggest that cyber bullying may seriously affect children.



Possible Effects of Cyber Bullying Kowalski and Limber, 2008


- Study of 931 students in 6th – 12th grades
- Findings:
 - Children who were cyber “bully/victims” had the highest rates of
 - anxiety, depression and school absences
 - Children not involved in cyber bullying had
 - highest self-esteem and grades and the fewest symptoms of health problems

Hinduju and Patchin: Bullying, Cyber bullying and Suicide, in press

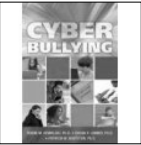
- Experience with cyber bullying is associated with an increase in suicidal ideation.
- Cyber bullying victims were twice as likely to have attempted suicide.
- Cyber bullying offenders were 1.5 times more likely to have attempted suicide.

(than those who were not victims or offenders)
accepted for publication in Archives of Suicide Research.

Phoebe Prince




15 year old teen bullied and cyber bullied



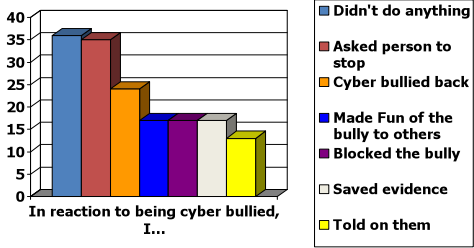
“My son was an early casualty and his death an early warning to our society that we’d better pay attention to how our children use technology. We need to study this new societal problem with a sense of urgency and great diligence.”
 John Halligan

Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

6. Children’s responses to cyber bullying are often counter-productive.



Reactions of Victim (Kowalski & Limber, in preparation)



Reaction	Percentage
Didn't do anything	~38
Asked person to stop	~35
Cyber bullied back	~25
Made Fun of the bully to others	~18
Blocked the bully	~18
Saved evidence	~15
Told on them	~12

School Safety Issues

- youth who reported being targeted by Internet harassment were eight times more likely than all other youth to concurrently report carrying a weapon to school in the past 30 days.
- Ybarra et al. Journal of Adolescent Health, December 2007, Youth Violence and Electronic Media (www.jahonline.org)

Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

- 7. Adults aren't doing enough to address cyber bullying.

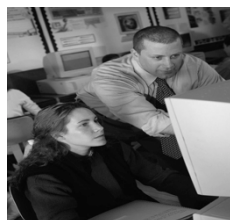


Focus Group Themes

- Few parents and educators are talking with children about cyber bullying.
- When asked if parents are talking to them about cyber bullying, students primarily share messages about internet safety.

Kowalski et al., 2008

What Can Educators Do to Prevent Cyber Bullying?



1. Incorporate Into Existing Bullying Prevention Programs

- Include cyber bullying prevention messages into school-wide bullying prevention efforts.



2. Assess Cyber Bullying

- Use an anonymous questionnaire to determine prevalence.
- Look for age and gender trends.
- Collect more detailed information in informal group discussions.



3. Provide Staff Training


- All staff should be familiar with the basics.
- In-depth training for key staff
 - Administrators
 - Counselors
 - Media specialists

National Cyberethics, Cybersafety, and Cybersecurity Baseline Study-
www.staysafeonline.org

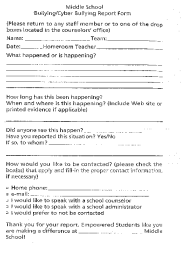
- 75% of educators do not feel comfortable discussing cyber bullying.

4. Develop Clear Rules and Policies About Cyber Bullying

- Incorporate into existing “student use of technology” policy and bullying policies.
- Distribute information about the policies to staff, parents, students




5. Encourage Reporting of Cyber Bullying




6. Spend Class Time on Cyber Bullying

- Incorporate discussions into class meetings on bullying & peer relations.
 - What is cyber bullying?
 - What are the schools' rules?
 - How to respond to cyber bullying
 - Bystanders and cyber bullying
 - Online “netiquette”
 - monitoring our online reputation



Prevention Resources on Cyber Bullying Available from Hazelden.org

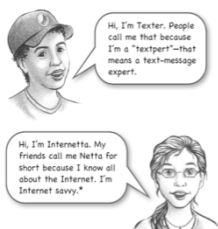
- Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum for Grades 6-12
- Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum for Grades 3-5
- Cyber Bullying: Bullying in the Digital Age



Goals of the Curriculum

- Increase student, educator, and parental awareness of cyber bullying
- Equip students with skills and resources to treat each other respectfully when using cyber technologies
- Give students information about how to get help if they experience or witness cyber bullying.
- Equip students with skills to use cyber technologies in positive ways

Five-Session Curriculum



- Each session is 40 minutes – once a week
- Texter and Internetta are role models who share their experiences helping their friends
- Each session also includes a game or activity

Overview of the Eight Sessions

- 50 minutes in length
- Some separation of activities for middle school and high school
- Hands-on activities
- Use of peer leaders
- Middle school sessions 1-5
 - Use of journal entries by fictional ms students
- High School sessions 1-5
 - Stories based on events in the news
- Sessions 6-8
 - Small group projects to create positive social networking sites



7. Use Students as Experts

- Youth are more knowledgeable than many adults
- Youth involvement sends an important message

8. Build Strong Parent/School Partnerships

- Host parent programs at the school on cyber bullying. Post information on your school website.
- Send home printed materials on cyber bullying for parents.
- Have a contact person at the school who is knowledgeable about cyber bullying and can assist parents with their concerns.



Parent/Guardian Materials



- Parent/guardian letter
- Useful handouts such as Internet Safety Tips and the Glossary of Cyber Terms
- Homework assignment to be done with parent or guardian

Intervention in Cases of Cyber Bullying

- Notify parents of all involved children
- Share concerns with other adults at school
- Provide tips about possible responses and the removal of offensive online material
- Contact police in serious cases
- School discipline?
 - substantial interference with instruction/operations
 - hostile environment (objective as well as subjective)
- N. Willard, CRSIU
- Referrals to mental health resources
- Informal resolution

“Bullied Girl Alone No More”

“She finds comfort in letters from hundreds of strangers, a campaign begun by Mill Valley sisters.”



San Francisco Chronicle
May 23, 2007



For More Information

- www.cyberhelp.com
- www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
- www.hazelden.org
- www.olweus.org