

CYBERBULLYING: INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

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Abstract

Cyberbullying and its negative consequences have become a very real concern for schools, students, and parents in recent years. It leaves many targeted individuals feeling sad, depressed, angry, and frustrated. It also may contribute to physical aggression, poor academic behavior, depression, and suicide. This paper will discuss the consequences, legal issues, and various forms of cyberbullying. Warning signs of its perpetrators and its victims will be addressed along with the parents' role in combating cyberbullying. Intervention and prevention programs will be introduced and recommended. Strategies for developing a comprehensive cyberbullying program for schools will be presented. Assessments that address the prevalence and severity of cyberbullying in schools will be analyzed for educational leaders to consider utilizing. Presenting these topics is intended to assist school counselors and other educational leaders in developing a program that may decrease the frequency and severity of cyberbullying in their school and community.

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Introduction

Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon that schools and parents have been attempting to address and deal with in an effective manner for the past several years (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012). Research has provided many definitions of cyberbullying and its ramifications. Cyberbullying may be defined as “the use of electronic forms of communication by an individual or group to engage repeatedly in sending or posting content about an individual or group that a reasonable person would deem cruel, vulgar, threatening, embarrassing, harassing, frightening, or harmful.” (Snakenborg, 2011, p.90). Research has highlighted several negative aspects of cyberbullying in recent years.

Consequences and forms of cyberbullying have been well documented. Warning signs, parents' roles, and legal issues have been introduced and discussed within the research. Intervention and prevention strategies have been recommended for schools, parents, and adolescents. A thorough knowledge of the various intervention and prevention strategies is essential in order to minimize the frequency and severity of cyberbullying. Much of the research that has been completed on the prevention of cyberbullying has determined that it is imperative for educators, counselors, students, parents, and community members to all be involved in the process (Couvillon, 2011).

Review of Literature

Consequences and Forms of Cyberbullying

There are several possible negative consequences of cyberbullying. It leaves many targeted individuals feeling sad, depressed, angry, and frustrated; as well as being embarrassed and afraid to attend school (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012). Research has linked cyberbullying to family problems, low self-esteem, physical aggression, delinquent behavior, and poor academic achievement in school (Freis & Gurung, 2013; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012). According to Hinduja and Patchin (2013) cyberbullying, as well as traditional bullying, has been linked to many dangerous behavioral and psychosocial problems such as dropping out of school, drug use, fighting and aggression, suicidal thoughts and bringing a weapon to school. There have been many reports in the United States where the victims of cyberbullying have experienced suicidal thoughts and have tragically taken their own lives (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Stauffer et al., 2012).

Holly Grogan is one of many examples of a student who has committed suicide due to the adverse effects of cyberbullying. On September 16, 2009 Holly ended her own life by jumping from a 30-foot bridge near Gloucester, UK. It was reported that some of her schoolmates had posted numerous derogatory rumors on her Facebook page (Stauffer et al., 2012). It was also reported that the vicious messages continued to be posted even after she switched schools in order to escape the harassment. Holly Grogan, Ryan Halligan, Megan Meier, and others are just a few of the many tragic examples of the realities of the devastation that may be a result of cyberbullying (Stauffer et al., 2012).

After reviewing 35 published peer-reviewed research papers, Patchin & Hinduja (2012) estimated that an average of 17% of students reported that they participated in cyberbullying and 24% of students stated that they had been victims of cyberbullying. Juvonen and Gross (2008) conducted an anonymous online survey of over 1,400 youth ranging in ages 12 to 17. They found that 72% of those that responded to the survey admitted that they had participated in cyberbullying at least once in the past year. In another study of 384 adolescents, 29% of the respondents stated that they were victims of cyberbullying, 11% admitted to cyberbullying others, and 47% of them reported that they have witnessed cyberbullying (Mason, 2008). This same study found that 20% of the adolescents were threatened online and 60% stated that they were negatively affected by the harsh comments they received while online at home, in school, or with their friends (Mason, 2008).

