Cyberbullying: a workshop for parents

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Cyberbullying: a workshop for parents

Abstract
There are many advantages to the new technology that is flooding the American way of life. However, with the good also comes the bad. Cyber-bullying is one example of the negative side of our ever-changing technology. Cyber-bullying can be very devastating for all people involved (Campbell, 2005). It affects the victim, the bully, family, and friends. With cyber-bullying on the rise, even more children will be affected in the future and the effects of this type of bullying will become more widespread.

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Cyber Bullying: A Workshop for Parents

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This Research Paper by: Erin Jackson

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Head, Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Postsecondary Education

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Cyber Bullying

Description of Cyber Bullying

Internet use is on the rise in American homes and in American schools. Students' access to computers and other technology such as cell phones has increased in the past years and continues to rise as the United States becomes a more technologically advanced nation (Keith & Martin, 2005). Ninety-nine percent of teens between the ages of 16-18 report using the internet and 91% of teens ages 12-15 use the internet. With this increase in internet use among youth in America, a new trend in bullying has arrived (Keith & Martin, 2005).

Belsey (as cited in Keith & Martin, 2005) defined cyber-bullying as bullying through the use of electronic communication means such as computers, pagers, cell phones, websites, etc. Cyber-bullying is purposeful, recurring, aggressive, and is meant to hurt others. This definition provides a general overview of what cyber-bullying is, but there are several forms of cyber-bullying. Harassment, flaming, cyberstalking, outing, and exclusion are just a few words that describe ways a child can be bullyed over the internet or through text messaging (Bamford, 2004).

Prevalence

Cyber-bullying is a fairly new phenomenon and research on the topic is still new. However, the literature suggests that cyber-bullying is definitely affecting our children and our schools. A study on bullying (Li, 2005) found 54% of 7th graders surveyed had been victims of usual face-to-face bullying. Among this 54% over one quarter of them also were victims of cyber-bullying. Also, 15% of these students admitted to bullying others using the internet or some form of electronic communication. The majority (40.9%) of these students used multiple forms of electronic communication such as chat rooms, e-mail, and cell phones. Another survey, conducted by I-SAFE America, found that 57% of the 1,566 students surveyed had
experience some form of cyber-bullying and about one fourth of these students stated it occurred regularly (Keith & Martin, 2005).

### Symptoms of the Issue

There are many advantages to the new technology that is flooding the American way of life. People are able to communicate more easily and children can use the computer for educational purposes. Many people use a computer or other forms of technology everyday for work or school and are able to use them appropriately. However, with the good also comes the bad. Cyber bullying is one example of the negative side of our ever-changing technology. Cyber-bullying can be very devastating for all people involved (Campbell, 2005). It affects the victim, the bully, family, and friends. With cyber-bullying on the rise, even more children will be affected in the future and the effects of this type of bullying will become more widespread.

Cyber-bullying can be hard to detect for several reasons. A lot of cyber-bullying happens at home. Many parents see computers and technology as tools for everyday use while their children see computers and technology as a way to stay connected with their friends (Strom & Strom, 2004). Because of this gap between parents and children it can be difficult for parents to detect if their child is bullying or being bullied. There are some things parents can do to monitor a child’s use of the computer. Parents can keep the computer in a common area such as the living room where it is easily accessible and easy to walk by. Parents should talk with children about appropriate and inappropriate use of computers and keep an eye on what is happening. If a parent suspects his or her child is being bullied, openly communicating concerns can be beneficial (Bamford, 2004).

Most cyber-bullying is done at home, but the effects can carry over into the school community. Victims of bullying can develop psychological and physical problems associated
with being bullied. Some common psychological problems include depression, low-self esteem, and social anxiety. All of these can affect the performance of students in a school setting and can cause students to become fearful of school because students are unsure of who is bullying them (Greene, 2003).

A major issue associated with cyber-bullying is anonymity. When using the internet, students may feel more freedom to say anything when communicating with others. Often, this can lead to more hurtful things being said. When students are able to bully people without revealing their identity, students may not feel as responsible for their actions and how those actions affect others (Sparling, 2004). Covell (2005) stated, “The power differential that is normally present between bully and victim is not present with electronic bullying. Websites and screen names provide anonymity to the bully” (p. 31). The anonymity of cyber-bullying also makes it more difficult to track who is behind the attacks and can make it more difficult to prevent them or stop them (HRSA, 2005).

