Understanding & Addressing Cyberbullying in Schools

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Today's Agenda

- Define cyberbullying and describe who is at risk for being involved

- Review common consequences and concerns youth involved in bullying face

- Review findings from a recent survey of 3-5 grade students in 6 KS elementary schools

- Review potential strategies for intervening and addressing cyberbullying among students

True or False

- Victims report that they are primarily cyberbullied by strangers.

- Youth targeted by cyberbullying behavior suffer from anger, frustration, and sadness.

- Traditional schoolyard bullies are also likely to be cyberbullies.

- Cyberbullying does not result in physical harm to victims because it occurs (and is contained) completely online.

- Most victims of cyberbullying tell an adult (parent or teacher) about their experience.

Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J. (2009); http://www.cyberbullying.us/quiz.php?QUIZNUM=1

Cyberbullying Definition

- The use of electronic media by an individual or group to convey repeated negative and aggressive acts or behaviors. The intent is to cause harm or discomfort to an individual who may find it difficult to defend him or herself.

(Tokunaga, 2010; Slonje, et al., 2013; & Menesini et al., 2012)

Internet Use Among Youth

- 95 percent of youth between the ages of 12 and 17 are online

- 93% of teens report having a computer or access to one in their home

- 78% of youth ages 12-17 report having a cell phone, and 47% of those being smartphones (equals 37% of all teens)

- 74% of youth report accessing the internet through their cell phone, tablet or other mobile device at least occasionally

  - 25% report being "cell-mostly" internet users

(Lenhart et al., 2011; Madden et al., 2013)

Cyberbullying

- Circulating Electronic Images or Videos
- Insulting Text Messages
- Harassment Through Online Games
- Harassment Through Social Media
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Instagram
  - Online games

Frequency of Cyberbullying

- Difficult to determine due to prevalence rates varying across studies

- Recent review of research found:

  - Approximately 21% of teens have been cyberbullied and around 15% cyberbullied others at some point in their lifetimes

  - About 1 in 4 teens have been targets of cyberbullying and 1 in 6 have been the perpetrators of cyberbullying behavior

- 47% of youth reported witnessing cyberbullying as bystanders

- Traditional bullying more common among youth

- Cyberbullying is a pervasive social problem that has the potential to negatively impact a substantial number of youth

(Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; von Marées & Petermann, 2012; Wolak et al., 2007; Ybarra et al., 2006)

Whose Involved – Risk Factors

- Age
- Gender
- Involvement with traditional bullying
- Internet usage & risky online behaviors

Common Consequences for Victims

- Depression
- Social Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Emotional distress
- Hopelessness
- Academic problems

(Beran & Li, 2007; Katzer et al., 2009; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Ybarra et al., 2007)

Common Consequences for Perpetrators of Cyberbullying

- Depression

- Substance abuse

- Physical symptoms (i.e., headaches)

- Academic problems (i.e. school drop out)

- Suicidal Ideation

(Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Sourander et al., 2010; Wang, Nansel, Iannotti, 2011; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)

Prevention & Intervention

Court Decisions

- Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent School District (1969)
- $1.1 Million dollar lawsuit in Tennessee against Public Board of Education

PREVENTION

School climate has to be that any form of bullying is wrong

Prevention Strategies

- Awareness

- Education

  - Teachers & Staff

  - Students

  - Parents

(Kowalski et al., 2012; Walker, 2014)

Education

Teachers and Staff

- Anti-bullying training every year that staff – both certified and classified – are required to attend that includes cyberbullying

  - Assess staff knowledge and attitudes prior to and after training to determine whether increases are found post-training

  - Clearly define bullying and describe all prohibited behaviors as articulated in the school's anti-bullying policy

  - Train staff of using any required documentation to track and investigate bullying incidents

  - Educate staff on investigation protocols such as when to notify school administrators, parents, and law enforcement

