

Cyberbullying

What Can I Do?

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Subset of: Bullying and Social Aggression in DE
Medical Society of Delaware
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Credits for Archived Slide Set

- Dr. Borer has presented on bullying at various schools and staff developments over his years in practice and he has created different portions of this slide set over time. The slide set is updated from time to time from online, organizational, and educational resources, as well as from ongoing clinical experience.
- Formatting for the slides was provided in part by Medical Society of Delaware.
- Some of the slides present materials available through various referenced websites. Dr. Borer also prepared an educational program on bullying and social aggression for Lorman Seminars in '06, which informs some of his thoughts and topics in this slide set, and which he references herein.
- The presentations by Dr. Borer at the Medical Society of Delaware, as well as this slide set, have been shared for the benefit of Delaware's youth. Dr. Borer has received no remuneration for use of this slide set. The materials in these slides may inform the presentations of others, but the slide set itself is copyrighted and used with permission by the Medical Society of DE and by the Delaware Bullying Prevention Association.

Cyberbullying—A Definition

- **CYBER OR ELECTRONIC Bullying** – using the Internet, email, text messaging, or other social media to threaten, harass, hurt, single out, embarrass, spread rumors, and/or reveal secrets about others.
- Engaging others in targeting a particular individual enhances the bullying and the potential hurt and damage to the individual.

TYPES OF CYBERBULLYING

Written (includes rumors, scapegoating, threats, humiliation)

Visual (includes derogatory pictures, sexting, gestures and emojis)

Cyberbullying may take in-person bullying at school or on the bus—

And turn it in to bullying around the clock, to an audience outside of school!



“CYBERBULLYING”

- Those who cyberbully– may be modeling bullying from home, elevate themselves at the expense of others—some may be impulsive, others very methodical and targeting, some may have behavioral disorders in other areas.
- Victims – vulnerable, may have low esteem, sensitive temperaments, AD/HD, autism spectrum, learning disabilities, or other factors causing them to stand out. May be lonely and in need of friends. May be good students who are targeted due to envy.

What are the most common methods of cyber bullying?

- In studies of middle and high school students, (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2006; Kowalski et al., 2005; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006) the most common way that children and youth reported being cyberbullied was through instant messaging. Somewhat less common ways involved the use of chat rooms, e-mails, and messages posted on web sites. A study of younger children (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2006) showed that they were most often bullied through e-mail, comments on a web site, or in a chat room—even gaming forum!

CYBERBULLYING



Who does the cyberbullying?

- Some people intend to target the victim, and will do so in person and on social media, with little regard for hurting feelings of the victim.
- Some cyberbullying may result from negative or hostile feelings coming forth in texts or tweets, as if the cloud is a buffer between the raw feelings of the bully and the impact on the victim. These cyberbullies may be surprised at how nasty they get, and may be apologetic if confronted regarding the personal pain they are causing.
- Cursing and bad language can easily turn from “bonding” to intimidation.

Those Who Bully - Characteristics

- Blame others
- Poor empathy
- Poor self-awareness
- Self-centered sense of superiority, brilliance, wit, popularity
- May have academic issues, but many do not
- Use aggression to hide pain
- Provoke the noted imbalance of power
Pain of other to sooth own
- Have a need to dominate
- Have little empathy for victims
- May relate to wide group of people

Dynamics in the cyber victim

Per Sviashanker, MD:

- A cyber victim may feel more anxious and depressed than when they are bullied in person. **AACAP 2/13**
- The online self may be an idealized image of the real self, and when the online self is bullied or derogated, this may lead to depression and even suicidal ideation in the real self.
- **Intervention:** Rather than cut off online social networking, one has the opportunity to increase access to resources to increase esteem and counter cyberbullying against the online self—eg—private online blog allowing special friends and family members. Counseling and monitoring may also be supportive.

Dynamics in the cyber victim

- Those who are victims of bullying in the real world, may turn to the virtual world to create an idealized persona who is strong or popular.
- Unfortunately, the same vulnerabilities that exist in the real world may be carried to the virtual world and to social media, creating online vulnerability as well. This is especially true for those seeking love and friendship on the internet.

Cyberbullying Reporting

(per stopbullying.gov)

Report Cyberbullying

- When cyberbullying happens, it is important to document and report the behavior so it can be addressed.
- Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.
- Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Screenshot the message or picture. Record the dates, times, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages. Take it to an appropriate adult. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers.
- Then delete the messages or pictures. Don't save them unless instructed by authorities.
- Block the person who is cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying Reporting (per stopbullying.gov)

Parents: Report Cyberbullying to Online Service Providers

- Cyberbullying often violates the terms of service established by social media sites and internet service providers.
- Review their terms and conditions or rights and responsibilities sections. These describe content that is or is not appropriate.
- Visit social media safety centers to learn how to block users and change settings to control who can contact you.
- Report cyberbullying to the social media site so they can take action against users abusing the terms of service.

