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Cyberbullying: Digital Awareness to Educators

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Introduction

Children learn moral values, skills, and lessons from mentors as well as from their peer groups through interaction in a school. Undoubtedly, school is beneficial to children, even though certain children bully others to find an outlet for their frustrations, and revenge. They are limited to face-to-face interactions; hence these things could be better controlled. Smart phones, computers, laptops, tablets with internet facility, social media networks, internet telephony, chat rooms, and other forms of technology have permitted bullying. This new form of abuse is known as cyberbullying. Simply cyberbullying or cyber harassment is to deliberately harass other people with the help of technologies. Cyberbullying is often done by children through sending SMS, posting text, sharing apps and negative content, sharing about someone's personal or private information, gaming where people can view, participate and share content. 5 R's must be followed when addressing cyberbullying situations: They are Responding to the victims, Research the facts, Record the documents, Report the findings and revisit the issue to make sure it is resolved.

Definitions

There are many definitions available world widely about cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is the use of inappropriate behaviour, strength or influence, whether directly or indirectly, and whether verbal, written, physical or through displays of or use of imagery, symbols or otherwise, to intimidate, torment, threaten, harass or embarrass others, using the Internet or other technology, such as mobile telephones. - **David Fagan, Lawyer, BizLegal.eu**

Cyberbullying is a cyber-communication posted by a minor online, by instant messenger, e-mail, website, diary site, online profile, interactive game, handheld device, cell phone or other interactive device that is intended to frighten, embarrass, harass or otherwise target another minor." - **Parry Aftab**

When a minor uses technology as a weapon to intentionally target and hurt another minor, it is cyberbullying. - **StopCyberbullying.org**

Forms of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a fast-growing worldwide problem. It can happen in various ways and done differently. All must be aware of the forms of cyberbullying; then only can we have the knowledge to protect our children.

Nancy Willard's eight forms of cyberbullying

1. **Trickery:** act trust-worthy to reveal their secrets and then post it online.
2. **Flaming:** Vulgar words to provoke an online fight.
3. **Harassment:** Sending backbiting or disturbing e-mails continuously.
4. **Denigration:** To hurt intentionally someone, spreading rumours/lies/gossip.
5. **Exclusion:** Excluding someone from an online group purposefully.
6. **Cyber stalking:** Online harassment and abuse leads to the fear of victim's safety.
7. **Impersonation:** Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name.
8. **Outing:** Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information/images.

Parry Aftab's four different cyberbullying methods

1. Direct attacks: Email/SMS send to the target directly.

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2. Indirect attacks: Email/SMS/post publicly for third-party audiences to humiliate.
3. Cyberbullying-by-proxy: With or without other's knowledge, cyberbully the victim.
4. Privacy invasions and abuses: Video cameras or webcams used to spy on the victim and sharing that widely.

Sherri Gordon's six types of cyberbullying

1. **Speed Pimping:** Morph car license plates to flash it widely to embarrass the target.
2. **SWAT-ing:** Bullies use apps to hide the number, change their voices.
3. **Todding:** Bully someone to the point of suicide and post it, bringing even more pain into the lives of the victim's family.
4. **Happy Slapping:** Bullies recorded one or more kids slapping/kicking/hitting/punching a victim then post it on YouTube to reach larger audiences.
5. **Teen Shaming:** Steal photos from a victim's social media page and reposting with comments that shame and ridicule the person in the photo.
6. **Cyber baiting:** Record the video of victim's reaction and post it for others to see.

Elements Characterizing Cyberbullying:

The elements characterizing cyberbullying are

1. use of electronic or digital means
2. intentional harm
3. imbalance of power
4. repetition
5. sense of anonymity and lack of accountability
6. publicity

Bullying is face-to-face, victim can find a safe space, limited to onlookers, bully can be identified easily. Can see facial and body reaction of target and onlookers but the Cyberbullying happens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year, victims never find safe space, and hard to escape from the bullies, victim's video or image can go viral in a matter of seconds, bullies can be anonymous, no geographical limitations.

