<u>**ABUSE/BULLYING**</u>

(Prepared by Dave Wolffe, Program Coordinator, P.E.A.C.E., Inc.)

(*Bullying is something, that not only occurs with children of all ages, but is also something that occurs in families, intimate relationships and in the workplace*.)

1. <u>**Three Conditions Creating A Bullying Situation and Forms They Take**</u>

   a. <u>**Negative or Malicious Behavior**</u> **– This can take the form of,**

      1. <u>**Physical Aggression**</u>**-punching, hitting, pushing**

      2. <u>**Verbal Aggression**</u>**- These may stem from remarks about the victim's physical appearance, religion, cultural background, dress, sexual orientation, intelligence or peer group.**

      3. <u>**Intimidation**</u>**-Threats**

         a. **To cause physical harm to that person or someone he/she cares about,**

         b. **To reveal something embarrassing, or private or sometimes to post photographs, often altered with their face**

      4. <u>**Exclusion From Groups**</u>**-describing the victim as someone who doesn't belong with a particular group, an outcast**

   b. <u>**Repeated Bullying Behavior**</u> **over a period of time.**

   c. <u>**Power or Strength Imbalance**</u> **between the parties involved.**

2. <u>**Bullying Locations**</u>

   a. <u>**Bullying, In Person**</u>**, can take place anywhere in a school building, hallways, locker rooms, cafeterias, on a bus, in a playground, in youth clubs, in the community The important element is that the location is somewhere this behavior may go unnoticed by any person in authority or in a position to stop it or have the offender punished.**

   b. <u>**Cyber-Bullying**</u> **-Over the *Internet* through the use of social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter) and by *Mobile Devices*-cell phones (text messages, instant messaging, I-Pads), on websites, and blogs. This has become a big problem with young people becoming more proficient**
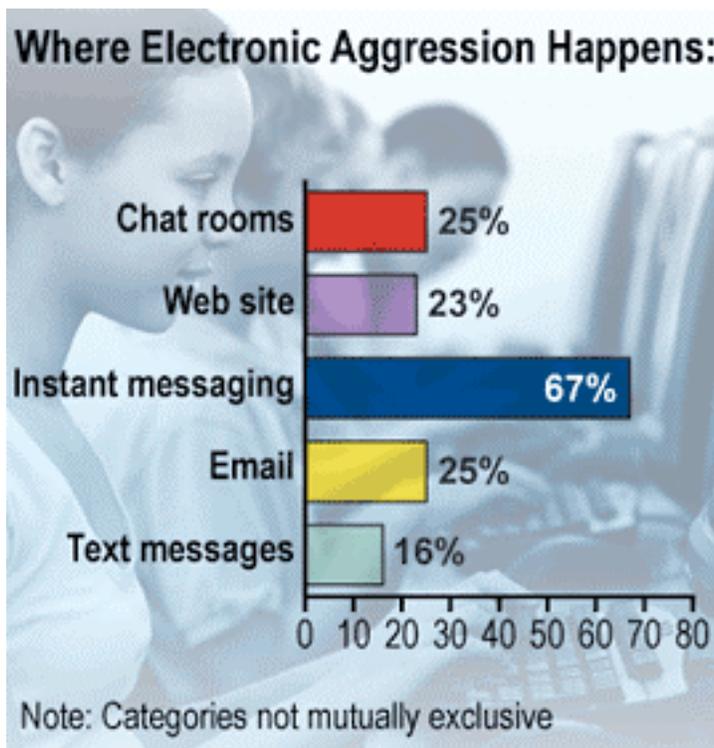
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in the use of this technology than many adults. It is harder to detect and stop and often results in the bullying being less visible. It also brings with it many legal ramifications for both parents and youth. There are more laws and other ramifications coming from the increase in cyber bullying that put parents and children in more danger virtually.

(Be part of the group concerned about this problem and help bring more legal consequences for this abusive behavior. Contact your lawmakers and other groups involved with this problem in our society.)

The following chart and results of surveys were taken directly from Wikipedia's information on Cyber-bullying. They are presented here to give you, as parents and professionals who work with young people, an idea of how serious a reality this kind of abuse is.

Where Electronic Aggression Happens:

Venue	Percentage
Chat rooms	25%
Web site	23%
Instant messaging	67%
Email	25%
Text messages	16%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

Note: Categories not mutually exclusive

(Distribution of cyber-bullying venues used by young people in the U.S. according to the Center for Disease Control.)

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A 2004 survey of 1,500 students between grades 4-8, prepared by I –Safe.org and reported in 2006 by ABC News, reported:

- **42% of kids have been bullied online. 1 in 4 have had it happen more than once.**

- **35% of kids have been threatened online. Nearly 1 in 5 have had it happen more than once.**

- **21% of kids received mean or threatening e-mails or other messages.**

- **58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than 4 out of 10 say it has happened more than once.**

- **58% have not told their parents or adult about something mean or hurtful that happened online.**

A 2006 survey by Harris Interactive reported,

- **43% of U.S. teens having experienced some form of cyber-bullying in the past year.**

(These are not just numbers. They are victims; They could be your child, your student, someone you care about).

3. **Victim Characteristics And Behavior – The characteristics found in long suffering victims may be the cause of, or the result of, being bullied.**

   a. **He/she is usually quiet, careful, and sensitive and may start crying easily.**

   b. **Often he/she is different in some way from others-physical appearance, dress, religious beliefs.**

   c. **He/she lacks self-confidence.**

   d. **The boys don' t like to fight and are often physically weaker than the bullies.**

   e. **He/she is often a loner, who has few or no friends.**

   f. **Bullies may also have been victims themselves. As a result, they express their anger and violence toward others.**

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4. **Effects of Bullying**-This describes both physical and virtual effects of bullying.

    a. Victims have lowered self esteem, increased suicidal ideation and a

        a variety of emotional responses, including, vengeance, fear, frustration

        anger and depression.

    b. The victim begins to avoid friends and activities.

    c. Some victims commit suicide (bullycide).

