R U Rdy? Social Media and Bullying Prevention and Intervention

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Co-Director, Bullying Research Network
Director, Empowerment Initiative

Half-Day Workshop

National Association of School Psychologists

February 13, 2015
Learning Objectives

• Participants will gain a better understanding of definitions for both traditional and cyberbullying.

• Participants will learn characteristics of cyberbullying and associated outcomes of the behavior.

• Participants will be introduced to several strategies for educators, parents, and teens for preventing cyberbullying.
• Tweet comments and questions!
@ DrSueSwearer
@ Bully_Research
@ Empowerment_UNL

• #NASP2016
• @NASPonline
Workshop based in part on:

- Studying bullying since 1998
- Co-edited a special issue: “Bullying: At School and Online” at [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)
- Developed a cognitive-behavioral intervention for bullying behaviors
- Being a supervising psychologist in the child and adolescent therapy clinic at UNL since 1999
- Being a parent of two daughters
- Chair of the Research Advisory Board for the Born This Way Foundation [www.bornthiswayfoundation.org](http://www.bornthiswayfoundation.org)

Available from: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)
Bullying Prevention in Schools: Using Partnerships to Reduce Bullying

• Empowerment Initiative (http://empowerment.unl.edu)
• Working with schools and school districts since 1999.
• A partnership between individual schools and/or districts and the University of Nebraska – Lincoln School Psychology Program.
• Using data to make decisions about effective bullying prevention and intervention strategies.
• Researchers provide yearly feedback to participating schools.
• Elementary, Middle, High Schools and higher education.
• University researchers work in tandem with school personnel, students, and parents.
The Empowerment Initiative
(http://empowerment.unl.edu)

- The Empowerment Initiative supports translational research designed to foster positive, accepting communities free from bullying and other negative behaviors.
- Studies conducted through the Empowerment Initiative focus on identifying and addressing the complex personal, social and cultural factors underlying such behaviors, thereby advancing practical solutions to promote healthy relationships within families, schools and communities.
- The focus of EI is on translational research.
Translational Research: H.E.A.R. Workshop

- Anti-bullying presentation created for the National Guard
- Rick Weissbourd, Stephanie Jones, & Susan Swearer (2013)
- Published by Career Training Concepts, Inc.
- Project team: Trisha Ross, Matthew Morgan, Yvetta Churchill, & Jimmy Shafe
- Can we reduce bullying by using National Guard recruiters to deliver the H.E.A.R. message?
Definition of Bullying (Swearer, 2001):

- Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person **on purpose** and the person being bullied has a **hard time defending himself or herself**. Usually, **bullying happens over and over**.

  - Punching, shoving and other acts that hurt people physically
  - Spreading bad rumors about people
  - Keeping certain people out of a “group”
  - Teasing people in a mean way
  - Getting certain people to “gang up” on others
Bully/Victim Continuum*

- Bully Perpetrator—reports bullying others
- Victim/Target — reports being bullied by others
- Bully-Victim — reports bullying others & being bullied
- Bystander — reports observing others being bullied
- No Status/Not involved — does not report any involvement with bullying

*IMPORTANT: This is a dynamic continuum; kids move between these roles and can be in multiple roles at the same time.
A Social-Ecological Model of Bullying

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Orpinas & Horne; 2006; Swearer & Espelage, 2004)
LiveScience article: “Bullying hits parents too.”

- Quotes from the article:
- While it can be hard to cope with the emotions bullying brings, Swearer encourages parents to focus on solutions for their child.
- "Going in angry and yelling and screaming, which I have seen, does not help anybody," Swearer said. "Everybody just gets defensive."
- Parents should realize that bullying is a complex social problem, and the situation may have been developing for some time, she said.
A few on-line reader responses:

• No, but going in swinging usually stops this BS in its tracks.
• This is both stupid and exploitable. I hate to say it but we need bullying in society. It's what separates the weak from the strong, and motivates people to rise above. If you can't rise above, then you're the runt of the litter and you kill yourself. Society has just become stronger with one less weakling.
• Violence tends to solve bullying. I'd rather my kids threw someone who was bullying them into a beating, rather than have it come back to screw them later in life by lowering their self esteem.
• People might as well know up front that I'll go straight to jail about my kids. Some brat wants to bully my kid, I'll show him/her what a REAL bully looks like.
• When my son was growing up I told him I'd better not ever catch him bullying another and at the same, I'd better not ever catch him being used as a punching bag.
• I rather my son got in trouble with school authority for standing up for himself than just stood there and took crap from other kids!
• When all else fails in the "civilized" setting, sometimes we have to go back to old fashioned methods of sending a message the bully will surely understand.
• It's liberals like yourself that allow bullies to continue as you and your kind are soft on handing out consequences to the bullies.
• Only way to stop this kind of behavior is to make it so its not fun anymore for the evil sheep that do the bullying. Hurt them. Hard and fast and bad...and if you are too weak to do it by yourself then get the help of other kids who have been victimized...catch the bully alone...and make it so its no fun any more.
• If a fist won’t work....grab a weapon.....they have to be stopped...period....face it...we don’t need these animals....
This still leaves questions about cyberbullying...
What is Cyberbullying?

