

## Cyber-Bullying



“Sticks and Stones Can Break My Bones, But How Can Pixels Hurt Me?”

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## The Digital Generation

- ♦ 90% of children ages 5 to 17 use computer
- ♦ 53% of children ages 5 to 17 use the internet
- ♦ 80% have cell phones
- ♦ Studies show that the majority (85-99%) of adolescents use the internet regularly
- ♦ The world children live in today is increasingly digital

## What is Bullying?

- ♦ Bullying refers to acts of aggressive behavior that cause physical or psychological harm or discomfort to another person committed when there is a power imbalance between participants



## What is CYBER-Bullying?

- ♦ Covert psychological bullying conveyed through electronic mediums such as email, message boards, cell phones, blogs, social networking, video games, etc.
- ♦ The covert aspect is important because the anonymity leads to the occurrence of bullying that wouldn't occur in real world settings.

## Two Realms of Cyber-Bullying

- ♦ Real World - Bullying that is a result of real world activity, for example- an unflattering video posted on YouTube



## “The Rictionary”

- ♦ Fake Myspace using real life picture from class
- ♦ Said he was homosexual
- ♦ Been picked on since kindergarten, this is worse because the information has greater reach
- ♦ Contemplated suicide
- ♦ Myspace removed after weeks of pestering



## Two Realms of Cyber-Bullying



- ♦ Virtual World - Bullying that is a result of internet/virtual activity, for example- not including someone in a chat room

## Megan Meier



- ♦ An adult neighbor pretended to be a boy named "Josh," initiated a love relationship via Myspace.
- ♦ Started posting nasty comments on Myspace - last post said "I wish you were dead"
- ♦ Committed suicide
- ♦ United States vs. Lori Drew - acquitted because of void-for-vagueness

## Intro to Cyber-Bullying Vocabulary

- ♦ Flaming - A heated online exchange
- ♦ Harassment - Repeatedly sending nasty messages that cause emotional distress
- ♦ Denigration - Online postings of negative or false info, can be used to damage reputation or friendships (gossip)
- ♦ Impersonation - Pretending to be someone else and posting material to get the person in trouble/danger or damage that persons reputation

## Intro to Cyber-Bullying Vocabulary Continued...

- ♦ Outing - Sharing someone's secrets, embarrassing info, or images online
- ♦ Cyber-Stalking - Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear
- ♦ Happy Slapping - Videotaping and electronically disseminating videos of someone being assaulted

## "Traditional" Bully Profile

- ♦ Often suffer from poor parent/child relationships
- ♦ More inclined to misuse both legal and illegal drugs
- ♦ By age 30 were more likely to have more criminal convictions



## "Traditional" Bully Profile Continued...

- ♦ Even though likely to be popular, still suffer from anxiety and low self-esteem
- ♦ Boys are more likely to engage in physical bullying
- ♦ Girls are more likely to engage in social bullying



## Cyber-Bully Profiles



- ♦ 44% report poor emotional attachment to caregivers, while only 16% report strong attachment
- ♦ Being the victim of bullying makes you more likely to be a Cyber-Bully
- ♦ Many studies show peak activity at age 14

## "Traditional" Victim Profile

- ♦ Generally physically weaker or smaller and unable to defend themselves
- ♦ Usually poor communication or problem solving skills
- ♦ Likely to spend a lot of time on their own



## "Traditional" Victim Profile Continued...



- ♦ More likely to report symptoms of social phobia, vomiting, and sleep disturbances
- ♦ More likely to be rejected and excluded by their peers

## Cyber-Bullying Victims

- ♦ Targeted for specific attributes such as physical appearance, ethnicity, etc.
- ♦ Suffer from high levels of social anxiety
- ♦ More likely to report illicit substance use
- ♦ Warning signs may include:
  - ♦ Unexpected discontinuation of computer use
  - ♦ Nervous or jumpy reaction when electronic communication occurs
  - ♦ Angry, depressed, or frustrated appearance after using the computer