Approximately two-thirds of the recipients of cyberbullying reported that they knew their perpetrators and more than half of those victims stated that their perpetrator attended their school (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). This same study also found that approximately 90% of the victims of cyberbullying do not tell their parents or other adults that this is happening to them. One reason that most victims of cyberbullying do not tell adults is that they fear that the bullying will become more frequent and intense. Another reason is that they fear that the adults will take away or limit their time on their mobile phone, computer, or other electronic devices (Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2012; Chibbaro, 2007).

In one study, 37% of the teenagers that were surveyed stated that they would say things through electronic communication that they would not say in person (Bauman, 2013).

Cyberbullying can be instigated at any time and any place, which does not allow the victim to ever really escape its negative effects. Also, the size of the audience can cause the humiliation

and unintended consequences to be amplified to a level that can be devastating to the recipient of cyberbullying (Bauman, 2013). This same study found that females reported feeling more distress than males when they were the recipients of cyberbullying. The majority of adolescents reported that cyberbullying that involved images were the most upsetting and had the most negative impact on the target (Bauman, 2013). “Sexting” is one form of cyberbullying that involves sending seminude or nude pictures through picture messaging. A national report published in 2009 stated that 20% of teens and young adults, and 11% of females from ages 13-16, admitted to participating in sexting (Bauman, 2013).

There are several other forms of cyberbullying behaviors. Flaming is an indirect form of cyberbullying that consists of an argument between two people that involves vulgar or rude language, threats, and insults (Chibbaro, 2007). Exclusion, harassment, and denigration are all examples of indirect forms of cyberbullying. Exclusion occurs when an individual is purposely left out of communications involving various forms of technology; whereas harassment is when someone is repeatedly sent hurtful messages through those same forms of technology (Chibbaro, 2007). Denigration typically occurs when a student or group of students direct their anger or frustration toward a teacher or an administrator. The students may create a Web site in order to publicly ridicule and demean the school official and try to damage their reputation (Chibbaro, 2007).

Warning Signs and Parents’ Role

Diamanduros, Downs, and Jenkins (2008) have identified and discussed some of the warning signs that are associated with cyberbullying. The cyberbully victim may suddenly stop using their computer or cell phone or may become anxious while using them. They may avoid

discussing with adults who they were communicating with on their electronic device. The cyberbully victim may become depressed or angry after using a cell phone or computer. They may also become withdrawn or isolate themselves from their friends or family (Diamanduros et al., 2008). Some warning signs of the cyberbully offender include using electronic devices late at night, utilizing several accounts on the Internet, excessively laughing while using their cell phone or computer, switching or closing programs when others are present, and becoming more upset than usual when they are denied access to electronic devices (Diamanduros et al., 2008).

Since much of cyberbullying is carried out by adolescents from their home, parents play a key role in the prevention of cyberbullying and to helping create a safer online environment (Cassidy et al., 2012). Most parents report that their children spend less time on the Internet than the time that their children report. Since students typically under-report their time spent on the Internet, adolescents are probably spending more time using electronic devices than most parents realize (Cassidy et al., 2012). In a survey given to students, parents, and educators in three schools in British Columbia, Canada; 36% of the students admitted that they have engaged in cyberbullying in the previous year and 32% reported that they had been recipients of cyberbullying (Cassidy et al., 2012). In this same study, only 11% of the parents reported that their child was a victim of cyberbullying and most educators were unaware of the extent of cyberbullying that was occurring among the students that they were in contact with.

Most adolescents reported that they would not participate in cyberbullying if they felt that there would be consequences from their parents or their school (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013). They also found that close supervision and monitoring by their parents and school personnel also deterred them from engaging in cyberbullying. Keeping the lines of communication open

between the students and their parents are important in helping to reduce the frequency and severity of cyberbullying from occurring (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013).

There are several suggestions for parents to consider which may help them protect their children from participating in cyberbullying (Snakenborg, 2011). Parents may use one of the popular search engines, such as Google, to see if there is any unwanted personal information about their child on the Internet. They may simply type the name of their child in quotations and all references relating to their child (as well as others with the same name) will appear. They may also type in email addresses, screen names, or news group postings by clicking the “groups” icon located above the search screen on Google (Snakenborg, 2011). If they notice any unwanted information of their children they may contact Google (or any other search engine) and ask that they remove it from their site. The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act states that websites must remove any information of any adolescent under the age of 13 if their parents request them to. If they do not comply, parents may contact the Federal Trade Commission at <http://www.ftc.gov/> to register a complaint (Snakenborg, 2011).