- Cyberbullying is “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 themselves.”
  *Smith and Slonje (2010)*

- Cyberbullying means using electronic/digital tools to hurt someone (by threatening, humiliating or embarrassing, ruining friendships or reputation).
- “the use of information technology to bully a person by sending or posting text or images of an intimidating or threatening nature.”
  *Oxford English Dictionary, 2010*
From CNN Article: “Parents, beware of bullying on sites you’ve never seen”

Editor's Note:

(CNN)—"Why aren't you dead?"

"You should die."

"Wait a minute, why are you still alive?"

"Go kill yourself."

It's impossible to comprehend another human being, let alone a child, sending such hateful messages to another person, but according to Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd in Lakeland, Florida, these messages are all too real.
Technology Used in Cyberbullying

- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Ask.Fm)
- Applications (Snapchat, Instagram)
- Text & Picture Messaging
- Email
- Chat Rooms
- Instant Messaging
- Online Gaming

## Rank-order of popular social media sites (n = 75; ages 12-17; 2015)

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<td>Online gaming</td>
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Reported Social Media Use

Social Media Usage By Location

Average Usage

Facebook Messenger
Instagram
Twitter
Snapchat
Tumblr
Other instant...
Littlemonsters.com
Skype
Online computer gaming

United States
Outside of U.S.

Results presented at the annual meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists, February, 2015, Orlando, FL
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<td>Google +</td>
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<td>Littlemonsters.com</td>
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• #HackHarassment
• www.hackharassment.com
What Makes Cyberbullying So Powerful?

• We may not know who did it (it can be anonymous), and that’s scary. It could even be a friend.

• What we text or put online is permanent and can be seen by everyone (vast audience).

• People say things in texts or online that they would NEVER say in person: online disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004).
What Makes Cyberbullying So Powerful?

• We can’t see their faces or body language, so it might be “just kidding,” but we can’t tell (absence of paralinguistic cues).
• It can happen at any time, any place (24/7). Victims don’t think they can escape.
• Kids don’t tell adults, so they suffer alone.
  – Worried that they will have their phone, computer, etc. taken away
Why focus on cyberbullying?

- The Norton Online Living report states that 76% of U.S. teens ages 13-17 "constantly" or "frequently" visit social networking sites.
- About 3.6 million monthly visitors to Facebook are under 12 years of age.
- The average U.S. teen sends 3,339 texts per month.
- The average U.S. teen spends 7 hours and 38 minutes per day online, on TV, playing video games (Kaiser Family Foundation).
- 20% of 11-18 yr. olds reported being cyberbullied (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).
Why address cyberbullying?

- Involvement in cyberbullying has been linked to several negative outcomes (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014)
- Cyberbullies:
  - Depression, anxiety, peer relationship problems, higher levels of stress, poor academic achievement, drug and alcohol use.
- Cybervictims
  - Loneliness, Depression, Anxiety, lower self-esteem, drug and alcohol use
- However, those that were cyberbully-victims typically were associated with the more severe outcomes
- Therefore, we need to address cyberbullying for all individuals involved.
Warning Signs of Cyberbullying

• Appearing sad, moody, or anxious
• Avoiding school
• Withdrawing from social activities
• Experiencing a drop in grades
• Appearing upset after using the computer
• Appearing upset after viewing a text message
We need to ask the question:

“What are the conditions that allow cyberbullying behaviors to occur?”
The Digital Divide

• We used to say there was a “generation gap” between adults and adolescents.
• Now we talk about the “digital divide” to highlight the vast differences in the types, uses, and knowledge of technology between youth and adults. Most young people are digital natives, while adults are digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001).
A Social-Ecological Model of Bullying
(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Orpinas & Horne; 2006; Swearer & Espelage, 2004)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f_kavukuKl
Strategies for Youth

