

Cyberbullying & Adolescent Suicide

By Lisa Moore

EPY 839—Spring 2011



What is cyberbullying?

Patchin and Hinduja (2006) defined it “as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text.”

Also known as online harassment and electronic bullying



How it differs from traditional bullying

- ▶ 24/7 and viral nature
- ▶ Wider audience
- ▶ Often don't know who the bully is
- ▶ Occurs away from school
- ▶ Fear loss of technology privileges



Common Forms of Cyberbullying

- ▶ Text messages (e.g., instant messaging, cell phones)
- ▶ Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace)
- ▶ Chat rooms
- ▶ Images/videos (e.g., cell phones)
- ▶ Websites
- ▶ Emails



Types of Cyberbullying

- ▶ Harassment (e.g., sending rude or insulting messages all the time)
- ▶ Flaming (e.g., online fighting)
- ▶ Denigration (e.g., posting cruel gossip or rumors)
- ▶ Impersonation (e.g., pretending to be someone else to make that person look bad)
- ▶ Outing (e.g., sharing someone's secret)
- ▶ Exclusion (e.g., unfriending someone)
- ▶ Stalking (e.g., making someone fear for their own safety in real life)



Roles

- ▶ Victim
- ▶ Bully (e.g., females have higher offender rates!)
- ▶ Bystanders (e.g., forward hurtful messages, visit hurtful sites)



Cyberbullying Prevalence



From my research:

- ▶ Dempsey et al. (2009) found that 14% of respondents reported victimization of cyberaggression during the past 30 days
- ▶ Hinduja and Patchin (2008) found “over 32% of boys and over 36% of girls had been victims of cyberbullying” in their study
- ▶ Jovonen and Gross (2008) found that 19% were “repeatedly cyberbullied” in their study
- ▶ Kowalski and Limber (2007) found that 11% were victims in their study
- ▶ Nicol and Fleming (2010) found that 70% had “engaged in at least some aggression on their phone over the past six months”
- ▶ Raskauskas and Stoltz (2007) found that 48.4% of their participants had been victims
- ▶ Wolak, Mitchell, and Finkelhor (2007) found that 9% of their participants had been harassed online during the past year, 43% knew the bully and 57% only knew the bully online



Reporting Issues

- ▶ Unknown bully
- ▶ Perception of adult abilities
- ▶ Breaking school/home rules



Effect of Cyberbullying

- ▶ Psychological Effects
 - ▶ Lowered self-esteem
 - ▶ Depression
- ▶ Retaliation
- ▶ Suicide



Legal Issues

- ▶ Sexual exploitation/pandering in pornography
- ▶ Stalking
- ▶ Hate crimes



Cyberbullying and Suicide-Sound Familiar?

- ▶ Tyler Clementi, freshman at Rutgers University, jumped off the George Washington Bridge after a video showing him having sex with another man makes its way onto the Internet thanks to his roommate!
- ▶ Phoebe Prince, 15-year old who received nasty online messages and emails, committed suicide in January 2010!
- ▶ Alexis Pilkington, 17 year old who was the victim of vicious taunts on social networking sites, took her own life in March 2010!



Cyberbullying and Suicide

According to research by Hinduja and Patchin (2010) “20% of respondents reported seriously thinking about attempting suicide, while 19% reported attempting suicide.”



Prevention Tips

▶ Schools

- ▶ Prevention programs (e.g., AUPs, policies)
- ▶ Health-related programs (e.g., stress management)
- ▶ Don't blame the victim & empower bystanders
- ▶ Counseling-related programs (e.g., conflict resolution)
- ▶ Know the warning signs (e.g., child is depressed or sad, child seems upset or angry after using the Internet or cell phone, withdrawal, changes in academic performance)
- ▶ Create a safe environment
- ▶ Educate them on this topic!



Prevention Tips

▶ Parents

- ▶ Know the warning signs (e.g., child is depressed or sad, child seems upset or angry after using the Internet or cell phone, withdrawal, changes in academic performance)
- ▶ Know what they do online/with their cell phones
- ▶ Set limits for Internet and cell phone use
- ▶ Discuss cyberbullying with your child so they know they won't get into trouble reporting it



Prevention Tips

▶ Victims

- ▶ Tell an adult!!
- ▶ Ignore the cyberbully
- ▶ Change your screen name
- ▶ Don't share your personal information with any strangers online

▶ Bystanders

- ▶ Don't blame the victim
- ▶ Tell an adult!!



Useful Websites

- ▶ NetSmartz (<http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents>)
- ▶ iSAFE (<http://www.i-safe.org/>)
- ▶ National Crime Prevention Council Cyberbullying site (<http://www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying>)
- ▶ STOP Cyberbullying (<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org>)
- ▶ Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use (<http://www.cyberbully.org/>)
- ▶ Cyberbullying Research Center (<http://www.cyberbullying.us/>)
- ▶ BrainPOP's Cyberbullying site (<http://www.brainpop.com/technology/computersandinternet/cyberbullying/>)
- ▶ KCSS Cyberbullying site (<http://www.kysafeschools.org/cyberbullying.html>)
- ▶ McGruff's Cyberbullying site (<http://www.mcgruff.org/Advice/cyberbullies.php>)
- ▶ Safe School Coalition Lesson Plans (<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/rg-lessonplans.html>)



References

- Dempsey, A.G., Sulkowski, M.L., Nichols, R., & Storch, E. A. (2009). Differences between peer victimization in cyber and physical settings and associated psychosocial adjustment in early adolescence. *Psychology in the Schools, 46*(10), 962-972. Retrieved from EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier.
- Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J.W. (2010). Bullying, cyberbullying, and suicide. *Archives of Suicide Research, 14*(3), 206-221. Retrieved from Routledge.
- Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J.W. (2008). Cyberbullying: An exploratory analysis of factors related to offending and victimization. *Deviant Behavior, 29*(2), 129-156. Retrieved from EBSCOhost International Security & Counterterrorism Reference Center.
- Jovonen, J., & Gross, E.F. (2008). Extending the school grounds?—Bullying experiences in cyberspace. *Journal of School Health, 78*(9), 496-505. Retrieved from EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier.
- Kowalski, R.M., & Limber, S.P. (2007). Electronic bullying among middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 41*(6), S22-S30. Retrieved from ScienceDirect.
- Nicol, A., & Fleming, M.J. (2010). "I h8 u": The influence of normative behavior and hostile response selection in predicting adolescents' mobile phone aggression—A pilot study. *Journal of School Violence, 9*(2), 212-231. Retrieved from Routledge.
- Patchin, J.W., & Hinduja, S. (2006). Bullies move beyond the schoolyard: A preliminary look at cyberbullying. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 4*(2), 148-169. Retrieved from SAGE.
- Raskauskas, J., & Stoltz, A.D. (2007). Involvement in traditional and electronic bullying among adolescent. *Developmental Psychology, 43*(3), 564-575. Retrieved from EBSCOhost PsycARTICLES.
- Wolak, J., Mitchell, K.J., & Finkelhor, D. (2007). Does online harassment constitute bullying? An exploration of online harassment by known peers and online-only contacts. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 41*(6), S51-S58. Retrieved from ScienceDirect.

