CYBER-BULLYING: SAFTY SAVES

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Abstract
Kids have been bullying each other for generations. The latest generation, however, has been able to utilize technology to expand their reach and the extent of their harm. This phenomenon is being called cyber bullying. Estimates of the number of youth who experience cyber bullying vary widely ranging from 10-40% or more. Researches shows that about 47% percent of the age group of 11-18 year-olds have been cyber bullied at some point in their lifetimes. Cyber bullying is a growing problem because of the increasing numbers of kids who are using and have completely embraced online interactivity. This paper throws light on the meaning of cyber bullying, traditional bullying, negative effects on person's behaviour, obstacles and warning signs. Paper also suggests what a victim, parents, school, officials and society at large can do, prevent and safe thyself and others.
Keywords: Cyber bullying, Traditional bullying, Effects, Measures

Introduction

About 74% teens, access the Internet on their mobile device. They do so for school work, to keep in touch with their friends, to play games, to learn about celebrities, to share their digital creations and become a tremendous part of their lives, it is not surprising that some youth have decided to use the technology to be malicious or menacing towards others. The fact that teens are connected to technology 24/7 means they are susceptible to victimization around the clock. It is also easy for them to type words rather than to spoke words face-to-face. Cyber bullying crosses all geographical boundaries. The Internet has really opened up the whole world to users who access it on a broad array of devices with-out considering how that content can inflict pain and sometimes cause severe psychological and emotional wounds.

What The Cyber Bullying Is???

It is defined as: "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic de-vices." Basically, it refers to incidents where adolescents use technology to harass, threaten, humiliate, or otherwise hassle their peers. For example, youth can send hurtful text messages to others or spread rumors using smart phones or tablets. Teens have also created web pages, videos, and profiles on social media platforms for making fun of others. With mobile devices, adolescents take pictures in a bedroom, a bathroom, or another location where privacy is expected, and posted or distributed them online. Others have recorded un-authorized videos of other kids and uploaded them for the world to see, rate, tag, and discuss.

Cyber bullying vs. Traditional bullying

While often similar in terms of form and technique, cyber bullying and bullying have many differences that can make the latter even more devastating.

- With the former, victims may not know who the bully is, or why they are being targeted. The cyber-bully can cloak his or her identity behind a computer or phone using anonymous email addresses or pseudonymous screen names.
- The hurtful actions of a cyber bully can be viral to a large number of people i.e. at school, in the neighborhood, in the city, in the world!
- It is often easier to be cruel using technology because cyber bullying can be done from a physically distant location, and the bully doesn't have to see the immediate response by the target.

Negative effects that cyber-bullying can have on a person's behaviour

There are many detrimental outcomes associated with cyber bullying that reach into the real world. Like many targets report feeling depressed, sad, angry and frustrated. Those who are victimized by cyber bullying also reveal that they are often afraid or embarrassed to go to school or received poor grades. In addition, research has revealed a link between cyber-bullying and low self-esteem, health problems, family problems, academic difficulties, school violence, and various delinquent behaviors. Cyber bullied youth also report having suicidal thoughts, and there have been a number of examples where youth who were victimized ended up taking their own lives.

Where does cyber bullying commonly occur?

Cyber bullying occurs across a variety of venues and mediums. In recent years, most youth are having been drawn to social media such as Twitter and YouTube. This trend has led to increased reports of cyber bullying occurring in those environments. Voice chat, textual chat, and texting via phones or tablets also provide an environment in which hate and harm is expressed.

Obstacles in the fight to stop cyber bullying

There are two primary challenges today that make it difficult to prevent cyber bullying. Even though this problem has been around for well over a decade, some people still don't see the harm associated with it. Some attempt to dismiss or disregard cyber bullying. While it is true that there are many issues facing adolescents, parents, teachers, and law enforcement today, but it is the need to accept that cyber bullying is one such problem that will get more serious if ignored.