Gender Differences

Cyber-bullying is very comparable to traditional bullying when it comes to gender differences. Boys self-report bullying more than girls do and usually boys will threaten physically while girls will attack psychologically (Meadows, 2005). Females are often the victims of cyber-bullying. A lot of the bullying received by females is in the form of harassment, either sexual or name-calling. However, females are also emerging as instigators and bullies on the internet. Females are usually seen as more quiet or submissive and the anonymity of the internet allows them to retaliate against the bullies. This is different from traditional bullying because males are usually the instigators or bullies (Shariff & Gouin, 2005).
Interventions

Cyber-bullying has a major impact on schools but it is a difficult area to address because most of the bullying happens outside of school or off school grounds. With the increase in the numbers of students that cyber-bullying is affecting, schools are beginning to implement programs and educate teachers and other school staff about the subject (Campbell, 2005).

Greene (2003) suggested the first step is to change the school climate. If the climate of the school suggests that bullying in any form is unacceptable, a school can begin to make some changes. Some key ideas that Greene suggested are forming open communication between students and teachers, establishing a way to report bullies in an appropriate and friendly manner, and educating students on bullying.

Greene (2003) discussed two other methods that can be used by counselors to handle bullying. These methods, "the no blame approach" (p. 298) and "the method of shared concern" (p. 298) both utilize individual and small group counseling sessions. Both approaches avoid punishment for the bully and the bystanders but strive to communicate empathy between the bullies and bystanders towards the victims. The other part of these approaches is to create social support for the victims.

Conclusion

It is evident that the issue of cyber-bullying is only going to increase and grow in and out of schools. As educators, having an understanding of the issue and continuing to learn more about what can be done will be important in the prevention of cyber-bullying and in helping the bullies and victims.
References


Pew Internet & American Life Project, Teens and Technology: Youths are leading the transition to a fully wired and mobile nation, July 2005.


Cyber-Bullying: An Introduction

What Does Cyber-Bullying Look Like?

Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging (IM), defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others

Types of Cyber-bullying
Bamford, 2004

- **Anonymity**: comments in a chat room can’t be traced to one person’s identity
- **Flaming**: a heated argument usually including vulgar language. Usually this occurs in a public area such as a chat room or discussion board
- **Harassment**: offensive messages aimed at an individual or group
- **Outing**: a public display, posting or forwarding of personal communication such as e-mails
- **Exclusion**: designation of who members of the “in” group are and excluding others. Usually this is done among girls
- **Pornography**:

Quiz: What do you know about Internet Lingo?

http://www.cyberbullying.ca/

True Stories of Cyber-Bullying

I have contacted Bill Belser by email and am still waiting for a response.
Day Two: Talking to Your Child

**Warning Signs**  
Keith and Martin, 2005
- Excessive amounts of time spent on the computer
- Trouble sleeping or nightmares
- Depressed feelings or crying for no reason
- Mood swings
- Feeling sick or ill
- Anti-social behaviors
- Falling behind in school work

**How to Talk to Your Child**  
Bamford, 2004
- Open communication
- Talk about good and bad computer use
- Give your child the skills to handle dangerous situation while on the internet

**How can you Protect Yourself or Your Child from Cyber-Bullying?**  
Deloyer, 2005
- Don't give out personal information
- Question what you read not all the information is true
- Be polite to others online
- Refrain for sending messages to others when you are angry
- If you don't know who the message is from don't open it
- Trust your instincts
- Turn off your computer and spend time doing something else

**What if Your Child is Being Cyber-Bullied?**  
Deloyer, 2005
- Don’t reply to messages from the bully
- Tell someone: a parent, teacher, school administrator
- Inform your ISP (internet service provider)
- Let the local police know
- Keep the messages you receive as evidence
- Do not make plans to meet anyone from the internet
Day Three: How Can You Keep Your Child Safe?

Basic Internet Safety
Bamford, 2004

- Keep computer in an open area where you can easily monitor your child's activities
- Consistently check with your child to see what they are doing
- Form rules for computer use and enforce them in your home

Who Can Help You?

- Local Police
  - Keep evidence of bullying
- School Personnel
  - What are school policies?
  - Talk with the counselor, teachers, and administrators
Cyber-Bullying: A Workshop for Parents
Part 1

Presented by Erin Jackson
Agenda for Workshop

- Day One
  - 7:00pm- Workshop Begins
  - 7:20- 7:30- Group Discussions on Cyber-Bullying
  - 8:00-8:15- Time for Questions
  - 8:15- Closing

- Day Two: Talking to Your Child

- Day Three: What Can You Do?
True Stories of Cyber-Bullying

- Feathers in the Wind
Discussion

- How much do you know about the internet?
- What concerns do you have regarding your children and the internet?
- How much do you know about internet safety?
- What do you want to learn about cyber-bullying?
What is Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying "involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging (IM), defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others" (p. 8).