Education

Students

- Safe & Secure use of technology and online communication mechanisms

- Netiquette

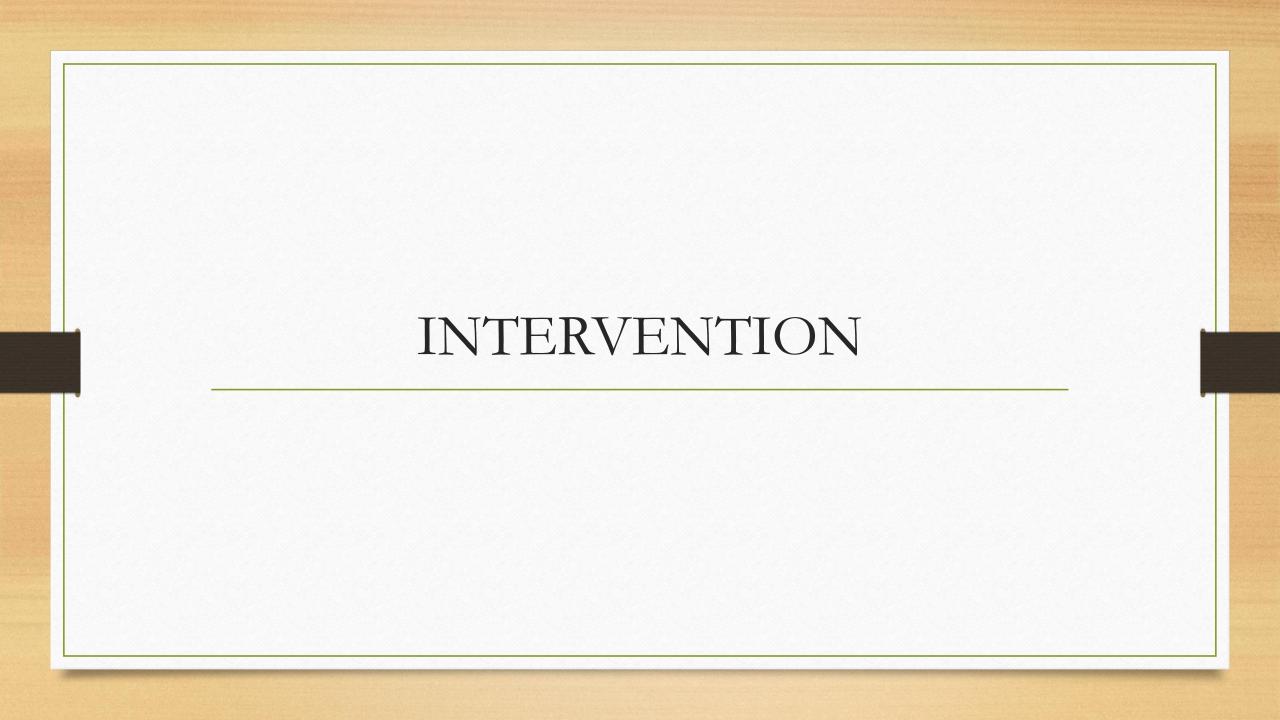- Information on cyberbullying

- Curriculum

Education

Parents

- Importance of talking to their kids about safe, appropriate and responsible use of online communication technology (http://cyberbullying.us)

- What is cyberbullying – definition & examples

- School policy on cyberbullying – including possible sanctions and how to report cyberbullying at school

- Tips on how to respond

- Community resources that can provide more information and assist if there child is victim or perpetrator of cyberbullying behavior

Prevention Strategies

- Policy
  - Comprehensive Anti-bullying policy
  - Student Use of Technology policy
- Consistent processes & procedures
- Partnership

(Kowalski et al., 2012; Walker, 2014)

INTERVENTION

Steps Educators can Take

1. Talk to the student who has been targeted by the cyberbullying behavior
2. Have an educational conversation with the student who is cyberbullying
3. Ensure that child being targeted has a safety and comfort plan
4. Inform all relevant adults about the situation (teachers, coaches, bus drivers, lunch room staff)
5. Have plan for "unstructured" areas in the school
6. Contact parents of those involved
7. Consider having a team in place to address these situations

(E.K. Englander, 2012)