Another tool that parents may utilize to help protect their children from cyberbullying, are software packages that are designed to filter or block specific content based on key words, categories, and Web site addresses (Snakenborg, 2011). Two examples of these products are the Cyber Bullying Prevention Engine developed by Net Box Blue and a product named Child-Friendly Internet provided by PureSight. Both of these products will quarantine, block, and provide a report of derogatory instant messages, emails, and other forms of communication based on the sources or key words that are provided by the user (Snakenborg, 2011). These software programs allow a third party (e.g., parents or school administrators) the ability to monitor and identify offensive material without the need to look through every message that is

received on the Internet. However, the effectiveness of these programs is limited, since adolescents can access the Internet from many other locations, such as a friend's house, the library, and other electronic devices (Snakenborg, 2011).

Mason (2008) suggests that school leaders should support both the victims of cyberbullying and their parents. He also encourages school personnel to engage with the students that are the instigators of cyberbullying as well as their parents. He cautions that many parents may not be aware that their child is participating in cyberbullying and may be defensive and deny it. Some strategies that may be effective when dealing with parents include; listening and not arguing with them, educating them on the dangers of cyberbullying, working together on seeking solutions on how to stop it from occurring, providing clear and concise expectations and consequences, and stressing to them that the school's goal is to create a caring and safe school environment for their child and for all of the students in their school (Mason, 2008).

Parents reported being quite knowledgeable about the older forms of technology like email and cell phones, but admitted that they are not as familiar with the newer forms of technology such as Facebook, Youtube, blogs, and chat rooms (Cassidy et al., 2012). The majority of the parents surveyed were in favor of promoting open communication, modeling, and a more kind and respectful online environment in order to help reduce the frequency and severity of cyberbullying; while the majority of educators favored more restrictions and punishment (Cassidy et al., 2012). This study concluded by stressing the importance for students, parents, and educators all being involved in the development and implementation of cyberbullying prevention strategies and policies. Involving parents when implementing these strategies and policies will give school leaders an opportunity to gain support and cooperation in preventing cyberbullying and dealing with any incidences in the future.

Legal Issues

Even though cyberbullying takes place in the electronic environment and may be instigated anonymously, the effects of it carries over to the school environment and may have very harmful consequences for the students that are being bullied (Mason, 2008). Based on past court cases, school officials are responsible to investigate any form of cyberbullying when they suspect that it is occurring in order to create and maintain a safe and welcoming learning environment for all of their students. Claims of cyberbullying should be taken seriously through communication and education with all of the parties involved in order to minimize the frequency and severity of cyberbullying (Mason, 2008; Snakenborg, 2011).

School and law enforcement efforts to combat cyberbullying may be challenging for several reasons. Some school administrators are reluctant to pursue and punish cyberbullying for fear of infringing on a person's first amendment rights of free speech. They are also very cautious since they do not have a thorough understanding of their legal authority (Mason, 2008; Stewart, 2011). Much of cyberbullying originates outside of the school and occurs in the nonphysical world. This makes it difficult for law enforcement agencies and school officials to detect who the instigators are and to what extent they are violating the existing laws (Stewart, 2011). Another deterrent for school administrators in combating cyberbullying is that most victims are reluctant to report incidences of cyberbullying since they fear that the bullying may become more severe and that the adults will take away or limit their time on their electronic devices (Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2012; Chibbaro, 2007). Also, most state and local law enforcement agencies do not have the resources and training in this relatively new area of crime and harassment (Stewart, 2011).

