Frequency, Patterns, and Prevention of Cyber Bullying and Victimization

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Role of Technology

• Importance of technology

• Increasing access/use
  • MediaSmarts (2013)
    • 5,436 Canadian youth
      • Smart phone access
      • Social media

• Social networking sites
Role of Technology

• Current Apps
  • Cyberbullying Primus

• Dependency and addiction

• Responsible technology use
1) Cyber bullying is occurring at epidemic levels
2) The best way to respond to cyber bullying is to tell an adult
3) Cyber bullying is a problem for both boys and girls
4) Cyber bullying is more frequent than traditional forms of bullying
5) Monitoring is the best way for parents to prevent cyber bullying
6) Cyber bullying occurs more often in North America than elsewhere
7) Cyber bullying is most common during high school
8) A one size fits all approach is best to deal with cyber bullying
What is Cyber Bullying?

• “Aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of communication, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376)

• Characteristics, types, and mediums

• The story of Megan Meier
  • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFsfDLcKfQU
Frequency of Cyber Bullying & Victimization

- Sex, racial or ethnic differences?
  - Intellectual or developmental disability

- Most frequent during what grades?
  - Types of behaviours

- Conservative estimates
  - Canada and Worldwide

- Cyber < traditional (Modecki et al., 2014)
Responding to Cyber Victimization

- Passive - Ignore it, do nothing
- Active - Report it, tell someone
  - Parents, teachers
- Reactive - Confront the bully, get revenge
Effectiveness of 1\textsuperscript{st} Response

- **Reducing the cyber bullying**
  - Making a joke **MORE EFFECTIVE** than doing nothing/trying to ignore it, turning off comp/cell phone, and getting revenge
    - Why?

- **Reducing the distress**
  - Making a joke, leaving the website, telling an adult at home, or telling a friend **MORE EFFECTIVE** than turning off comp/cell phone and doing nothing/trying to ignore it
    - Why?
Risk Factors and Consequences

- Normal part of childhood and adolescence?
- Mental health and behavioural problems
  - Cyber victimization and bullying
  - Direction of association
- Traditional bullying and victimization
  - Strongest predictor
  - Relational forms
Risk Factors and Consequences

- School environment
- Academic concerns
- School climate
- Relationship problems
Role of Bystanders

- Largest involvement
- Unlimited audience
- Passive vs. Active role

“By doing nothing, bystanders are doing something”
Role of Bystanders

- Perceptions and attributions of bystanders of cyber bullying
  - Control, responsibility, and blame

- Victim response (passive, active, or reactive)

- 1105 middle school students (ages 10 to 14)
Role of Bystanders

• Imagine the following blog was written by a boy/girl at your school:
  • “I recently found out that another boy/girl at school created a Facebook profile about me and sent friend requests to all of my classmates. In the profile, there are pictures of my face photo-shopped onto embarrassing pictures and everyone has been posting mean and hurtful comments. Since I found out about the profile a few weeks ago I can’t sleep because I can’t stop thinking about it and I’m scared everyone is turning against me. *I tried to ignore it* but the hurtful comments are still being posted.”

• Varied victim response (passive, active, reactive)
Role of Bystanders

• Passive responses ➔ greater control, responsibility, and blame

• Not that serious OR other victims were “trying harder”

• “True victim”??? Who needs help online???
Implications for Prevention

• Education (digital citizenship, modeling, supervision, communication, rules)

• Address the early risk factors
  • Mental health and behavioural problems
  • Traditional (relational) bullying and victimization

• Healthy relationships!
  • Create safe and supportive environments
  • Encourage prosocial behaviours
  • Compassion, kindness, empathy
The End!

THANK YOU!