• Protect your password
• Keep photos “PG”
• Don’t open unidentified messages
• Log out of online accounts
• Setup privacy controls
• Never retaliate
• If repeated, tell them to stop
• Block them from contacting you
• Never pass on messages from cyberbullies
• Save the evidence
• Pause before you post
Strategies for Parents

- Encourage youth to protect their passwords
- Save evidence of the incident
- Know what your children are on (e.g., social media, apps)
- Learn about these sites
- Monitor what your children are saying and use instances of negative online behavior as teachable moments
- Address any incidents of cyberbullying perpetration or victimization

(From Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012, *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age*)
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(From Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012, Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age)
Strategies for Educators: Prevention

• Assess cyberbullying in your school
• Define cyberbullying for staff and students
• Develop clear rules and policies for cyberbullying incorporated into an existing anti-bullying policy
• Like any form of bullying, encourage students to report instances of cyberbullying to staff
• Spend class time on the topic of cyberbullying
  – Discussions with students of online safety
  – Activities on cyberbullying
• Share information with parents

(From Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012, Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age)
Strategies for Educators: Intervention

- School discipline: Because of the online nature of the behavior, it is difficult to determine if discipline is possible. Consult with district officials for what is the best method for addressing this.
- Notify parents when instances of cyberbullying occur.
- Share information on how to remove things from their social media sites.
- Monitor students that have reported cyberbullying for changes in mood or behavior. Possible mental health services may be warranted.
- Continue to share information on cyberbullying and its effects with students who cyberbully/are cyberbullied.
- Like traditional bullying, do not bring the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) together to talk. Discuss what happened with the individuals separately.

(From Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012, *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age*)
Early Work on Positive Social Media Use

• Just as with traditional bullying, the vast majority of individuals are bystanders to cyberbullying who do not know what to do
  – 88% of teens reported being a bystander to mean or cruel behavior online (Pew Research Center, 2011)
  – Most (90%) reported ignoring the behavior, but many (80%) also reported defending the victim
• Therefore, one outlet for youth is positive social media use
  – Standing up for others
  – Displaying positive messages online
  – Not joining in cyberbullying
Positive Social Media Use

• Positive social media:
  – Rethink app, Kindness app, Kinder app, Happify app
  – Online communities like LittleMonsters.com
  – #Icanhelp; #HackHarassment; #KindMonster
  – danah boyd’s book: *It’s Complicated*

• It is crucial that parents and educators encourage youth to create the positive change they wish to see
Online Resources

- **www.cyberbullying.us**
  - Great resources for parents, educators, and youth on cyberbullying

- **www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/**
  - Resources for multiple forms of bullying (e.g., traditional, cyberbullying)
Facebook Help Center

- [https://www.facebook.com/help/420576171311103/](https://www.facebook.com/help/420576171311103/)
- Provides information for needs regarding
  - Bullying (e.g., how to remove a post, block an individual)
  - Parent information on bullying and appropriate social media use (e.g., How can I help my teen use Facebook wisely?)
  - Suicide prevention (e.g., I need to find a suicide helpline for myself or my friend, Helping a friend who has posted about suicide)
- Facebook also has great information about bullying for youth, parents, and educators at their Family Safety Center: [https://www.facebook.com/safety](https://www.facebook.com/safety)
Starting on Wednesday, Facebook is rolling out a new feature for suicide prevention.

The social media site is partnering with Now Matters Now, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Save.org and Forefront: Innovations in Suicide Prevention, a nonprofit operating out of the University of Washington's School of Social Work, to give users more options when they see a friend post something that is concerning. It works on both desktop and mobile.

If a Facebook friend posts something that you feel indicates he or she could be thinking about self harm, you'll be able to click the little arrow at the top right of the post and click "Report Post." There, you'll be given the options to contact the friend who made the post, contact another friend for support or contact a suicide helpline, the University of Washington reported on Wednesday.

After that, Facebook will look at the post. If Facebook feels like the post indicates distress, it will contact the person who posted it. That person will be greeted with the following pop ups when he or she next logs in:
Huffington Post: “Facebook Adds New Feature for Suicide Prevention”

Hi Gerald, a friend thinks you might be going through something difficult and asked us to look at your recent post.

Only you can see this. Anything you do there will be kept private.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/25/facebook-suicide-prevention_n_6754106.html
Huffington Post: “Facebook Adds New Feature for Suicide Prevention”

What would you like to do?
You matter to us, so we want to offer support if you need it. You're not alone—we do this for many people every month. What would you like to do?