According to Stewart (2011) there are 47 states that have adopted laws that make stalking and electronic forms of harassment illegal. There have been some contradictions in case law regarding cyberbullying and other cyber-crimes. Mason (2008) discussed various legal cases involving free speech concerning students while at school and away from school. In one of the cases, a student was expelled for creating a website that had derogatory and threatening comments about a specific teacher. However, in another case, a student who was originally expelled for starting a website that involved fake obituaries of students, won in a court case. The school couldn't prove that the student that designed the website was targeting anyone in particular or that it caused any disruptions to the learning environment of the school (Mason, 2008). However, most cases have supported the schools and the victims of cyberbullying when it has caused an interruption to the learning environment, even if the cyberbullying was instigated away from the school (Mason, 2008; Stewart, 2011). This has given schools and victims of cyberbullying confidence and power to hold accountable those that are involved in participating in cyberbullying.

Congress passed a law in 2008, that addresses cyberbullying and other issues, named Protecting Children in the 21st Century (Snakenborg, 2011). There are currently 44 states that have legislation regarding issues relating to harassment, intimidation and school bullying. In some cases it is difficult to demonstrate that cyberbullying is covered under the current legislation; therefore many states have included language specific to cyberbullying in their laws (Snakenborg, 2011). For example, in North Carolina it is now a misdemeanor to participate in cyberbullying. In Missouri, cyberbullying is a crime that may result in fines, jail time, or both. Also, the states of Ohio and Virginia have both added cyberbullying to their existing laws (Snakenborg, 2011).

All levels of government need to continue to assess the laws on cyberbullying to make sure that they are constitutional and will hold up in the courts (Stewart, 2011). Legislators, law enforcement agencies, and school administrators must continue to work together in order to combat cyberbullying and minimize the severity and frequency of cyberbullying and other cyber-crimes.

Intervention and Prevention

The most widely researched and utilized antibullying program in schools is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Mason, 2008). This comprehensive program teaches the importance of increasing the awareness of the prevalence of bullying, increasing the supervision and monitoring of students, clearly stating and enforcing the rules against bullying, and providing positive adult role models for students to follow. School-level interventions involve the entire school population and are designed to create a safe and welcoming environment so all of the students can learn in a non-threatening environment (Mason, 2008). Research has shown that in some schools there was a 25% - 50% reduction in the amount of bullying when the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was implemented.

Statistics associated with the prevalence of cyberbullying and the negative impacts on its victims have resulted in developing ways to intervene and prevent it from occurring. Much of the research that has been completed on the prevention of cyberbullying has reported that it is imperative for educators, counselors, students, parents, and community members to all become involved in the process (Couvillon, 2011; Mason, 2008). Students are less likely to participate in cyberbullying if their peers don't and if they know that there will be consequences for their actions (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013). In one study, 4% of adolescents that reported none of their

friends participated in cyberbullying in the past six months also stated that they didn't in the previous 30 days. However, 62% of the respondents that reported that most of their friends participated in cyberbullying in the past six months stated that they also did in the previous 30 days (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013).

School counselors have a significant role in providing awareness of cyberbullying to teachers, school personnel, students, and parents. They also are highly involved in determining and implementing the prevention and intervention strategies of cyberbullying (Chibbaro, 2007). Some of the key components of a school's cyberbullying intervention program should include, clearly defining and enforcing policies for the students; collecting and analyzing data about the prevalence of cyberbullying; having adults teach and model appropriate uses of electronic devices; and having cyberbullying education and the proper use of technology an ongoing process (Couvillon, 2011).

Chibbaro (2007) offers several suggestions that school counselors may utilize to help minimize the prevalence of cyberbullying from occurring. One of the first steps suggested is to make sure that there are clear policies in place regarding cyberbullying both in school and away from school. School counselors should recommend that there be a clearly defined policy that cyberbullying both while at school and at home will not be tolerated. Possible consequences for being involved in cyberbullying may include detention, loss of computer time, suspension, and expulsion (Chibbaro, 2007). Students should be educated on the harmful effects of cyberbullying and taught that what they put online can be traced back to them. There should also be a procedure for students to anonymously report any cyberbullying incidences that they are aware of (Chibbaro, 2007).

After the policies and reporting procedures are written, school counselors may then turn their attention to creating an awareness and intervention strategies for students, parents, and school personnel (Chibbaro, 2007). Intervention strategies may include teaching students how to identify what cyberbullying actually is, determining effective ways to communicate to the students the cyberbullying policies, teaching students how to anonymously report cyberbullying when it does occur, and making sure that there is adequate supervision in areas of the school where cyberbullying may likely occur (Chibbaro, 2007).

