Addressing Cyber Bullying

Marlene Snyder, PhD, National OBPP Development Director, Clemson University

Sue Thomas, M.A. Education, Manager of Business Development, Hazelden Foundation

Debbie Johnston, Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up For All Students Act

Steven Schechner, CEO, SafeWave.org
Overview of the Talk

- Children and technology use
- Recent attention to cyber bullying
- What is cyber bullying?
- Key findings about bullying
- Prevention of cyber bullying
- Intervention: What to do if cyber bullying occurs
- Internet safety
Teens and Technology Use

- More than 97% of adolescents (12-18) use the Internet and more than half use it daily
- 45% of adolescents have cell phones
- 75% of teens use IM, 48% use it daily

The Pew Internet and American Life Project 2007
Teens and Technology Use

- The greatest change in online activity is between 6th and 7th grade.
  - 60% of 6th graders use the Internet
  - 82% of 7th graders do.

- Young girls are more likely to be online than boys and are more likely to use IM.

The Pew Internet and American Life Project 2007
Use of Social Network Sites

- MySpace: most popular social networking site in US, has over 100 million accounts, adds 230,000 every day, ¼ belong to minors.

- NCMEC and Cox Communications Survey:
  - 71% of 13-17 year-olds have a personal profile on a social network site
  - 69% of teens regularly receive personal messages online from people they don’t know
  - 64% post photos or videos of themselves, 58% post info about where they live.
  - 8% had posted cell number online
Adult Concerns About Online Communities

- 63% of adults were uncomfortable with children participating in online communities.
- Only 15% felt comfortable with children’s participation.

Center for the Digital Future, 2008
Cyber Bullying in the News
Mentions in US Newspapers and Wires

# mentions

- '02
- '03
- '04
- '05
- '06
- '07
- '08*
Research on Cyber Bullying
PSYCH Info mentions in scholarly articles & books

# mentions

- '03
- '04
- '05
- '06
- '07
- '08*

- 0
- 5
- 10
- 15
- 20
- 25
- 30
- 35
Bullying...

- Is aggressive behavior that intends to cause harm or distress.

- Usually is repeated over time.

- Occurs in a relationship where there is an imbalance of power or strength.
Direct Bullying

- Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting...
- Taunting, teasing, racial slurs, verbal harassment
- Threatening, obscene gestures
Indirect Bullying

- Getting another person to bully someone for you
- Spreading rumors
- Deliberately excluding someone from a group or activity
- Cyber Bullying
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
Cyber Bullying Defined

“An aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.”

Smith et al., 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?*”

“*I’ll see you tomorrow because I’ll be beating the ___ out of you. Enjoy living while you can...I’ll make you die slowly.*”
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

- “Happy Slapping”
Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

Cyber Bullying is involving increasing numbers of children and youth.
How Prevalent is Cyber Bullying?

A survey of 3,767 middle school students showed:

- 18% had been cyber bullied at least once in the last 2 months
  - 6% at least 2-3 times/month
- 11% had cyber bullied others at least once
  - 2% at least 2-3 times/month

Kowalski & Limber, 2007
Cyber Bully Status

- Victim: 0%
- Bully: 10%
- B/V: 20%
- Not Inv: 80%

% MS students
What Forms of Cyber Bullying Are Most Common?

Of those who had been cyber bullied:

- 68% said they were teased in a hurtful way
- 53% said someone told lies and/or spread rumors about them
- 35% said someone used their username to pick on others

Kowalski et al., 2008
Communication Modalities for Cyber Bullying

- Instant messaging
- E-mail
- Text messaging
- Social network sites
- Chat rooms
- Blogs
- Web sites
- Bash boards
- Internet gaming
Method of Cyber Bully Victimization (Kowalski & Limber, 2007)

Of students who had been cyber bullied

- IM
- Chat room
- Website
- E-mail
- Text msg
- Another way
Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

Girls are more likely to be involved in cyber bullying than boys.
Gender and Cyber Bully Status (Kowalski & Limber, 2008)
Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

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

A clear need for prevention messages at younger ages!
Grade Differences in Cyber Bully Status

- Victim
- Bully
- B/V

- 6th Gr
- 7th Gr
- 8th Gr

0% 10% 20%
Key Findings About Bullying

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
Identity of “Cyber Bully” (Kowalski & Limber, in preparation)

Of those who had been cyber bullied:
- Another student
- Stranger/DK
- Friend
- Sibling
- Someone else
Cyber Bullying and “Traditional” Bullying

*Different* characteristics:

- **Anonymity**
- **Disinhibition**
Cyber Bullying and “Traditional” Bullying

*Different* characteristics:

- Anonymity
- Disinhibition
- Accessibility
Cyber Bullying and “Traditional” Bullying

Different characteristics:

- Anonymity
- Disinhibition
- Accessibility
- Punitive fears
- Bystanders
## Relationship Between Traditional Bully Status & Cyber Bullying Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Bullying Status</th>
<th>Cyber Victim</th>
<th>Cyber Bully</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully/Victim</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Relationship Between Cyber Bully Status & Traditional Bullying Experience

(Kowalski & Limber, in submission)

<table>
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<th>Traditional Victim</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully/Victim</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Involved</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

Initial findings suggest that cyber bullying may seriously affect children.
Effects of “Traditional” Bullying on Victims

