Child and Youth Mental Health Series

Cyberbullying:
Danger on the Virtual Playground

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Technology Artifacts
(AKA: When I was growing up)

- Phones were all plugged into a wall
- You never began a call with, "Where are you?"
- In public, if you had to call someone you needed to find a kind store owner or have coins for a payphone to make a call
- When you took a photo you had to wait a few days to see it
- Eventually there were car phones that had to be installed into your car and the first cell phones were huge

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Social Nostalgia
(AKA: When I was growing up)

- People who were too shy to leave their house spent a lot of time alone
- Games came in boxes and could only be played with others if they were physically present
- You would have to shower, brush your teeth and dress up to get together with someone
- If you happened to be home when something interesting happened to a friend, you had to wait until tomorrow to find out about it
- Your bedroom was a safe place where you could get away from all the social pressures

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More Social Nostalgia

- You learned about people by speaking to them directly and real smiles, eye-contact and tone of voice mattered
- No one had more than 15 friends
- No one had any friends that they never met
- Feeling good about how you looked didn't involve having people "like" your photos
- When you turned out the lights you went to bed without interruption

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The New Social World:
The Always-On Generation

- In cyberspace you can spend more time interacting with friends and meet people from all over the world without even leaving your house

- In addition to meeting up with people at the park or downtown, you can now meet up in chat rooms, on Facebook, Skype, WeChat or countless other virtual locations

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The New Social World

- Cyberspace allows people to remain "connected" whenever and wherever they are
- You don't have to leave your room to communicate with others … or be insulted by them
- Ones social life has moved from a real world one to one that includes a virtual world that has different rules and can at times feel misleadingly safe

The New Social World

- Thoughts that used to be given the time needed to be considered can now be shared as soon as they come into your head resulting in a lack of censorship
- This is a world with **No Take Backs.** Once it is out there you no longer have control of it

The New Social World

- Facebook coopted and redefined words such as **Friend** and **Like**
- Selfies are becoming more provocative in order to get more "likes"

Breaking Up is Hard to do...Not

- Not being quick enough to reply to a text can be perceived as an insult or even a way of breaking up with your boyfriend or girlfriend
- Breakups can be done by changing your status to single on Facebook, unfriending, de-tagging and deleting photos
- Using text or email to end the relationship

- All of these methods remove the human connection and the human reaction, making it easier to do and depriving people of the nonverbals that help us gauge reaction and temper our approach

Some Health Costs

Sleep:
- Sleep deprivation due to having phones by the bed with interrupting texts throughout the night
- Blue light from all screens (smart phones, iPad, computer, television) interfering with the production of melatonin, a hormone that prepares the brain for sleep

- Sleep issues affect concentration, attention, anxiety levels and mood

More Health Costs

Vision issues:
- More time inside on computers/gaming systems has meant less time outside in natural lighting. Light triggers release of retinal dopamine which inhibits eye growth reducing myopia.
- Some studies identify a link between near-work and myopia but inconsistent

Reduction in physical exercise and time outside

What do you prefer?

When communicating with friends do you prefer making a telephone call or sending a text/email?

What if you're tired?

What if you're busy?

What if you're angry at them?

Some Statistics

- Canadians sent 23 billion person-to-person text messages in Q3 2013*
- Total text messages sent in 2012 numbered 96.5 billion, up from the 78 billion messages sent in 2011*
- Average number of text messages per month for youth ages 13-17 years is 3417 (Nielson 2011)
- 86% of 18-34 year olds in Canada heavily use social media (Ipsos, 2011)

  - *according to txt.ca

Some Statistics

- "Canadians are the world's biggest Internet users, logging an average of 43.5 hours of online browsing per month, almost twice the global average." (Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada)

Consider this:

- If a teens world includes cyberspace, then in cyberspace we will see the expression of:

  - Ethics, morality and empathy in an environment that can be anonymous (downloads, sharing secrets, impaired signals around the effects of one's behaviour on others)
  - Emotions (capability to express and direct anger, sadness, etc. to a large audience with immediacy)

Consider this continued:

- Communication skills (managing private information, personal censorship, keeping a trust)
- Sexuality and intimacy (on-line dating, on-line relationships, sexting, sleeping together and waking up together, handling a breakup)
- Leisure (gaming, chatting, hanging out)
- Violence and aggression (cyber-stalking, discrimination, libel, threats …
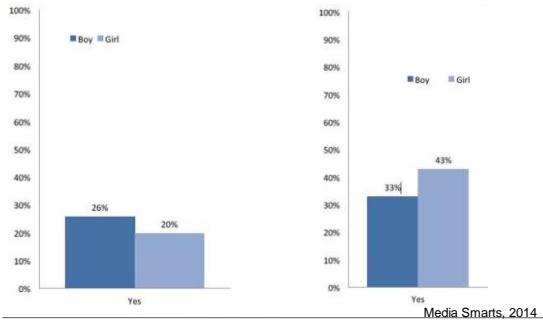
Cyber Bullying

The Stats

- 2013 National Survey of 5,436 Canadian students from grades 4-11 regarding online meanness and cruel behaviour

- 23% admitted to doing something mean or cruel to someone else online
- 37% reported that they were the recipient of online meanness and/or cruelty

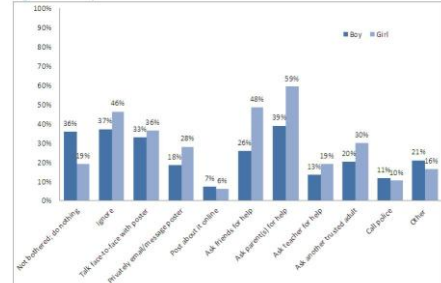*(2014) Cyberbullying: Dealing with Online Meanness, Cruelty and Threats, Media Smarts

Perpetrator   Recipient

Media Smarts, 2014

Responses to Cyberbullying

Figure 21: Responses to mean or cruel behaviour: Gender

Media Smarts, 2014

Interesting Data

- Kids Help Phone (2011) – cyberbullying is most rampant on social networking sites followed by texting
- One million children were harassed, threatened or cyberbullied on Facebook in 2010 (Consumer Reports 2011)
- 81% of youth agree that online bullying is easier to get away with than bullying in person*
- 80% think it is easier to hide online bullying from parents*

*Teen Youth and Wireless Safety Survey, 2009

Video

Cyber-Teen Alerts: Cyber-Bullying
American Bar Association, 2010

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpQuyW_hISA

Main Reasons Cyberbullies Bullied Others

Table 2: Reason(s) for being mean or cruel online

If you answered Yes, why did you do it?	Percentage Yes
I was just joking around	55%
The person said something mean and cruel about me first	48%
The person said something mean and cruel about my friend first	32%
I wanted to get even with the person for another reason	22%
My friends were doing it	8%
I was bored ♂♀	15%
I was angry	25%
I did not like the person	32%
Other	12%
I don't know	5%

Media Smarts, 2014

Bullying vs. Cyber Bullying

Bullying

The bully is someone who actively seeks out weaker targets, and purposefully and repeatedly harasses them, with the primary intention being to express dominance and power through the infliction of harm

Cyber Bullying

Involves the use of information and communication technologies to intentionally frighten, embarrass, and/or harass a targeted individual.