According to Mason (2008) school leaders should be encouraged to take an active role in discussing and researching why adolescents become cyberbullies and make sure that they are held accountable for their actions when they are identified. They should teach and encourage students to not stand by and allow bullying of any type to take place. They should also teach them not to ignore the pain that cyberbullying inflicts on themselves and their peers. They should promote ideas and programs that foster a positive social environment in which every student is included and welcomed in their school and within their community (Mason, 2008).

There are several curriculum based programs available to educators that strive to help prevent cyberbullying. Some examples of these programs include “iSAFE Internet Safety Program”, “Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum”, “Sticks and Stones: Cyberbullying”, and “Let’s Fight it Together: What We All Can Do to Prevent Cyberbullying” (Snakenborg, 2011, p.92). These programs typically include videos or Webisodes that teach the negative aspects of cyberbullying and how to prevent it. They also address effective ways to intervene when cyberbullying does occur (Snakenborg, 2011). These programs may be used alone as the cyberbullying program in a school or may be just a portion of a more comprehensive cyberbullying prevention and intervention program.

The “iSafe Internet Safety Program” is a comprehensive program that supplies schools with relevant educational materials intended for students in grades K-12 (Snakenborg, 2011; Mason, 2008). It provides hands-on lessons specifically for grades K-4 that teach the students vocabulary and concepts of the Internet and introduces them to Internet safety. It also includes activities for students in grades 5-8 that encourage discussions about the importance of recognizing and preventing cyberbullying. In grades 9-12, their materials provide activities that utilize Webcast videos that promote and encourage discussions surrounding the appropriate use of electronic media and the variety of forms of cyberbullying. Mason (2008) states that the iSafe Internet Safety Program provides community outreach materials along with its classroom lessons. This helps to empower students, parents, community members, and law enforcement officials to create and promote a safe environment on the Internet. Refer to Appendix A for a more detailed description of the “iSafe Internet Safety Program”.

The “Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum” is a program that is designed for students in grades 6-12 and consists of curriculum for eight sessions (Snakenborg, 2011). There are materials provided in both English and Spanish that teach the negative aspects of being involved in cyberbullying. They recommend having peer leaders be involved in the delivery of the curriculum which includes ideas to refrain from cyberbullying and intervening when students are aware of it. Curriculum directed towards younger students was later added to the program (Snakenborg, 2011). Refer to Appendix B for a more detailed description of the “Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum” program.

“Sticks and Stones: Cyberbullying” is intended for use with high school students. It utilizes a film that involves a student that is the recipient of cyberbullying. There are additional resources provided that teachers and counselors may use to encourage students to discuss what

they have learned while watching the video (Snakenborg, 2011). School counselors and other education leaders should take the time to learn about and evaluate the many different products that are available to utilize in their schools' cyberbullying program.

According to Snakenborg (2011) there are no peer-reviewed studies that prove the effectiveness of cyberbullying prevention and intervention programs. He cautions that educators should be careful to monitor and evaluate the implementation and outcomes of any cyberbullying program or curriculum until they are proven to be effective. There is research that shows that the incidences of face to face bullying substantially decrease in schools that provide antibullying education and prevention programs (Mason, 2008). One study found that the incidences of cyberbullying decreased after a school implemented a conventional bullying intervention (Bauman, 2013). Therefore, schools should consider including education and intervention strategies regarding cyberbullying in their policies and practices. This may help reduce the severity and frequency of cyberbullying occurring in their school and community (Mason, 2008). Integrating some cyberbullying intervention and prevention strategies along with the existing antibullying program may be an effective way to approach this important area of concern.

There are two workshops available to school counselors, education leaders, and parents that are provided by the Anti-Defamation League. These two workshops are titled "Trickery, Trolling, and Threats: Understanding and Addressing Cyberbullying" and "Youth and Cyberbullying: What Families Don't Know Will Hurt Them" (Snakenborg, 2011, p.92). The Anti-Defamation League has also provided online lesson plans intended for elementary, middle, and high schools students.