Guidelines for Educators

Guidelines for the educators are enlisted below.

i) Develop digital citizens

Being a responsible digital citizen is in the hands of the educators. Digital citizens must know cyber safety and savvy, digital citizenship, and ethical use of technology.

ii) Raise awareness

Awareness changes social perceptions. Teachers should teach the students about the psychological and legal difficulties, risks in technology, cyber safety, and positive online communities.

iii) Teach to report cyber abuse

Students must report abuse to break the silence surrounding cyber abuse. The reasons behind not reporting abuse are fear, retribution from peers and adults, remove computer or cell phone access.

iv) Aware firm policies

Students should be aware of policies before a problem occurs. This always gives to feel safety.

v) Inseparable from online

Younger generations are closer with internet. If a student approaches a teacher with an online abuse /problem, it should do not take it lightly. Teacher must find the resources immediately to solve the issues, because it is very difficult to separate them from the internet and they feel that the online persona of them is important.

vi) Stay up-to-date

Cyberbullying issues frequently change due to the nature of technology changing rigorously. Hence teachers, administrators, and counsellors must be updated.

vii) Involve parents and make them update

May be parents are ignorant of cyberbullying issues. Hence, it is important to report them, and then only they can intervene at home. Educators might suggest parents on how to handle the victims and bullies.

viii) Open communication with students

Students need to know how, whom, when and where they can report their issue. At the time of stressful situation, they can't think logically and the legal issues behind that. It is best to make resources clear and available before situations become muddled with stress.

ix) Allow technology in learning environment

Teachers can focus on the ethical use of technology when it is available in the classroom. Segregation of technologies often make the students go further underground. Teaching students how to use technology appropriately is better than having them figure it out with no guidance.

Spread the love

It's imperative that we teach and model appropriate digital citizenship for students. With the constant use of technology, both in and out of the classroom, we have to remain vigilant to maintain safety. However, no amount of hovering is going to keep kids safe online. That's why we must be the example for exemplary digital citizenship every day.

Encourage Digital Literacy

Using technology to further learning can help your students appreciate the capabilities of the digital age. One great way to utilize the internet is to have your students investigate the sources of articles or headlines found online. Teaching them how to use the internet to know whether certain information is fake or real is a great exercise. Encouraging students to locate the answer online, if they are unsure, is another basic way to improve digital literacy.

Insist on Digital Etiquette

When communicating with students online address them appropriately. Additionally, expect your students to behave the same as they would in class. Correct spelling, formal greetings and closings, and polite language are all

ways to be respectful online. Reward good digital etiquette much like you would good behaviour in class.

Teach Digital Responsibility

Using technology in the classroom should be treated as a privilege. Learning with online resources and games is much more enjoyable than reading a book or listening to a lecture. Students who display inappropriate digital citizenship or misbehave in class should be suspended from participating in tech activities.

Model and Explain Digital Security

Vicki Davis outlines the fundamentals of responsible digital citizenship through the "9 key P's for proactive knowledge." Putting these practices into daily use in your classroom is a great way to model digital citizenship for your students.

1. Passwords

Teacher should demonstrate to make secure passwords and taught fundamental of password etiquette. Instructors need to adhere to password rules/guidelines by not sharing their passwords or requesting students to share online access. Before making awareness about password to the students, educator and parents must have the answer to the following questions.

- Do students know to prepare a secure password?
- Do students perceive that email and on-line banking ought to have a strong level of security and not use same passwords in different sites?
- Do students understand safe ways in which to recollect their passwords?

2. Privacy

Instructors should ensure their classes understand how to secure their personal data. To be safe on the web, everyone should know how to keep addresses, messages, emails and telephone numbers from hurting us. Before making awareness about privacy to the students, educator and parents must have the answer to the following questions.

- Do students have insight to protect their personal information?
- Do students understand what is personal information is (like address, email, phone number)?
- Do students know however internet sites track their web usage habits and the way to control their privacy settings?

3. Personal Information

Other personal information like family photos and favourite things/food should not be share in public domain. Remind them not to share everything on the internet. Before making awareness about personal information to the students, educator and parents must have the answer to the following questions.

- Do students know what personal information is?
- Do they apprehend why they ought to be selective sharing information with others?
- What is "oversharing?" Why can it be a problem?

