

# Cyberbullying

Detective Sergeant Brent Maguire  
Fairfield Police Department

# Cyberbullying

- The 21st-century bully doesn't hang out on the street corners looking to shake kids down for their lunch money
- Cyberbullies are hiding behind their computer screens to torment their targets



# How is Cyberbullying Different from Traditional Bullying?

- ✓ Victims often don't know who the bully is or why they are targeted
- ✓ Viral – large number of people can find out about it very quickly
- ✓ Can be done from a distance and the bully doesn't have to see the person's response (impersonal)
- ✓ Many adults don't have technical skills to monitor or respond

This has caused adults to be slow to respond which, in turn, gives the cyberbullying the belief that there are little to no consequences

# What is Cyberbullying?

- ◆ Cyberbullying is the use of e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, pagers, cell phones, or other forms of information technology to deliberately harass, threaten, or intimidate someone
- ◆ The problem is compounded by the fact that a bully can hide behind an electronic veil, disguising his or her true identity

This makes it difficult to trace the source, and encourages bullies to behave more aggressively than they might face-to-face

# What is Cyberbullying?

- ◆ Cyberbullying can include such acts as making threats, sending provocative insults or racial or ethnic slurs, gay bashing, attempting to infect the victim's computer with a virus, and flooding an e-mail inbox with nonsense messages



# Types of Cyberbullying

- According to Nancy Willard, author of Cyber-Safe Kids and Cyber-Savvy Teens, there are seven forms of cyberbullying
  1. Flaming
  2. Harassment
  3. Denigration
  4. Impersonation
  5. Outing and Trickery
  6. Exclusion
  7. Cyberstalking

# Types of Cyberbullying

- ❑ Flaming

Online “fights” using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language

- ❑ Harassment

Repeatedly sending offensive, rude and insulting messages

# Types of Cyberbullying

## Denigration

“Dissing” someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships

## Impersonation

Breaking into someone’s account, posing as that person and sending messages to make the person look bad, get that person in trouble or danger, or damage that person’s reputation or friendships



# Types of Cyberbullying

## Outing and Trickery

Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online

Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared online

## Exclusion

Intentionally excluding someone from an online group, such as a "buddy list"

# Types of Cyberbullying

## Cyberstalking

Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating

Engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his/her safety

# NetSmartz.org

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# Who is the Cyberbully?

- According to [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org), there are generally five types of people who cyberbully:
  1. Power Hungry
  2. Retaliating Victim
  3. Mean Girl
  4. Vengeful Angel
  5. Inadvertent Cyberbully

# Who is the Cyberbully?

## 1. **Power Hungry**

Seeks attention from peers

Maintains control by intimidating victim



# Who is the Cyberbully?

## 2. Retaliating Victim

Was cyberbullied or bullied in past

Seeks revenge on bullies

May be less popular, but usually has above-average computer skills

# Who is the Cyberbully?

## 3. **Mean Girl**

Bullies for entertainment value and to alleviate boredom (i.e. @ slumber party)

Aims to increase her own popularity by putting others down

# Who is the Cyberbully?

## 4. **Vengeful Angel**

Seeks revenge on behalf of those who have been bullied

Aims to protect friends

Doesn't see themselves as a cyberbully

# Who is the Cyberbully?

## 5. **Inadvertent Cyberbully**

Uses internet carelessly, without considering potential impact on others

Does not intentionally hurt others

# Why are some teens making not-so-good choices?

## 1. Brain Development

Teens are in process of developing frontal lobes that allow for reasoned and ethical decision-making

Learning to make reasoned and ethical decisions requires attention to the connection between actions and consequences



# Why are some teens making not-so-good choices?

## 2. Disinhibition

Use of technologies interferes with recognition of connection between action and consequences

Perception of invisibility, creation of anonymity removes concerns of detection and resulting disapproval or punishment

Lack of intangible feedback of impact of online actions interferes with recognition of harm caused and resulting empathy and remorse

# Why are some teens making not-so-good choices?

## 3. Exploration of Identity

Social networking profile becomes vehicle to present emerging self-image, which includes sexuality