Many electronic media have provided strategies to prevent cyberbullying before it occurs (Snakenborg, 2011). The most often stated and effective strategy that is suggested is to simply block the harmful emails, phone calls, and instant messages that are being sent. Most of the computer profile sites, like MySpace and Facebook, provide a link on their site that allows participants to report any abuse or offensive material. They also encourage adolescents to tell a trusted adult if they are being targeted with cyberbullying. One strategy that students may utilize when confronted with cyberbullying is summed up in the phrase “Stop, Save, Block, and Tell” (Snakenborg, 2011, p.93). Students are taught to stop responding to content that they are hurt by, save any pictures or messages that they feel are offensive, block the offender from sending anymore messages, and tell an adult that they are being targeted.

There are several other resources available to help inform and educate parents, adolescents, and educators about being responsible while using the Internet. Some of these resources include, “Brain Pop, Cable in the Classroom, Common Sense Media, ConnectSafely, CyberBullyHelp, Learning.com, Media Awareness Network, StopBullying.gov, A Thin Line, and Web Wise Kids” (Levy, 2013, p. 27). These resources address a variety of topics regarding Internet safety including cyberbullying.

One of the key components of a school’s cyberbullying intervention program should include collecting and analyzing data about the prevalence of cyberbullying (Couvillon, 2011). Two instruments that may be utilized to determine the prevalence and severity of cyberbullying are the “Reynolds Bully-Victimization Scales for Schools” (RBVSS) by William Reynolds, and the “Student Needs Assessment Survey” by Nancy Willard.

The Reynolds Bully-Victimization Scales for Schools (RBVSS) consists of three self-report norm-referenced surveys created to determine various dimensions of school-related bullying, victimization and the psychological distress that is a result of bullying (Sink & Edwards, 2005). There are two sections that are specifically designed to assess cyberbullying behaviors and attitudes. The entire battery can be administered in 15-20 minutes. The hand scoring procedure is relatively easy to follow and can be completed in a short period of time. According to Sink & Edwards (2005) the standardization process was conducted in a rigorous manner. The standardization sample was quite large (N=2000), representing students in grades 3-12 from 37 schools across 11 diverse states. Reliability evidence for the RBVSS is reviewed in the manual as internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach alphas) and stability estimates. The magnitude of the alphas reported for each of the three scales was strong (Sink & Edwards, 2005). The manual describes three separate validity studies conducted on the RBVSS. Content validity was demonstrated with several item analyses. The author provides strong evidence of the discriminant, convergent, and criterion validity for two of the three tests and adequate validity for the other test (Sink & Edwards, 2005).

The second assessment that may be administered is the “Student Needs Assessment Survey”. This survey consists of 30 questions that may be completed in a relatively short period of time. Results of this survey will provide baseline data on the prevalence and severity of cyberbullying activity. There are questions that refer to the degree of parental involvement. This is important for future survey results, since an increase in parental involvement would indicate the effectiveness of parental awareness and education (Willard, 2013). Select questions relate specifically to bystanders and the likelihood of students intervening when they witness cyberbullying occurring. There are also questions that ask how comfortable adolescents are in

reporting online concerns to adults, which is another key component in deterring cyberbullying from occurring (Willard, 2013). Surveying students and collecting information about cyberbullying is an essential step to determine the needs of a school and the effectiveness of various prevention and intervention strategies.

Conclusion

After analyzing and synthesizing the research on cyberbullying, it is essential that educators and parents strive to stay informed about the new forms of technology and how they are utilized by adolescents. Teachers, counselors, and other school leaders should be continually educating themselves on new forms of technology by student demonstrations and professional development opportunities (Couvillon, 2011). Research suggests that schools should not ban the use of electronic devices since students will have access to them outside of school anyway (Couvillon, 2011). Schools should not limit their prevention program to a one-time discussion with limited exposure. Rather, they should make their cyberbullying education and prevention program an ongoing venture just as their traditional bullying policies and other school practices have been for many years (Couvillon, 2011).