Recommendations for talking with a victimized child

1. Talk with the victim to get the details of the incident; affirm the child's feelings ("you were right to tell me this")
2. Determine if this is an isolated event or on-going
3. Help to generate solutions (blocking, contacting social media sites to remove offensive content, identify supportive classmates/ friends and adults who can help)
4. Refer to appropriate resources
5. Follow up with the victim multiple times to make sure the bullying has stopped
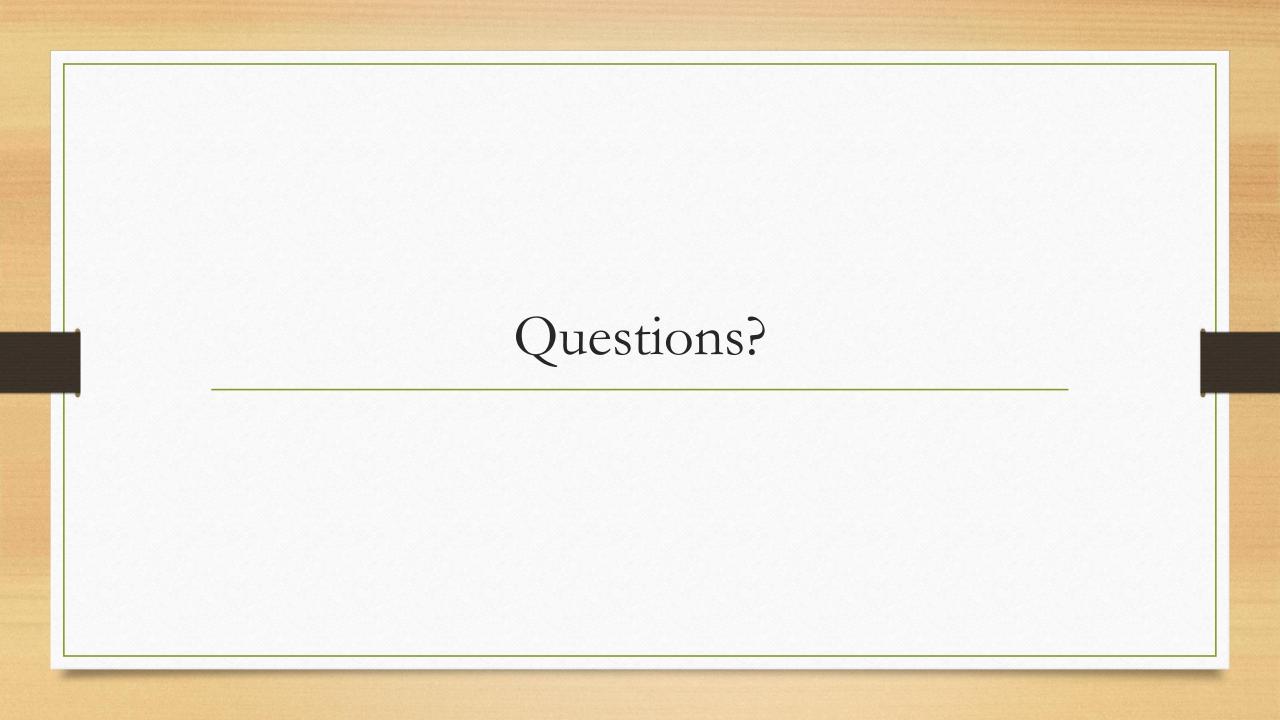   - If it has not stopped or gotten worse, further action and supports may be necessary for the victim

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Conclusion

Students perspectives on anti-bullying strategies

- Previous research has revealed that students wish that school personnel would:
  - Notice and intervene in bullying situations
  - Provide assistance to victims; teach them how to cope
  - Involve the parents of both bullies and victims

Questions?

Scenario #1

Casey loves playing video games on his computer, especially those that allow you to link up to and compete with other players across the country through the Internet. He recently met Matt from Florida while playing video games online, and they became fast friends because both enjoyed and excelled at one particular game. Together, they became almost unbeatable whenever they competed as a team against other teams online. At some point, though, Casey told Matt he had found another partner and didn't want to play with Matt anymore. Matt was outraged that he was being "dumped" for someone else, and he began to tell other people on the gaming network that Casey "sucked" at all video games and that no one should ever be his partner unless they wanted to lose really badly. Soon after these statements started circulating, Casey's new gaming partner dumped him, and everyone else on the network wouldn't interact with him. Since the video game he loved so much could only be played with a partner, Casey was no longer able to play and felt totally rejected on the Internet (which had heretofore been a safe haven for him). The next day at school, Casey tells you about the incident.

- Is this cyberbullying?

- Has it caused a significant disruption to the school environment?

- How would you respond?

Scenario #2

Madeline has been receiving hurtful e-mails for the past few weeks from an address she doesn't recognize. At first they just included insults about being fat, so she ignored them. But now they are coming more often and include threats that make her feel unsafe. Madeline starts to get worried but doesn't want to tell anyone because she is concerned they will take away her Internet privileges. You overhear students talking about these incidents during lunch.

- Is this cyberbullying?
- Has it caused a significant disruption to the school environment?
- How would you respond?

Scenario #3

Emily and Jane had been best friends. They had a massive argument. The next day Jane's email box was full and there were numerous postings on her Facebook page. The emails and postings were offensive. When she looked at her email account she realized a group email had been sent from her own account making racially discriminating comments as well and rude and hurtful comments about all of her friends and classmates. She had not sent this e mail. When friends, Jane had told Emily the passwords of email and Facebook accounts.

- Is this cyberbullying?
- Has it caused a significant disruption to the school environment?
- How would you respond?

Resources

- Stopbullying.gov
- http://cyberbullying.us/
- www.cyberbullyhelp.com
- Cyberbullying books:
  - Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age (2 ed.) (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012)
  - Cyberbullying prevention and response: Expert perspectives (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012)