Teens are using social networking as vehicle to establish their “place” within their social community

# Why are some teens making not-so-good choices?

## 4. Online Social Norms

“Everybody does it”

“What happens online, stays online”

“Life online is just a game”

# Cyberbullying Insight

- Material, text or images, may be posted on personal web pages, blogs, transmitted via email, discussion groups, message boards, chat, IM, or cell phones
- A significant amount occurs off-campus but impacts students on-campus
- Students could be using school's internet system or personal cell phones to engage in cyberbullying

# Cyberbullying Insight

- According to 2006 survey conducted by Fight Crime, a non-profit organization:

1. 1/3 of teens ages 12 – 17

1/6 of all children ages 6 -11

Had mean, threatening or embarrassing things said about them online

2. 45% of children and 30% of teens said cyberbullying occurred at school



# Relation to School Bullying

- Continuation of in-school bullying
- Retaliation for in-school bullying
- DO NOT immediately assume that the student posting the harmful material is the originator of the problem

# Boys vs. Girls

- Girls tend to be more actively involved in online communications, which is the venue for cyberbullying
- Boys tend to be interested in gaming, violence against fictional characters

# Personal Relationships

- Harassment in the context of “flirting”
- Relationship break-ups
- Online fights about relationships

# Recognition

- School officials must recognize that what initially appears to be an online threat could be any of the following:
  1. A joke, parody, or game
  2. A rumor that got started and has grown and spread
  3. Material posted by someone impersonating another person for the purpose of getting that person in trouble
  4. Distressing material posted by a depressed or angry youth that could foretell a violent or suicidal intention, but does not represent an imminent threat
  5. A legitimate imminent threat

# Recognition

- The problem is that when school officials or law enforcement are first appraised of an online threat, it may difficult to tell which of the previously mentioned might be involved
- Highest priority is doing what is necessary to protect against a possible legitimate threat



# Recognition

- Students must understand the following:
  1. **Don't make threats online** – adults may not be able to tell whether the threat is real. They must understand that they could be suspended, expelled or even arrested.
  2. **Report threats or distressing material** – if they see a threat or distressing material, it could be very real. It is extremely important to report this to an adult as someone could be seriously injured.

# Impact

1. Online communications can be extremely vicious
2. No escape – victimization is ongoing, 24/7
3. Material can be distributed worldwide and is often irretrievable
4. Cyberbullies can be anonymous and can solicit the involvement of unknown “friends”
5. Teens may be reluctant to tell adults because they are emotionally traumatized, think it is their fault, fear greater retribution or fear online activities or cell phone use will be restricted

# Targeting Staff

- Staff person is targeted because of some perceived status issue, such as sexual orientation or obesity
- Obnoxious attention-seeking student
- Legitimate objections to the actions or policies of the school or staff
- Student feels that he/she has been bullied/mistreated by teacher

# Monitoring Internet Use at School

- Users should have a limited expectation of privacy on the school's internet system
- Routine maintenance and monitoring (technical and by staff) may lead to discovery that user has violated school policy or law
- Clear notice to students that internet use is monitored can enhance deterrence

# Tips for Teachers

- ✓ Discuss online behavior with your students – if you wouldn't say something in person, don't say it online
- ✓ Encourage students to report cyberbullying
- ✓ Teach students to think before they post and not to let their emotions get the best of them

Warn students of the danger of responding when angry or upset



# Tips for Teachers

- ✓ Keep an anonymous comment box in classroom where students can report incidents of cyberbullying
- ✓ Have a classroom policy that addresses inappropriate computer and cell phone use

Post class rules regarding acceptable internet behavior

If you already have a school policy regarding this, enforce it!