It is imperative for school administrators, counselors, parents, students, community members, legislators, and law officers to continue to educate themselves on the prevalence and negative ramifications of cyberbullying. Schools should have a clearly defined cyberbullying policy. This policy should include awareness and continuous education as well as prevention and intervention strategies. Programs such as the “iSafe Internet Safety Program” and the “Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum” program, discussed earlier in this paper, should be highly considered for implementation in schools everywhere. If cost is a prohibiting factor, materials such as the “Online Safety Education Kits”, developed and provided by the company Netsmartz at no cost, should be considered as well. Refer to Appendix C for a more detailed description of these materials.

Schools should continue to analyze and evaluate their policies on cyberbullying and the effectiveness of their intervention and prevention strategies. Having everyone involved in the education, development, enforcement, and continuous improvement of the policies and practices regarding cyberbullying may help to minimize the severity and frequency of cyberbullying and its many negative consequences.

Author's Note

As a classroom teacher for the past 26 years in a school with students in grades 6-12, I have witnessed many incidences of harassment and traditional bullying. I've always been aware and concerned for the health and well-being of the victims of such behavior. With the development of technology and the Internet, I've become very intrigued with the emergence of cyberbullying and its negative ramifications. Since the incidents of cyberbullying are not as easy to detect and witness as traditional bullying are, I was very eager to research and study the various aspects of cyberbullying and its widespread influence on today's adolescents. This made it relatively easy for me to choose the topic of cyberbullying for my Capstone Project.

Studying the topic of cyberbullying has been a very stimulating and enriching experience. With the knowledge and insight that I have gained from researching various aspects of cyberbullying, I feel more informed and empowered to make a positive difference as a current teacher and as a future school counselor. Studying several intervention and prevention strategies and programs has given me increased skills and confidence to implement and evaluate many of the existing strategies and programs currently available regarding cyberbullying.

I now realize that there are several concrete steps that I as a school counselor may take to educate and empower students, parents, teachers, and community members on the negative consequences of cyberbullying. I have a greater appreciation for the need to implement and continue to evaluate an intervention and prevention program on cyberbullying in conjunction with any existing bullying program. I sincerely believe that my efforts will help minimize the frequency and severity of cyberbullying. I look forward to the opportunity to make a positive

difference in the lives of the students that I will be serving as a school counselor in the near future.

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Appendix A

iSafe Internet Safety Program Information (taken from the isafe.org website)

What is i-SAFE e-Safety Education?

i-SAFE is a blended compliance enterprise solution that combines the power of technology, traditional curriculum and the influence of social media to educate and empower students through cutting-edge e-Safety education platforms. i-SAFE e-Safety education is designed to provide schools and school districts with comprehensive curriculum materials and learning platforms and tools for equipping students with the critical thinking and decision-making skills they need to be safe, responsible and technologically proficient cyber citizens in today's global society and economy.

i-SAFE Subscriptions

Schools acquire i-SAFE curriculum through one of two low cost subscription packages: E-Rate and GOLD. The E-Rate Subscription package has K-12 lesson plans in the topic areas of Appropriate Online Behavior, Cyber Bullying and Social Networking and was developed as an easily-deployed and uniform solution for schools to satisfy CIPA Internet safety education mandates and protect their E-Rate funding.

The GOLD Subscription package includes all the curriculum and resources included in the E-Rate Subscription package plus access to the world's largest e-Safety curriculum library which includes lessons on cell phone safety, intellectual property, sexting, predator identification and many more.

AUP Cloud Services

AUP Cloud Services is an automated, Web-based policy and acceptance system that provides schools/districts:

- A step-by-step, customizable online framework enabling administrators to create a Web-based AUP document that addresses all technology users
- i-SAFE's expertise and video tutorials to educate students, parents and school staff about specific technology acceptable use policies
- An automated, Web-based signature/acceptance process, including secure on-demand reporting that details current progress
- Secure and searchable storage

Appendix B

Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum

For more information or to order, visit www.hazelden.org/cyberbullying or call Hazelden toll-free at 1-800-328-9000.

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What is *Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum for Grades 6-12*?

Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum for Grades 6-12 is a program that deals with attitudes and behaviors associated with cyber bullying. It consists of an eight-session curriculum, with additional resources on a CD-ROM that includes:

- Reproducible parent resources
- Reproducible student fact sheet
- Program poster and student handouts
- Resources to address cyber bullying schoolwide (establishing a school policy and addressing legal concerns, for example)
- Peer leader training materials
- A short training on cyber bullying for program facilitators

Most materials needed to implement the program are included in the manual and on the CD ROM. In addition, a Web site has been established that will provide up-to-date information about cyber bullying. This Web site can be accessed at www.hazelden.org/cyberbullying.

What Are the Goals of the Program?

This program strives toward achieving the following results:

- Raise students' and parents' awareness of what cyber bullying is and why it is so harmful.
- Equip students with the skills and resources to treat each other respectfully when they use cyber technologies; and help students know how to get help if they, or others they know, are being cyber bullied.
- Equip students with the skills to use cyber technologies in positive ways. For more information on the learner outcomes of each session, turn to the Curriculum Scope and Sequence on the following page of this document.

Who is the Intended Audience?

Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum for Grades 6-12 is designed for middle school and high school students. This program would fit well within a health education, communications, technology, or general life skills curriculum (see references to national academic standards at the end of this document). Teachers may use their discretion to adapt some activities to the age and maturity level of their students.

Appendix B (continued)***Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum Scope and Sequence*****Session 1: What Is Bullying?**

By the end of each session, students will be able to

- Define bullying.
- Identify examples of bullying.
- Identify the roles students play in the “Bullying Circle.”
- Identify rules against bullying.

Session 2: What Is Cyber Bullying?

- Define cyber bullying.
- Identify the technologies used in cyber bullying.
- Identify cyber bullying situations.

Session 3: How Does Cyber Bullying Affect People?

- Identify the effects of cyber bullying on the child who is bullied, the bystanders, and the child(ren) who bully.
- Identify how to use technology in a positive way.

Session 4: Why Do People Cyber Bully Others?

- Identify reasons why people think they can get away with cyber bullying others.
- State why they think cyber bullying is unacceptable.

Session 5: How Should You React to Cyber Bullying?

- Identify what steps to take if they are cyber bullied.
- Identify what steps to take if they know that someone else is being cyber bullied.

Session 6: Creating a Positive Cyber Site—**Part I**

- Describe how some social networking sites began.
- Explain what social networking sites do to curb abuse.
- Describe the steps in planning a social networking site.

Session 7: Creating a Positive Cyber Site—**Part II**

- Describe the components of an effective presentation.
- Identify how they personally will commit themselves to stop or prevent cyber bullying.

Session 8: Creating a Positive Cyber Site—**Part III**

- Make a public commitment to preventing cyber bullying.
- Identify positive ways to use social networking Web sites.

Appendix C

Information on *Online Safety Education Kits* (taken from the netsmartz.org website)

Presentations

NetSmartz offers free, multimedia Internet safety presentations tailored for specific audiences – parents and communities, tweens, teens, and younger children. These presentations come complete with a presenter’s guide and script. Download any of these to share with your students and their parents, or watch the presentation for parents and communities online now.

Online Safety Education Kits

Deliver comprehensive online safety education for middle school students with this easy-to-use Kit, brought to you by Sprint and the child safety experts at NetSmartz Workshop. As a program of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, NetSmartz focuses on educating children about online and personal safety.

- Who should use this Kit?

Professionals interested in keeping children safer online!

- Middle school teachers
- Youth program coordinators
- Counselors
- Law-enforcement officers
- Social service providers
- Religious leaders

Available in English & Spanish

- What is in this Kit?

Everything you need to start teaching Internet safety!

- The NetSmartz Workshop Resource Manual
 - - descriptions of resources and the online safety risks
- Tween & Teen Internet Safety Presentations
 - - two, interactive 30-minute presentations teaching Internet safety
- Educational Videos
 - - DVD collection of animated and documentary-style videos
- Activity Cards
 - - lesson plans that accompany the videos
- Internet Safety Pledges & Tips
 - - guidelines for safer Internet use
- *Your NetSmartz* Poster
 - - double-sided poster with safety tips in English & Spanish