4. Photographs

Pupils need to understand that photos are not safe to post. They must know and have responsible to the hazards because of geo tagging, automatic face recognition, and accidental background identifiers. Before making awareness to the students about sharing photographs and locations, educator and parents must have the answer to the following questions.

- Do students have knowledge about geo tagging?
- Do students' shrewdness to show off a geo tagging feature in the websites they use?
- Do students perceive how geo tagging will cause privacy concerns?

5. Property

It's vital to teach the students about the rules and guidelines of copyrights and creative commons. They must have insight to envision if a picture is used freely and the way to cite their sources properly. Before making awareness to the students about sharing photographs and locations, educator and parents must have the answer to the following questions.

- Do students respect the intellectual property rights of those who create works?

6. Permission

Along with copyright rules, students ought to know how to request the authorizer to use their copy righted work. They also need to know how to cite things appropriately. Before making awareness to the students for getting permission and giving proper authorization to the copyrighted items, educator and parents must have the answer to the following questions.

- Do students cognize to get permission for work they use?
- Do students know to cite permissions for the work they use?

7. Protection

Students should know the dangers of operating online. Make sure they are aware of the risk posed by viruses, worms, scams, phishing, and malwares like ransom ware, spyware etc. Children need to be cognizant of the danger of identity theft online.

8. Professionalism.

Educators should enlighten the difference to the students between online professional and personal communication. In the classroom, teacher should use proper digital etiquette to make the students to be a good digital citizen. Teaching the pupils with proper 'netiquette' is the fundamental to digital citizenship. Before making awareness about digital citizen, educator and parents must have the answer to the following questions.

- Do students understand the professionalism of professional / academics versus their personal/social lives?
- Do students know netiquette and online grammar?

9. Personal Brand

Explain and display how anything we share online travels across the globe and lives forever. Your students need to

decide on what they want the world to see and understand that nothing online can ever be erased entirely. Do your students understand their digital footprints?

- Have students decided about their voice and how they want to be perceived online?
- Do students realize they have a "digital tattoo" that is almost impossible to erase?
- Do students know how search engines cache a copy of web pages?
- Do students understand what backups are and that few if any sites are truly private?

Combat Cyberbullying

In making students responsible digital citizens, you instill in them the understanding that the online world is real. It isn't a place where they can go and say anything without repercussions. This idea is especially important to prevent cyberbullying.

Cyberbullies feel like the anonymity the internet grants them allows them to be cruel or unfeeling. In modelling appropriate digital citizenship, show students that their digital footprint is indelible. Talk to students about the ramifications of being a cyberbully. Discuss age-appropriate cases and their resolutions.

Let students know there are consequences for bullying, in real life and online. Also, let them know there is no shame in being the target of a cyberbully. Encourage students to talk to you safely, without judgment.

Modeling digital citizenship is an ongoing process. As an educator, you have to continually engage with students about online safety and appropriate behavior. Set the right example for them in class and during online interactions. The best example is a constant example.

How do you model digital citizenship? What resources do you find useful for teaching safe online practices? Let us know!

Prevent Cyberbullying

Consequences of Cyber Bullying are anxiety, sadness, shame, anger, depression, stress related disorders, suicide, low self-esteem, withdrawal from friends and activities, changes in mood, behaviour and appetite, emotional distress during and after using technology, bullying others. The consequences are truly unbearable for that reason the preventions are arrived.

1. Block all communication with cyber bullies
2. Do not forward any messages, comments, etc. that involve cyberbullying
3. Always report to an adult if any cyberbullying taking place
4. Do not reveal passwords, pictures and secrets to others
5. Do not reply in anger
6. Save the evidence

Conclusion

The age group of 15-17 is mostly affected by this. The causes of cyberbullying are to revenge of other peers, for

entertainment purposes, to boost their ego, to get a laugh from their peers, help bolster or remind people of their own social standing. Its effects are unbearable. They undermine confidence, self-esteem and sense of security, affects the performance and attendance at school/ college, causes stress and affects the health, affects the professional reputation and career, fuel prejudice in areas such as race, religion and sexuality and some time it leads to suicidal thoughts.

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