*Children have committed suicide due to depression brought on by cyber-bullying. Two examples of this effect are those of Ryan Halligan and Megan Meier(her suicide resulted in the case of the United States v. Lori Drew), as reported by USA Today and The Baltimore Examiner.

    d. **Mass killings**

    e. **Mental breakdowns**

    f. **Anxiety attacks**

    g. **No interest in human contacts**

    h. **Communication breakdowns**

    i. **Substance abuse**

    j. **Physical violence against innocent youths**

    k. **Self mutilation**

    l. **Sexual acting out**

5. **Bullying Detection:**

    a. Children who are afraid to go somewhere, school for example, may

        become ill, either developing or describing symptoms that may or not be

        real, or they may just resist going to school or some particular place,

        repeatedly. They may cut school, certain classes or not go to a particular

        place they have gone to before.

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b. Observation of youngsters, pointing fingers at someone, laughing at them or saying things that are belittling (making fun for some reason). Sometimes this is done by one individual, or may sometimes be joined by a group, adding to the taunting or isolating behavior.

c. Children are often by themselves in a room or part of a room, or stay away from other children wherever they are.

d. Hearing others say things like, "You don't belong here", or constantly telling targeted youngsters to get away or being described as fat, stupid, ugly.

e. If children are on social networks like Facebook, Twitter, or in a chat room, checking to see if anything derogatory is being written or posted.

f. Listening to a child describing something that he/she saw or heard that was posted on the internet. Often some of the abusers brag about what they did or say how cool a thing was done. You may also hear It from others, either directly or in some other form. They may even say something to the victim, laughing at them or saying something like, "That was a good picture of you"

g. Sometimes, a friend of a particular child will tell an adult, an authority figure or a relative of the victim of abuse what they saw or heard. There are many young people who don't hurt others or don't want to see others hurt. This is what may be described as a "Children's Information Network"

h. Parents bringing attention to physical/verbal fights that occur to the school/children who have had an altercation with their children.

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5. <u>**Bullying Prevention**</u>

   a. **Creating an environment in which people encourage caring and concern for others, and take a positive interest in what a person does and says, is one step toward preventing bullying. This can done by having children or others develop empathy for another person, by thinking of what it is like for someone who is different,**

      1. **Physically-in appearance, and ability to do something others can or can't do,**

      2. **Emotionally-being quiet, sensitive, afraid, as they enter a new situation, for example, living in a new neighborhood, meeting new people, going to a new school**

      3. **Culturally-coming from a different culture, with different dress, customs, language.**

   b. **A second step involves establishing behavioral guidelines and offers non-hostile, negative consequences when these rules are not followed. These can involve expectations of how each person wants to be treated by the other and describe the effects on the relationship when these are not met. They also let children know there is no tolerance for mistreating another child, defining this treatment as hitting, name calling, threats. These behaviors and consequences must be clearly stated and understood, whether in the home, school or other environment.**

   c. **The third step, must involve the reporting of any incident involving any form of bullying, physical, verbal or any kind of intimidation. This is perhaps one of the most important strategies to use. Without this action being taken, the bully can continue this behavior and is often**

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responsible for causing even greater physical or psychological harm to his/her victims, sometimes even resulting in their deaths. In agencies and institutions this must be spelled out in writing. It also has to take into account that both staff members, as well as any others who are present in a particular environment, who have witnessed this kind behavior, have the responsibility of informing someone in authority about the incident. The phrase, "BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE," emphasizes the importance of reporting a bully and his/her behavior.

d. Some social networks are blocked in schools.

e. Knowing in advance what children are doing on computers and finding out how to access these sites by consulting officials, others with similar needs, or finding sources for assistance with the internet and other technological devices.

(Keep in mind that this is often not possible since youngsters use different user names than those easily identified. Listening for nicknames or other forms of identity, such as people in the entertainment or sports industries, real or cartoon characters, may furnish clues to other forms of online identity)

f. Victims can avoid site/chat rooms where he/she is being abused.

g. E-mail addresses and cell phone numbers can be changed.

h. E-mail accounts now offer services to filter out messages from certain senders before they reach the inbox.

i. Arranging for caller identification can prevent victims from receiving calls of known numbers and names of bullies or their associates.

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<u>Abuse/Bullying Resources</u>

a. **www.stopbullyingnow.com**

b. **www.stopcyberbullying.org**

c. **www.rosalindwiseman.com (view website and learn about the "Stop Bullying: Speak Up" Campaign)**

d. **http://sisfi.org- We address with social, societal and psychological intelligence on abuse, bullying, domestic violence and suicide.**

e. **misunderstoodyouth.org**

f. **www. mentalhealth.samhsa.gov**

g. **www. safechild.org/bullies.htm**

h. **1-800-789-2687**

i. **Generally search the Internet under the subjects of "Bullying" and "Cyber-Bullying,(*Wikipedia and other informational sites) as well as consulting mental health facilities and agencies in your state for updated information.**

ABUSE OF ANY KIND IS SOMETHING THAT WARRANTS A NO TOLERANCE APPROACH. KNOWING AND LETTING OTHERS KNOW WHEN SUCH ABUSE TAKES PLACE IS NOT NEGOTIABLE.

<u>*SILENCE IS NOT AN OPTION*</u>