- ✓ Students need to know that all forms of bullying are wrong and that those who engage in harassing or threatening behavior will be subject to discipline

# Warning Signs - Victim

1. Unexpectedly stops using computer or cell phone
2. Nervous or jumpy when IM or email appears
3. Uneasy about going to school or doesn't want to go to school
4. Appears to be angry, depressed or frustrated after using computer or cell phone
5. Avoids discussions about what they are doing on computer or cell phone
6. Becomes abnormally withdrawn; loss of friends

# Warning Signs - Bully

1. Quickly switches screens or closes programs
2. Gets unusually upset if computer or phone privileges are restricted (That's every teen isn't it! LOL)
3. Avoids discussions about what they are doing on computer or cell phone
4. Appears to be using multiple accounts or ones not their own

# Responding to Cyberbullying

1. Save evidence – emails, IM, blogs, web pages (print out all instances + don't delete any messages received)
2. Try to identify cyberbully, if possible
3. Ignore – block or delete them
4. Calmly and strongly tell them to stop
5. Stop or remove material – contact ISP, website, etc.
6. Contact parents of cyberbully
7. Contact school
8. Contact police

# Responding to Cyberbullying

- Encourage students to contact a trusted adult if:
  1. They are really upset and not sure what to do
  2. Attempts to stop cyberbullying on their own have not worked
  3. It could be a crime
  4. It is occurring through the internet at school
  5. Cyberbully is anonymous
  6. Cyberbully is bullying other teens who may be more vulnerable and too afraid to get help



# Responding to Cyberbullying

- The school should contact or help the parent contact LE when the following is occurring:
  1. Threats of violence to people or property
  2. Coercion is involved
  3. Obscene or harassing phone calls
  4. Harassment or stalking
  5. Hate or bias crimes
  6. Creating or sending sexually explicit images of children
  7. Sexual exploitation
  8. Taking a photo of someone in a place where privacy is expected (bathroom, locker room, etc.)

# 720 ILCS 135/1-2

## Harassment Through Electronic Communications

(720 ILCS 135/1-2)

Sec. 1-2. Harassment through electronic communications.

(a) Harassment through electronic communications is the use of electronic communication for any of the following purposes:

- (1) Making any comment, request, suggestion or proposal which is obscene with an intent to offend;
- (2) Interrupting, with the intent to harass, the telephone service or the electronic communication service of any person;
- (3) Transmitting to any person, with the intent to harass and regardless of whether the communication is read in its entirety or at all, any file, document, or other communication which prevents that person from using his or her telephone service or electronic communications device;
  - (3.1) Transmitting an electronic communication or knowingly inducing a person to transmit an electronic communication for the purpose of harassing another person who is under 13 years of age, regardless of whether the person under 13 years of age consents to the harassment, if the defendant is at least 16 years of age at the time of the commission of the offense;
- (4) Threatening injury to the person or to the property of the person to whom an electronic communication is directed or to any of his or her family or household members; or
- (5) Knowingly permitting any electronic communications device to be used for any of the purposes mentioned in this subsection (a).

## 720 ILCS 135/1-2

# Harassment Through Electronic Communications

(1) "Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectric or photo-optical system. "Electronic communication" includes transmissions by a computer through the Internet to another computer.

# Issues for Educators to Address

1. School threat assessment and suicide prevention must incorporate online speech
2. Safe school personnel must be able to immediately access and review online material posted by a student in the event of a report of concern and may be prevented from doing so by the school filter

# Issues for Educators to Address

3. School officials should realize that in most cases harmful or dangerous speech posted in these sites or an underage registration is a violation of the Use Agreement.

These concerns will be addressed upon the filing of a complaint.

Sites will also work with law enforcement to identify anonymous users and preserve material.



# Issues for Educators to Address

4. Relying solely on school's internet filtering services to block access to these sites will likely not prevent student involvement on these sites from the school campus.

Better monitoring is necessary.

# Issues for Educators to Address

5. Off-campus activities of students can have a damaging impact on the well-being of students and the school climate and could lead to school violence.

Students and parents should be encouraged to report online concerns.

A process must be in place to effectively respond to reports.

# Issues for Educators to Address

6. Educating staff, students and parent about safe and responsible internet use is of critical importance.

# Resources

[www.commonsense.com](http://www.commonsense.com)

[www.cyberbully.org](http://www.cyberbully.org)

[www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org)

[www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org)

[www.stoptextbully.com](http://www.stoptextbully.com)

[www.haltabuse.org](http://www.haltabuse.org)