## Consequences of Cyber-Bullying

- ♦ In study of 3,000 students, 38% of victims felt vengeful, 37% felt angry, 24% felt helpless
- ♦ 8% of participants have attempted suicide, run away, refused to go to school, or have been chronically ill after bullying



## Consequences of Cyber-Bullying Continued...

- ♦ After experiencing Cyber-Bullying, females felt more frustrated than males
- ♦ Emotional responses to Cyber-Bullying could precipitate into more serious behavioral outcomes
- ♦ Most victims didn't feel accepted by peer group - often feel socially excluded

## How are Instances Reported

### Victims

- 47% would report to school personnel
- 57% would tell their parents
- 74% would tell their friends
- 25% would tell no one



## How Instances are Reported



### Of those who witness a Cyber-Bullying incident

- 52% would tell school personnel
- 45% would tell parents
- 70% would tell peers
- 18% would tell no one

## Why Students Don't Report to School

A study found these to be the most frequently cited reasons for not reporting Cyber-Bullying:

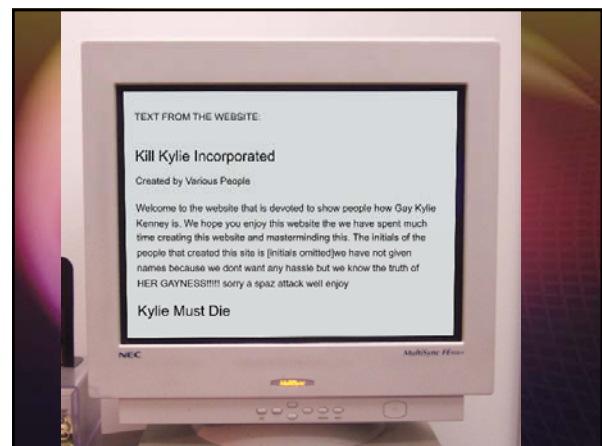
- ♦ Fear of retribution (30%)
- ♦ Viewed as the student's problem and not the school's mandate (29%)
- ♦ The school couldn't stop the bullying anyways (27%)
- ♦ They could get their friends in trouble (26%)
- ♦ Their parents would restrict their access to the internet (24%)
- ♦ Others would label them as 'informers' or 'rats' (20%)

## Combating Cyber-Bullying



## "Kill Kylie Incorporated"

- ♦ Websites and IM harassment
- ♦ Website was taken down soon after it was put it up because it was illegal to use death threats
- ♦ Took 9 months to find perpetrators, who were then suspended from school
- ♦ Changed schools twice and received professional help
- ♦ Now speaks about Cyber-Bullying at conferences



## Cyber-Bullying in Video Games



Game consoles like X-Box 360, PSP allow for online game play with live talk allowed between players. Participants in these games who use constant foul language, racist taunts, sexist comments and disruptive play tactics are called "Griefers"

Microsoft has developed programs to let players rate other players online behavior and does follow up on ratings.

X-Box players may also designate players they want to avoid and the TruSkill matchmaking software will attempt to accommodate users wishes.

## Collaboration

- ♦ A Study found 60% of students believe they have the power to stop Cyber-Bullying, but the same students also indicate that they believe combating Cyber-Bullying needs to be a joint collaborative venture between parents, students, and schools

## What Parents can do

- ♦ Move home computers into easily viewable areas of house
- ♦ Talk with children regularly about online activities
- ♦ Consider installing parental control filtering software
- ♦ Encourage children to report bullying

## What Kids Can Do

- ♦ Don't post contact information
- ♦ Understand how to use privacy controls
- ♦ Find someone they trust to communicate worries to
- ♦ Don't be a silent bystander - report it (anonymously is fine)

## What Schools Can Do

- ♦ Raise awareness through programs that disseminate information
- ♦ Ability to report anonymously
- ♦ Post rules and consequences in every school setting as a reminder
- ♦ Holistic school policies stressing the values of fairness and trust
- ♦ Self-esteem building programs
- ♦ Monitoring web use and blocking inappropriate websites and programs

## Questions?



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