Statistics

- 57% of the 1,566 students surveyed had experience some form of cyber-bullying and about one fourth of these students stated it occurred regularly
- 54% of 7th graders surveyed had been victims of usual face-to-face bullying
- 15% of these students admitted to bullying others using the internet or some form of electronic communication
- The majority (40.9%) of these students used multiple forms of electronic communication such as chat rooms, e-mail, and cell phones

Statistics

- 21 million (87%) kids ages 12-17 use the internet
- 11 million (51%) use the internet daily
- 84% of teens own some type of digital media device
  - computer
  - cell phone
  - PDA (palm pilot)

Pew Internet & American Life Project, *Teens and Technology: Youth are leading the transition to a fully wired and mobile nation*, July 2005.
Types of Communication

- Instant Messaging (IM)
- Chat Rooms
- Blogs or Social Networks
- E-Mail

Instant Messaging

One-on-one chat
On all the time
Free, instant download
Can be accessed on any computer
Groups of friends can “chat”
Share pictures or music

IM Risks

Strangers can contact your kids
It’s hard to monitor
Kids spend too much time on it
Online Profiles that are searchable
Trouble with peers/school
Cyber-bullying
Spam

• **IM Parent Tips**

Check screen names and profile and discuss good choices

Know your child’s password

Use parental controls and other settings and preferences

Stay involved/talk to other parents

Use log feature with child

---

Blogs & Social Networks

Myspace, Xanga, Facebook
Fun for kids to talk about with friends
Show off pictures
Identity tool
"Like working on a yearbook"

Retrieved June 29, 2006 from
http://www.childrenspartnership.org
Blogs & Social Network Risks

Strangers

Privacy issues, such as photo distribution

Risks to reputation

Blogs & Social Networks Tips

Limit blogs

Create a blog with your teen, making sure no personal information is online and discussing content

Discourage the posting of any photos—they can be copied and used by anyone

Make sure they know you’ll be one of their “friends”

Chat

Many participants "talking" at same time
All participants see each message
Monitored & unmonitored
Free and easy to access
Feels anonymous

Chat Risks

Higher risk child will reveal identification that can personally identify him/her

Chat rooms and “one-on-one” conversation flow easily—to offline private space

Unmonitored chat can have language and sexual content

Predators

Chat Tips

Don’t allow chat rooms
Only allow buddy chat
Only allow chat in moderated environment
Teach your children not to give out any personal information
Teach your child to never meet new online friends offline without parent or adult
Set rules and monitor carefully

Electronic Mail
Message sent from one address to another
Can include pictures, sound, video, or text attachments
Software or Web-based

E-mail Risks

Spam (junk mail)

Not private: Can easily be distributed to “whole world”

Computer viruses

Bullying

School or social trouble

E-mail Tips

Have different accounts for different levels of privacy

Teach children to do the following:
Protect passwords
Guard personal information
Never open e-mails or attachments from an unknown person
Delete chain letters
Remember that e-mail can be shared widely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAT ABBREVIATIONS</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFAIK</td>
<td>As far as I know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASAP</td>
<td>As soon as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBL</td>
<td>Be back later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBS</td>
<td>Big big smile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4BT</td>
<td>Back at the keyboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4BT</td>
<td>Be back in bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4UL</td>
<td>Be back much later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4UL</td>
<td>Be back soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4UL</td>
<td>Big evil grin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4UL</td>
<td>Boyfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4UL</td>
<td>Be back now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRB</td>
<td>Big grin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRR</td>
<td>Belly laughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRR</td>
<td>Be right back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRR</td>
<td>Be right back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4UL</td>
<td>But then again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRT</td>
<td>By the way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRW</td>
<td>Bursting with laughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRWTHINK</td>
<td>But what the heck do I know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSG</td>
<td>Chuckle &amp; grin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CID</td>
<td>Crying in disgrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CID</td>
<td>Continued (in my) next post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Chat post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRST</td>
<td>Crying real big tears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRST</td>
<td>Chuckle, snicker, grin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU</td>
<td>See you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU</td>
<td>Chuckle, snicker, grin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVU or CULRER</td>
<td>See you later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVU or CULRER</td>
<td>See you later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVU</td>
<td>See you online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4DU</td>
<td>Do I know you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAT ABBREVIATIONS</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EYS</td>
<td>Evil grin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMT</td>
<td>Excuse me for butting in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOR</td>
<td>End of message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOT</td>
<td>End of thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGF</td>
<td>For good measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAQ</td>
<td>Frequently asked question(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>Fingers crossed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIM</td>
<td>First in, here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIL</td>
<td>Tell it like it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL2UL</td>
<td>Talk to you later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMI</td>
<td>Too much information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THT</td>
<td>&quot;At next time&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPCA</td>
<td>&quot;Tell me please once again&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOY</td>
<td>Thinking of you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTR</td>
<td>The powers that be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIU</td>
<td>To ta for now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HYSIS</td>
<td>Thought that too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTVL</td>
<td>Talk to you later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTY</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UV</td>
<td>You're welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBR</td>
<td>Very big grin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WBB</td>
<td>Welcome back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WDFLYIC</td>
<td>Who died and left you in charge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHE</td>
<td>Where are you from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFM</td>
<td>Whatever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMMM</td>
<td>Welcome to my private?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTR</td>
<td>Want to go private?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTH</td>
<td>Who's the heck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WUF</td>
<td>Where are you from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WYSIWYG</td>
<td>What you see is what you get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YAS</td>
<td>You'll be sorry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YD</td>
<td>Young gentleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YL</td>
<td>Young lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YM</td>
<td>Young man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review