- Higher anxiety and depression
- Lower self-esteem
- More suicidal ideation
- Higher rates of illness
- School attendance, absenteeism, academic achievement
Possible Effects of Cyber Bullying
Kowalski & Limber (in submission)

- Study of 931 students in 6th – 12th grades
- Anonymous survey of:
  - Cyber bullying experiences
  - Psychological health
  - Physical health
  - School absences
  - Leaving school early because of illness
  - Grades
Cyber Bully Status and Anxiety

![Bar chart showing the comparison between boys and girls in different bully status categories: Victim, Bully, B/V, Not Inv.](chart.png)
Cyber Bully Status and Self Esteem

![Bar chart showing the comparison of self-esteem levels among Victim, Bully, B/V, and Not Involved categories.](chart.png)
Cyber Bully Status and School Absences

- Victim
- Bully
- B/V
- Not Involved
Cyber Bully Status and Leaving School Early

[Bar chart showing the comparison between Victim, Bully, B/V, and Not Involved categories with respective values.]
Cyber Bully Status and Grades

Victim | Bully | B/V | Not Involved

0 | 0.5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 3.5 | 4 | 4.5

0 | 0.5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 3.5 | 4 | 4.5
Cyber Bully Status and Health

Victim Bully B/V Not Involved
Cyber Bully Status and Depression

![Graph showing cyber bully status and depression for different categories: Victim, Bully, B/V, Not Inv. The graph compares boys and girls.]
Extreme Consequences of Cyber Bullying

Ryan Halligan  Megan Meier
Extreme Consequences of Cyber Bullying

Jessie Logan
Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

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

[Image of a person using a computer]
In reaction to being cyber bullied, I...

- Didn't do anything
- Asked person to stop
- Cyber bullied back
- Made Fun of the bully to others
- Blocked the bully
- Saved evidence
- Told on them

Reactions of Victim (Kowalski & Limber, in preparation)
Who the Victims Told
(Kowalski & Limber, in preparation)

When I was cyber bullied, I told a(an)...

- Friend
- Parent
- Sibling
- Adult at school
- Teacher
- Other
Key Findings About Cyber Bullying

- Adults aren’t doing enough to address cyber bullying.
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
It is a safety issue

“Youth who reported being targeted by Internet harassment were 8 times more likely than all other youth to report carrying a weapon to school in the past 30 days.”

Ybarra et al. (2007)
What Can Educators Do to Address Cyber Bullying?
1. Incorporate Into Comprehensive 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
4. Develop Clear Rules and Policies About Cyber Bullying

- Incorporate into existing “student use of technology” policy or as a separate entity.
- Distribute information about the policy to staff, parents, students
- Model policy at: www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime
5. Encourage Reporting of Cyber Bullying

Middle School Bullying/Cyber Bullying Report Form

(Please return to any staff member or to one of the drop boxes located in the counselors' office)

Name: ___________________________ Teacher: ___________________________

Date: ___________ Homeroom Teacher: ___________________________

What happened or is happening?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

How long has this been happening?

When and where is this happening? (Include Website or printed evidence if applicable)
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Did anyone see this happen? ____________ Have you reported this situation? Yes/No

If so, to whom? ___________________________

How would you like to be contacted? (please check the boxes that apply and fill in the proper contact information, if necessary)

- Home phone: ___________________________
- e-mail: ___________________________
- I would like to speak with a school counselor
- I would like to speak with a school administrator
- I would prefer to not be contacted

Thank you for your report. Empowered Students like you are making a difference at _____________________________ Middle School
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," safe blogging, monitoring reputations online
Monitoring Online Reputations

- Do students want a college admission counselor reading their Facebook profile?
- Would they want their prospective employer to read their blog?
- Google alerts
Tips for Safe Use of Social Networking Sites

- Follow the age guidelines. Do not show your date of birth.
- Use the privacy feature if available. (MySpace and Facebook have this.)
- Only “friend” (allow to view) people you know.
- Don’t share your profile password.
- (Exception) Parents need to know their children’s profile name and password.
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.
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?
- Referrals to mental health resources
- Informal resolution
Intervening in Cyber Bullying

Be aware of warning signs

A youth may be experiencing cyber bullying if he or she:

- Appears sad, moody, or anxious
- Avoids school
- Withdraws from or shows a lack of interest in social activities
- Experiences a drop in grades or decline in academic performance
- Appears upset after using the computer or being online
- Appears upset after viewing a text message
Review Evidence

Unlike bullying, cyber bullying leaves evidence:
- Text messages can be saved.
- Instant Messages can be saved and printed.
- Web sites can be viewed, and IP addresses can be found.
- Chat room dialogue can be copied and saved.
- Voicemails can be saved and played back.
Youth don’t often view adults as helpful resources because:

– Cyber bullying often happens away from adults, and they don’t think adults can help
– They fear retaliation if they report
– They fear punishment of loss of technology privileges
Resources from Hazelden

- *Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Program for Grades 3-5*

- *Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Program for Grades 6-12*
These Cyber Bullying Curricula are designed to:

- Educate students about bullying and cyber bullying
- Prevent cyber bullying through activities and discussions about appropriate online etiquette, empathy and ethics
- Empower bystanders to prevent or intervene in cyber bullying situations
- Encourage parent/guardian and child communication

Resources from Hazelden
For More Information

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