If your child is the one bullying--

If your teen is the one bullying:

- Speak to them about appropriate behavior to peers.
- Set consequences at home first.
- Speak to your teen's friends and their parents if necessary, to support your stand with your teen.
- Enlist the help of mental health, school, or legal professionals if needed.
- Don't bully your own teen! Talk to them, then listen to why they have been directing anger or placing their hurt onto others.

“CYBERBULLYING” – Resources:

- Teen Angels Program
 - 13 to 18 year old volunteers
 - Trained by the FBI and local law enforcement
 - Online safety, privacy, and security
 - Help teach and monitor websites
- Websites:

www.cyberbullying.org

www.stoptextbully.org

www.wiredsafety.org

www.deletebullying.org

www.stopbullying.gov

Suggestions for educators

- Take a look at a program through nobully.org
- Utilizes social groups under adult mentorship to promote pro-social, anti-bullying protection for the victim.
- “Engagement protocols”
- Currently implemented in schools in DE with support from DOE.

School Interventions

Beginning Prevention/Intervention Efforts:

- 1) Awareness of *Cyberbullying*. Many parents and students may not realize the dangers associated with electronic media so education should be broad and include school staff, students, parents, and other relevant community members.
- Provide resources to help students and parents identify cyberbullying and report it to the appropriate school staff.
- Students should be informed of ways to stop cyberbullying if it is happening to them.

School Interventions

The free CyberSmart curriculum (cybersmart.org) provides downloadable lessons and activities to educate school staff, students, and parents and emphasizes core character values (caring, honesty, respect for self, responsibility & fairness) as the underlying message of cyberbullying education.

- Educate parents about the risk of cyberbullying and provide methods they can use at home to prevent or intervene with cyberbullying behaviors.
- This information can be delivered to parents via workshops, online training, brochures and pamphlets, Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings or via a newsletter that is sent home with children.

More a parent can do:

- You can't help with cyberbullying if you don't know it's going on. Make sure that your children feel comfortable coming to you with a problem. Many kids worry that their parents will blame them and react by taking their web privileges away.
- Don't confront the bully or the bully's parents unless you're 100 percent sure it won't make things worse for your child. Bullies will often become worse when parents intervene.
- (Per Wellness Centers:) Children who are posting or sending nasty messages may be imitating their parents! Be sure to check your own social media behavior.
- Do a Google search for your child's name on the web so you can identify any instances where they've been mentioned, bullied, or publicly embarrassed.

(Tips provided courtesy of the Princeton Review)

More a parent can do:

- Don't let your child keep profiles of themselves on websites. They become easy targets for bullies, in addition to being magnets for solicitation.
- Know everyone on your child's buddy list. Learn how to block unwanted interaction.
- Keep printed copies of all bullying messages in their entirety. It's especially important to save the header information, which helps law enforcement track the problem. (Remember to save screenshots).
- Introduce the idea of a bullying curriculum for your child's school. You can find some good ones at: www.wiredsafety.org and www.isafe.org .

(Tips provided courtesy of the Princeton Review)

A range of bystanders—for Cyberbullies too!

- **Kids who Assist:** These children may not start the bullying or lead in the bullying behavior, but serve as an "assistant" to children who are bullying. These children may encourage the bullying behavior and occasionally join in.
- **Kids who Reinforce:** These children are not directly involved in the bullying behavior but they give the bullying an audience. They will often laugh or provide support for the children who are engaging in bullying. This may encourage the bullying to continue.

A range of bystanders (cont.)

- **Outsiders:** These children remain separate from the bullying situation. They neither reinforce the bullying behavior nor defend the child being bullied. Some may watch what is going on but do not provide feedback about the situation to show they are on anyone's side. Even so, providing an audience may encourage the bullying behavior.
 - These kids often want to help, but don't know how. Learn how to be "more than a bystander."
- **Kids who Defend:** These children actively comfort the child being bullied and may come to the child's defense when bullying occurs.

Cyber Prevention

- Tell children to never share personal information online
- e-mail address and cell phone numbers should be guarded
- Limit amount of time children spend online
- Purchase tracking software that can block inappropriate messages and websites, as well as track online activity
- Ask your child to report threatening messages
- Assure bullied children you will not take away the phone or computer
- Never respond to a bully. Print messages if harassment continues
- Report the situation to the bully's ISP
- Change your child's email address if necessary

(Source: Allan Beane, Ph.D., How To Help Your Child Be Bully Free)

What can the average student do?

- Be mindful of what you post or send.
- Do not pass on rumors. That can be hurtful to the person rumored about.
- Use your own communications to tell others to back off when you see negative comments.
- Show your own ability to rise above gossip and speak to the positive when possible.

“Victims of bullying spare themselves distress, by detachment; denying their ability to experience happiness.” -James Horace



Flip sides of narcissism - (a hurting inner sense of self)

Bully – Positive self-perception
(not the same as esteem)

Victim – Negative self-perception **and/or**
target or receptacle of bully's
hidden negative self-perception.