Talk to someone
Reach out to a friend or helpline worker.

Get tips and support
Learn how to work through this using some simple tips.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/25/facebook-suicide-prevention_n_6754106.html
If the person decides they'd like to talk to someone, they'll be prompted to call a friend, send a friend a Facebook message or contact a suicide helpline. They can either call or message a suicide prevention expert. Facebook also provides videos that use true stories of people who have dealt with suicidal thoughts.

There's also a section that recommends simple relaxation techniques like baking, drawing, going for a walk or visiting a library.

Facebook will even help someone find a self-care expert.
More options
Get tips from self-care experts and people who have worked through something difficult.

- See more things you can do right now
  Get more tips from Lifeline.

- Find local self-care experts
  Use a local services locator.

- Learn how to deal with suicidal thoughts
  See stories and ideas for managing suicidal thoughts.
NASP and National Council with the Born This Way Foundation

- [www.braverytips.org](http://www.braverytips.org)
- Build your strengths
  - Be Brave
  - Act Brave
  - Stay Brave
Video Resources

“Bully Dance” video

Bullfrog Films
Box 149
Oley, PA 19547
(610) 779-8226
Web: www.bullfrogfilms.com
You can also find this video on YouTube
Video Resource: Stories of Us--Bullying

- www.storiesofus.com

- *Stories of Us* is a unique series of education resources for primary and secondary students. Students collaborate in brainstorming the subjects, develop the scripts and perform all key roles. Every word of dialogue is their own, and every detail approved by the students. The *Stories of Us* videos are compelling as they draw upon the collective experience of the students, holding a mirror to their reality with such authenticity that some students watching them are convinced they are real.
Use Free Campaigns to Communicate Anti-Bullying Messages

http://www.stompoutbullying.org
www.meanstinks.com
www.raiseagiant.com
Join the movement: www.bullyproject.com

“IT’S TIME TO TAKE A STAND”

“A powerful, vital and brave must-see movie.”
NY Observer, Rex Reed

“Potent and Provocative.”
Rolling Stone, Peter Travers
“Stop Bullying: Speak Up”: A Positive Side to Technology!

- Facebook has announced a new anti-bullying partnership with Time Warner, Inc. called, “Stop Bullying: Speak Up.” They’re working together to educate parents, teachers and kids about preventing bullying.

- Fall 2011: Anderson Cooper, Time, People, etc. focused on bullying prevention

- Every October: National Bullying Prevention Month
NEA’s Bully Free: It Starts with Me

• One caring adult can keep a bullied student from dropping out of school. One caring adult may save a bullied student’s life. NEA's Bully Free: It Starts With Me campaign, is asking you to be that caring adult. Just take the pledge — to listen to bullied students who approach you and take action to stop the bullying. In return, NEA will provide you with free resources to help you support these students.

• One Caring Adult Can Make a Difference
http://www.prevent7.org/
www.bornthisway.foundation
#KindMonsters

I pledge to build a kinder, more accepting and braver world. A world where individuality is celebrated online, offline and through the boundless freedom of play. A world that offers eternal love, not judgment, to those who are brave enough to be themselves. A world with infinite and magnificent possibilities. In order to achieve that, I will do the following for myself, my friends and my community:

I will be conscious that what I say online has an impact, and lead by example by using my online presence to encourage and empower others. I will invite my friends - both online and IRL - to explore our creativity, passions, and imagination in order to build a kinder, braver world. I will always remember that the choice is mine when faced with good and evil, I will choose good.
http://project-hear.us

H.E.A.R
Helping Everyone Achieve Respect

PERSONAL COURAGE
INTEGRITY
LOYALTY
DIGNITY
Summary

• Cyberbullying is a serious problem for all age levels, with adolescents particularly at risk.
• Cyberbullying and traditional bullying often co-occur.
• Bullying in all forms (verbal, physical, relational, cyber) are connected to mental health difficulties.
• Cyberbullying can occur through many different avenues, including texting, social media sites, applications, and online gaming.
• Adults need to become better informed in order to be credible resources for young people.
• A commitment to change is on-going and never ends and everyone (educators, parents, and youth) must play a role to stop cyberbullying.
If all else fails, just remember…

The only way to have a friend is to be one.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
Thank you!

For more information contact:
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http://empowerment.unl.edu; Facebook: Empowerment Initiative; Twitter: @Empowerment_UNL

http://brnet.unl.edu; Facebook: Bullying Research Network Twitter: @Bully_Research