The other challenge relates to who is willing to step up and take responsibility for responding to inappropriate use of technology. Parents often say that they don't have the technical skills to keep up with their kids' online behavior, and that schools are covering it in detail during class time and through other programming. Educators are often doing their part through policies, curricula, training, and assemblies, but sometimes don't know when

and how to intervene in online behaviors that occur away from school but still involve their students. Finally, law enforcement is hesitant to get involved unless there is clear evidence of a crime or a significant threat to someone's physical safety. As a result, cyber bullying incidents slip through the cracks, are dealt with too informally, or are otherwise mismanaged.

Cyber bullying Warning Signs

A child may be a target of cyber bullying if He or She:
- unexpectedly stops using their devices
- appears nervous or jumpy when using their devices
- appears uneasy about going to school or outside in general
- appears to be angry, depressed or frustrated
- is oversleeping or not sleeping enough
- becomes abnormally withdrawn from usual friends and family members
- shows increase or decrease in eating
- makes passing statements about suicide or the meaninglessness of life
- loses interest in the things that mattered most to them
- avoids discussions about what they are doing online
- desires to spend much more time with parents rather than peers
- quickly switches screens or hides their device when you are close by
- uses their devices at all hours of the night
- gets unusually upset if they can't use their device
- Laughs excessively while using their device and won't show you what is so funny
- seems to be using multiple online accounts or an account that is not their own
- appears overly concerned with popularity or continued presence in a particular social circle or status
- demonstrates increasing insensitivity toward other teens
- demonstrates violent tendencies
- the parent-child relationship is deteriorating

What the Parents should do???

- Make sure child is and feels safe: - The safety and well-being of child should always be the foremost priority. Convey unconditional support. Parents must demonstrate to their children through words and actions that they both desire the same end result i.e. stopping the cyber bullying.
- Talk with and listen to child: - Engage the child in conversation about what is going on. Refrain from freaking out. Take the time to learn exactly what happened, and the context in which it occurred. Also, don't minimize the situation or make excuses for the aggressor.
- Collect evidence: - Keep evidence of all content (pictures, texts, emails, tweets, status updates) that the cyber bully has sent or posted. If the cyber bullying is occurring on a blog or forum, take screenshots of the

posts. The evidence will be useful to build a case against the person harassing, which can serve as clear proof that child is being cyber bullied. Keep a record of any and all incidents to assist in the investigation process.

- Work with the school: - Seek the help of administrators if the target and aggressor go to the same school. The child has the right to feel safe at school, and educators are responsible to ensure this through an investigation and appropriate response.
- Refrain from contacting the parents of the bully:-Some parents may become defensive and therefore may not be receptive to your thoughts. Be judicious in your approach to avoid additional drama and possible retaliation.
- Contact the content provider: - Cyber bullying violates the Terms of Service of all legitimate service providers (websites, apps, and Internet or cell companies). Regardless of whether child can identify who is harassing them, contact the relevant provider. An updated list of contact information can be found here: cyberbully-ing.us/report.
- Contact the police when physical threats are involved: - Most states have laws related to online threats, and law enforcement can assist in these cases either informally or formally. If local department is not helpful, contact country or state law enforcement officials, as they often have more resources and expertise in technology-related offenses.
- Contact the Office of Civil Rights; if the bullying is based on race, sex, or disability. They consider these cases very seriously if children are limited in their ability to learn and thrive at school because of discrimination.
- Seek counseling if necessary: - The child may get benefit by speaking with a mental health professional. Children may prefer to dialogue with a third party who may be perceived as more objective.
- Implement measures to prevent it from reoccurring: - If child is being bullied through social media (Face book, Twitter, etc.), set up privacy controls within each platform to block the bully from contacting them, and file a report. Also encourage them to keep talking to you before small issues flare up into major situations.

What a Victim should do???