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The Uniqueness of Cyber Bullying

- Cyber bullies can remain anonymous/ hidden particularly given their advanced knowledge of the technology
- The hurtful messages can obtain a wide audience with incredible speed
- Cyber bullies don't have to own up to their actions because they are very difficult to identify

Uniqueness Continued

- Pain Cues and Bullies
- Cyber bullies do not get immediate feedback in terms of pain cues and therefore, may not know when to stop
- Without clear feedback on their bullying, cyber bullies will have more difficulty being guided by empathy

Impact

Overwhelmed

Angry and Vengeful

Anxious

Powerless

Depressed and Suicidal

Exposed and Humiliated

Alone and Isolated

Disinterested in School

Types of Cyber Bullying

1. Instant/ Text Messaging Harassment
2. Stealing Passwords
   - Use password to enter chat rooms as the other person
   - Use password to change person's profile with embarrassing information or identifying information
   - Locking victim out of their own account
3. Blogs
   - Using one's blog to disparage another
   - Setting up a blog under the name of the cyber victim and then writing things that will get him/her in trouble

Types of Cyber Bullying

4. Web Sites
   - Designing sites to humiliate another person
5. Sending Pictures through Email and Cell Phones
   - Mass emails to other users that include nude, degrading, or doctored photos
   - **Happy Slapping** - one person assaults another, while someone records it on their cell phone

Types of Cyber Bullying

6. Internet Polling (i.e., ask.fm)
   - Who's hot? Who's not? Who is the biggest ---- in the 8th grade?
7. Proxy bullying
   - Provoke victim and then when he/she lashes back the communication is saved and forwarded to the parents of the victim

The Law in Canada

- Under the Criminal Code of Canada it is a crime to communicate repeatedly with someone if your communication causes them to fear for their safety or the safety of others
- It is a crime to publish defamatory libel
- Cyber bullying may also be violating the Canadian Human Rights Act if it spreads hate or discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or disability

Privacy and the Law

Ontario
- April 2007 Cyber Bullying was added to offenses one can be suspended or expelled from school for
- June 2007 it passed unanimously and is a part of the Safe School Act (Bill 81)
- In Ontario, the Safe Schools Act has been changed to specifically include online behaviour: students can now be suspended or expelled for cyberbullying, even if it is done outside the school.

Bill C-13

- Prohibit the non-consensual distribution of intimate images;
- Empower a court to order the removal of intimate images from the Internet;
- Permit the court to order forfeiture of the computer, cell phone or other device used in the offence;
- Provide for reimbursement to victims for costs incurred in removing the intimate image from the Internet or elsewhere; and
- Empower the court to make an order to prevent someone from distributing intimate images.

What Can Be Done?

Preparation and Prevention Tips

Talking to Parents

Figure 19: Talking to parents about uncomfortable online content: Grade
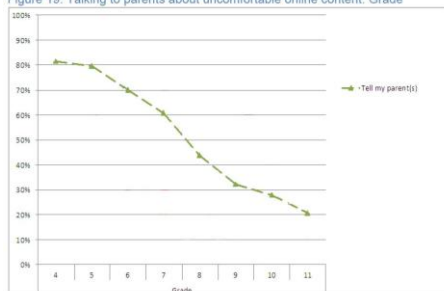
Media Smarts, 2014

For Parents

- Acting ethically online begins by helping kids learn how to behave ethically offline Media Smarts
  - **Toddlers**: Watch for teachable moments
  - **Young Children**: Talk about hypothetical situations related to respect, privacy, supporting friends, being kind to others
  - **Older Children**: Talk about general principals (fairness, kindness, respect, honesty)
  - **Tweens and Teens**: Role playing real and hypothetical situations

Quote

"Empathy can't be taught, but it can be caught."
Roots of Empathy
Mary Gordon

For Parents continued

- "Start young and keep the conversation going" _{Media Smarts}
- Your goal is to build a safe and trusting relationship so that if needed your children will come to you
- Learn about cyberbullying and have you child be one of your teachers
- Talk about family expectations regarding ethical behaviour offline and online
- Talk about cyberspace as a public place and how this impacts privacy and the importance of thinking carefully about what you post and pass on

For Parents continued

- Ask your child if he/she is or has been cyberbullied
- Ask if he/she is or has cyberbullied others
- Discuss illegality of cyberbullying
- Learn the technology
- Limit the use of technology but have alternatives that foster real world experiences (amily board game time, walks, soccer with friends, crafts)
- No devices in the bedroom
- Have the computer in a part of the house that is easier to monitor