Bully – gives illusion of power

- ❖ Fantasy of well-rounded, popular, strong guy or gal
- ❖ Fantasy of more friends/more power by convincing/dominating/victimizing others
- ❖ Peers who support the bully, may enhance the bullying behavior

Bully – takes hidden side of narcissism (i.e., the shame, humiliation, a part of self-hatred) and unconsciously deposits it onto a vulnerable or sensitive person--the victim.

- ❖ Instead of self-blame, the bully externalizes and displaces his/her own negative qualities onto the victim, then blames the victim for having these qualities.
- ❖ The “audience” (or henchmen) is then enlisted to protect the narcissist’s “inner fortress” by praising the narcissist or joining in on rejecting or fighting the victim.

Victim – may take on the negative from the bully and then act out the bully's own shame and rage→

- **allows the bully to feel a tension release and feeling of power**
- **while the victim suffers as a target, may get into trouble, or may even pass on some of the bullying behavior.**

The victim may be further victimized by becoming the holding tank and the mirror for the bully's inner hidden negative self-perceptions.

INTERVENTION FOR THE VICTIM

- Help victim recognize not only the strength but the weakness of the bully
 - helps level the playing field
- Victim should not taunt the bully
- Victim can recognize feelings of desperation in bully
- Encourage victim to see his/her own strengths
 - reject bully's view of them
 - see how bully attempts to use the victim

Interventions to help victims:

- ❖ Stay near friends or at least those who will not bully
- ❖ Assertiveness training
- ❖ Avoid being alone
- ❖ Ask for help
- ❖ Have a safe place or school contact person

Interventions to help victims – Cont'd

- ❖ Teach how to ask for help
- ❖ Teach how to approach teachers discretely when possible
- ❖ Teach how to “mosey” toward the teacher, friends, or neutral peers when bullied

Interventions to help victims – Cont'd

- ❖ Teach how to hide emotions from the bully
- ❖ Teach how to take an assertive, non-provocative stance toward the bully
- ❖ Teach how to “endure” when trapped
- ❖ Teach how to enroll/engage in comfortable peer activities

STRATEGIES FOR THE VICTIM

1. Be aware. Do not walk into the “lion’s den.”
2. The inner collection of supports.
3. Know your outer resources. Scout them out. Who teaches respect and stands up for the underdog?

STRATEGIES FOR THE VICTIM – Cont'd

- 4.** Do not show the bully your emotions (e.g., fear, crying, anger).
- 5.** Do not harbor the bully's feelings for him/her.
- 6.** Do not act out the bully's hurt or anger (otherwise, bully lets their tension off by victimizing you).

STRATEGIES FOR THE VICTIM – Cont'd

7. Break the silence. This takes wind out of the bully's sails.
8. Actively seek help as soon as possible after a bullying episode.
9. See there is a time course for your treatment, but the bully must be accountable for his or her actions now, to end the bullying behavior.
10. **Role play between episodes with family/trusted friends.**
10. Document time, place, specifics about situation for actions to be taken.

VICTIM – Use Caution and Monitor for:

- See any vulnerabilities
 - What does the bully say that hurts you most or gets a reaction?
 - Must embrace and deal with issues inside yourself to take the wind out of the bully's sails.

The Bully's Cry for Help

- Bully is given a consequence for his/her behavior.
- We sometimes expect this to end the problem.
- But bullies have often absorbed painful traumas or abuses themselves, then continued to take this out on others, creating fellow victims.
- So for the bully, the bullying behavior is their cry for help, and a consequence alone will not resolve pain.

BULLY INTERVENTION

- Pure punishment rarely works.
- Offer self control in form of choices.
- Assign a helper role for other students.
- Confront new bullying immediately.
- Utilize bystanders to reinforce rules, norms, alternatives to bullying.
Bystanders may ask bully to “step back.”

BULLY INTERVENTION – Cont'd

- Assess social skills and individual or family problems
- Involve parents in pro-social (not attacking) ways.
 - Helps parent overcome bullying or pro-bullying behaviors-or passivity- in themselves
- Limit violent TV and games. Substitute with emotional support and healthy cognitive stimulation.
- Deal with comorbid disorders (e.g., conduct disorder, substance use, etc.)



Delaware Bullying Prevention Association

- DBPA Board Members helped write Delaware's Model Policy for implementing bullying prevention in all Delaware public and charter schools. See:
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family/climate/files/Bully%20Prevention%20Policy%20Template%202007rfc.doc
- **DBPA Board Members have presented bully-proofing programs statewide in DE schools**
- **and at conferences to more than 70,000 students and school staff.**
- A DBPA Board Member established and teaches an undergraduate bullying prevention course at Wilmington University and is currently developing the curriculum for graduate level students.
- **DBPA established www.bullyprevention.org providing bullying prevention information**
- **and resources available in Delaware and links to valuable out-of-state resources.**

‘The Inspiring Project’

- ‘The Inspiring Project’ is a project that is intended to reduce and eliminate suicidal thoughts and action in teens and adults today.
- Chase began on social media such as Instagram, Twitter & Facebook.
- After posting a few weeks, he began to receive messages and emails from people who followed him asking for advice and help.

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Be Dauntless!