CYBERBULLYING BASICS

Cyberbullying Is: Being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material using technological means. Cyberbullying happens when an individual or group uses information and communication involving electronic technologies to facilitate deliberate and repeated harassment or threat to an individual or group.

ISSUES

- Anonymous bullying from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- No sanctuary from the intrusion of a threatening text message or an abusive e-mail.
- No control of its distribution. Potential to be distributed exponentially.
- No physical scars so it is less evident to a parent or teacher. It is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe.
- Young people are more adept at adapting to new technology, therefore adults are usually reacting to events instead of being proactive.
- The anonymity of electronic communication provides immunity and desensitizes the bully from its harmful impact.

The Cyberbully's Technology
◊ Social networks
◊ E-mail
◊ Cell phones
◊ Pager text messages
◊ Instant messaging
◊ Defamatory online polling websites
◊ Chat rooms

Based on 2004 i-SAFE survey of 1,500 students grades 4-8   http://www.isafe.org

42% of kids have been bullied while online. 1 in 4 have had it happen more than once.

35% of kids have been threatened online. Nearly 1 in 5 have had it happen more than once.

58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than 4 out of 10 say it has happened more than once.

53% of kids admit having said something mean or hurtful to another person online. More than 1 in 3 have done it more than once.

58% have not told their parents or an adult about something mean or hurtful that happened to them online.

What All Students Need to Know

All actions have consequences

Cyberbullying hurts

They are just being used and manipulated by a cyberbully

Cyberbully and accomplices often become the target of cyberbullying themselves

Care about others and stand up for what's right

(*Parry Aftab)

Cyberbullying typically starts at about 9 years of age and usually ends after 14 years of age. After 14, it becomes cyber or sexual harassment due to nature of acts and age of actors. (*Parry Aftab. Esq., Executive Director, WiredSafety.org http://aftab.com/index.php?}page=cyberbullying-statistics }

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Cyberbully Categories (www.cyberbullying.org)

◊   *"Inadvertent"* : *Person does not realize that he or she has hurt someone with their "fun" text messages and e mails*.

◊   *"Vengeful Angel"* This person *comes to someone's defense but ends up spreading harmful rumors about them.*

◊   *"Mean Girls"* *Gangs up on others to have fun, promotes social status, on and off line bullying, and needs others to join in.*

◊   *"Power-Hungry"* *Seeks power over weaker*

Possible Guidance Tips for Students:

• If you feel you are being bullied by email, text or online, do talk to someone you trust.

• Never send any bullying or threatening messages. Anything you write and send could be read by an adult.

• Serious bullying should be reported to the police - for example threats of a physical or sexual nature.

• Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images.

• If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.

• Why not log into a chat room with a different user ID or nickname? That way the bully won't know who you are. You could change your mobile phone number and only give it out to close friends.

• Contact the service provider (mobile phone company, your internet provider) to tell them about the bullying. They may be able to track the bully down.

• Use blocking software: You can block messages from certain people or use mail filters to block emails from specific email online.

Cyberbullying Types

"Flaming': Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.

"Harassment": Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages.

"Cyber stalking": Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating.

"Denigration": 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.

"**Impersonation":** Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes that person look bad, gets that person in trouble, or danger, or damages that person's reputation.

"Outing and Trickery": Sharing someone's secret or embarrassing information online. Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information which is then shared online.

"Exclusion": Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'.

{Nancy Willard, M.S., J.D., Director of the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use}

The Don'ts for Students

• **Don't** reply to bullying or threatening text messages or emails- this could make matters worse. It also lets the bullying people know that they have found a 'live' phone number or email address. They may get bored quite quickly if you ignore them.

• **Don't** give out your personal details online - if you're in a chat room, watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.

• **Don't** forward abusive texts or emails or images to anyone. You could be breaking the law just by forwarding them. If they are about you, keep them as evidence. If they are about someone else, delete them and don't reply to the sender.

• **Don't** ever give out your password or mobile email account.

CYBERBULLYING BASICS

WHY SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT CYBERBULLYING AND OTHER FORMS OF BULLYING

Safety

Many altercations at school begin with incidents that happen outside the school day, such as:
• comments on social-networking sites;
• text messages; and
• instant messages and email

Civil Rights Protection

Schools have a legal responsibility to address complaints successfully when a student is being harassed because of his or her race, color, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, disability, or age; and it is so severe that it prevents a person or group of persons from having access to their education.

How to Intervene On the Spot With Any Observed Bullying Behavior:

1. Stop the bullying.
2. Support the student who is being bullied.
3. Name the bullying behavior that is observed.
4. Engage any bystanders as to what steps they can take.
5. Report and document the incident to the designated person in your school.
6. Impose immediate consequences based on Conduct Code, if applicable.
7. Take the steps to ensure the bullying is not repeated. (Document)
8. Follow-up with student and monitor for any reoccurrence and correct. (Document)

Possible Actions without Discipline

∗ Discuss and counsel with student.
∗ Conference with parents/guardians.
∗ Contact social networking sites.
∗ Increase student and staff awareness through education and training.
∗ Have clear procedures in place.
∗ Refer to counseling when appropriate.
∗ Separate victim from bully.

Student Health and Academic Performance

Children who are bullied are more likely than non-bullied children to be anxious, depressed, and to suffer from low self-esteem. They also are more likely than other children to think about taking their own lives. (*Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*)

Bullying allowed to simmer without effective intervention in a school creates a hostile environment where learning is not fostered and students' concentration is limited.

SC Article 2 Safe School Climate Act states schools have a duty to:

• Prevent bullying and Train staff and students
• Investigate complaints
• Remedy, correct or rectify the situation
• Continue monitoring and correcting

Schools Have Jurisdiction to Discipline Cyberbullying:

⇒ When cyberbullying is initiated at school
⇒ Or is on school-issued electronic equipment
⇒ And when off-campus cyberbullying leads to "substantial disruption" at school.

Important to know Code of Conduct and District Policies regarding "Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment" and "Sexual Harassment."

When should educators report or assist parents to report cyberbullying to Law Enforcement?

• Death threats or any other forms of threats of violence to person or property
• Excessive intimidation or extortion
• Threats of intimidation that involve any form of bias or discrimination
• Any evidence of sexual exploitation
• Taking a photo of someone in a place where privacy is expected (like a locker room)