For Parents continued

- Ask to see their profile page, tomorrow. This will give them time to remove inappropriate content and is a way to teach them what not to post
- Ask your child to help you set up a profile and then ask to be included as a friend
- Set up a cyber safety contract with your child
- Speak with your child's school about their Cyber Bullying policies

For Youth

- Don't give out your private information (i.e., full name, address, school name)
- Never send a message when you are angry
- Protect your password and change it if you feel it has been compromised
- Remember that people online aren't always who they say they are
- Don't accept files, emails or links from people you don't know
- Be respectful to others online, don't swear, degrade, etc.

For Youth Continued

- Don't post what you didn't write
- Don't post anything your parents or principal shouldn't see
- Remember that what goes online stays online
- Check what your friends are posting about you
- If you make your social profile public be prepared to have future employers, schools etc. search and find it
- Don't support others in their cyber bullying

For Teachers
Lesson Planning

Helping students with their:

- understanding of how online communication differs from face-to-face conversation
- awareness of how the distinct attributes of online communication may contribute to inappropriate or bullying behaviour
- recognition of cyberbullying behaviour
- understanding of the crucial role played by bystanders, including themselves, in fuelling or stopping bullying behaviour online and offline
- awareness of the impact of cyberbullying on targeted individuals
- knowledge of appropriate action to take when cyberbullying occurs
- awareness of rules for "good Netizenship"

Taken directly from Media Smarts

For Teachers
Lesson Planning

- **Protect your privacy:** think twice before sharing passwords and personal information.
- **Respect the privacy of others:** don't share any information online without asking the person who gave it to you; ask any other people in your photos if they mind before posting or sharing them.
- **Respect people's virtual space:** don't go digging through someone's files or computer.
- **Stay true to yourself:** think twice before pranking people and don't pretend to be somebody else online.
- **Stay true to your values in cyberspace:** don't be a gossip girl or guy. Don't post things that you wouldn't say to someone's face. When something makes you angry, try resolving things face-to-face instead of doing it online.

Taken directly from Media Smarts

What Can Be Done?

Intervention Tips

Intervention Tips

- If someone is bothering you in Instant Messaging, block them
- Notify your internet, instant messaging, or mobile phone service provider
- Do not keep this to yourself. Tell an adult that you know and trust
- Inform your local police or your school SRO

Intervention Tips

- Don't reply to messages from cyber bullies. They want a reaction.
- Do not erase or delete messages from cyber bullies as you may need them for evidence
- If your account has been stolen, contact the service provider to get it back
- You may need to delete your current email or cell phone accounts and set up new ones

Resources

Web Sites:
- www.TurningCorners.ca (for copies of this presentation)
- www.PrevNet.ca
- www.KidsHelpPhone.ca

Books:
- The Bullying Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Deal with Social Aggression and Cyberbullying (Lohmann & Taylor, 2013)
- A Smart Girl's Guide to the Internet (Cindrich, 2009)

Resources

- https://www.facebook.com/help/
  - Safety Tools and Resources
- https://support.twitter.com/articles/18906#
  - Deleting one of your tweets
- https://help.instagram.com/
  - Select Privacy and Safety Center
- https://support.snapchat.com/
  - Select Abuse and Safety
- https://www.flickr.com/abuse/
  - Select form of Abuse

Resources

- http://www.getcybersafe.gc.ca/index-eng.aspx
  - Government of Canada
- https://www.cybertip.ca/app/en/
  - To report the online sexual exploitation of children in Canada
- http://needhelpnow.ca/app/en/
  - For youth who have mistakenly sent sexual images of themselves to peers
  - Lists social media sites and how to remove photos from these sites

Resources

- http://mediasmarts.ca/
  - Cyberspace resources and lesson plans.