- What is Cyber-Bullying
- Types of Communication
  - Instant Messaging (IM)
  - Chat Rooms
  - Blogs or Social Networks
  - E-Mail
- Lingo
Cyber- Bullying: A Workshop for Parents
Part 2

Presented by Erin Jackson
Agenda for Workshop

- Day One: Introduction to Cyber-Bullying
- Day Two: Talking to Your Child
- Day Three: What Can You Do?
  - 7:00pm- Workshop Begins with Adult Internet Safety Quiz
  - 7:20- 7:30- Group Discussions over Quiz Answers
  - 8:00-8:15- Time for Questions
  - 8:15- Closing
Common Types of Cyber-Bullying

- **Flaming**
  - A heated argument usually in a public forum such as a chat room
- **Harassment**
  - Offensive messages
- **Outing**
  - Posting of personal communication through forwarding of email or public displays
- **Exclusion**
  - "in" group members are identified and others are excluded
- **Pornography**

Bamford, 2004
True Stories of Internet Bullying

- You Can’t Take it Back
How much do you know about internet safety?

- Internet Safety Quiz

Where is the best place to locate your family computer?

- Computers should be located in an open area where parents can easily monitor their child’s internet activity

- B
Which is the best example of how to protect your children online?

- Posting clear rules about internet usage helps children be accountable for their behaviors while on the internet

- A
Your children are completely safe if they only visit child-friendly chat rooms

- Even sites that are child-friendly are not immune to predators. Keep your child safe by continuous monitoring of their internet activity
- B
What should you do if your children tell you that their online friend has asked for their telephone number and wants to meet them in person?

- Commend your child from coming to you with the information and talk with them about the dangers of meeting people in person.
- B
Of the choices below, which is the worst screen name for a child?

- Screen names should never have any personal information in them such as a name, age, hometown, or year of graduation
- A
According to Online Victimization: A Report on the Nation's Youth, how many children received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet in a one-year period of time?

- A


If you are not familiar with computers and the Internet you should

- Taking a class or reading a book is an easy way to learn more about the internet
  - check local meetings and library for books
- Sitting down with your child is another great way to learn more
- C
What should you do if you suspect online "stalking" or sexual exploitation of a child?

- Contact local law enforcement immediately
- Report information to www.cybertipline.com or 1-800-843-5678
If your children have their own personal web page and ask you if they can put their photographs on it, what should you do?

- Remind your child the picture could be viewed by anyone and the internet is not a safe place to put pictures.
- B
Quiz Discussion

- What did you learn?
- What was most surprising to you?
- What do you want to know more about?
Warning Signs of Cyber-Bullying

- Excessive amounts of time spent on the computer
- Depressive moods or unexplained crying
- Disinterest in social activities
- Falling behind in school and other activities
- Feeling sick or unwell
- Unusual mood swings

Talking to Your Child

- Open Communication.
  - Let your child know you are available to talk to about important issues

- Talk about good and back computer use
  - Establish rules and expectations for computer use (rule examples found at www.netsmartz.org)
  - Talk about what is appropriate and inappropriate

- Help your child learn the skills needed to handle dangerous situations on the internet
  - Knowing what to do in dangerous situations can keep your child from being bullied and can aid in identifying cyber-bullies

Bamford, 2004
Resources for parents

- **www.childnet-int.org**
  - Contains information on internet safety for parents and children
  - Contains more resources for parents including a website where you can make reports to police

- **www.netsmartz.org**
  - This is an interactive website where parents, children, and teachers can find information on internet safety
  - Children can play games, take quizzes, and do activities
  - Netsmartz.org has true-life stories of children who have been bullied over the internet
More Resources

- **www.kidsmart.org**
  - Very similar to netsmartz.org with games, activities, and quizzes

- **www.bullying.org**
  - This website contains information on cyber-bullying in general
  - Contains tips for parents and children and what to do if your child is being cyber-bullied