- Talk with trustworthy friends; they might have gone through similar situations might be able to give you advice.
- Cut ties; don't befriend the cyber bully If you feel, you need to respond to the cyber bully, do it respectfully. Do not try and rationalize or make friends with the bully.
- Block the bully; if you are getting incessant emails from a cyber bully, use your email program options to prevent that person from contacting you. Use the options within social media sites or applications to do the same. Then, the cyber bully won't be able to see you, search for you, or contact you in any way. You can even go through your cell phone

provider or Telephone Company and block a particular phone number that is calling you.
- Change your contact information; Change your e-mail, phone number, or online account completely. This would be a last resort because it greatly inconveniences you, but it may be necessary to terminate the problem.

What should School do to prevent cyber-bullying?
- Educate the school community about responsible Internet use; Students need to know that all forms of bullying are wrong and that those who engage in harassing or threatening behaviors will be subject to indiscipline.
- Discuss issues; related to appropriate online communications in various areas of the general curriculum.
- Re-view harassment and bullying policies; school district personnel should review the harassment and bullying policies; as incidents occur at school or originate off campus will ultimately result in a substantial disruption of the learning environment.
- Creative response strategies; students may be required to create anti-cyber bullying posters to be displayed throughout the school. Older students might be required to give a brief presentation to younger students about the importance of using technology in ethically-sound ways.

What the law officers should do???
- Aware of laws; Law enforcement officers also have a role in pre-venting and responding to cyber bullying. They need to be aware of ever-evolving state and local laws concerning online behaviors, and equip themselves with the skills and knowledge to intervene as necessary.
- Discretion to handle the situation; if the behavior doesn't immediately appear to rise to the level of a crime, officers should use their discretion to handle the situation in a way that is appropriate for the circumstances. For example, a simple discussion of the legal issues involved in cyber bullying may be enough to deter some youth from future misbehavior.
- Talk to parents; officers might also talk to parents about their child's conduct and express to them the seriousness of online harassment. So that they are informed and can properly respond if their child is involved in an incidents.
- Discuss with students; they can speak to students in classrooms about cyber bullying and online safety issues more broadly in an attempt to discourage them from engaging in risky or unacceptable actions and interactions.

Think before Act

- Don't post or send anything which may embarrass you; Think about what your family, friends, future employers, or college admission decision-makers might think if they see it. How would you feel if that statement or picture was forever tied to your name and your identity? Does it really represent who you are? Remember, your keyboard may have a "delete" button, but once online it is often impossible to remove.

- Build a positive online reputation; from the very first post you make on a new social media platform, think about how others will perceive and interpret what you share. Write positive, thought-provoking and creative blog posts or editorials for online news outlets. Figure out the best ways to create and maintain an online identity that strongly demonstrates integrity and maturity.

- Don't compromise with your identity; identity thieves are constantly looking for new ways to obtain your personal information, usually for the purpose of benefiting financially at your expense. Never post your address, date of birth, phone number, or other personal contact information anywhere on social media. Even with restrictions, access can be gained through fraudulent means such as by hacking or malware.

- Don't post pictures of others without their permission; and if someone asks you to remove a picture, do so immediately. It's what you would want if you asked someone the same thing.

- Don't comment or complain; especially about specific people or organizations, in public spaces online. People may negatively judge your attitude, even if your complaint has merit.

Parents will not be able to monitor their child's activities 24/7, nor should they need to do so. So it is crucial that parents cultivate and maintain an open, congenial line of communication with their children, so that their children willingly come to them whenever they experience something unpleasant or distressing. Taught and reinforce positive morals and values at home about how others should be treated with respect and dignity.

On the other side a positive on-campus environment will go a long way in reducing the frequency of many problematic behaviors at school, including bullying and harassment. In this setting, teachers must demonstrate emotional support, a warm and caring atmosphere, a strong focus on academics and learning, and a fostering of healthy self-esteem. As mentioned, it is crucial that the school seeks to create and promote an atmosphere where certain conduct not tolerated—by students and staff alike. At home, in schools and in society at large with healthy climates, child would know what is appropriate and what is not.

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