

Bullying

SCOPE OF PROBLEM

WHAT IS BULLYING

CYBER-BULLYING

SCOPE OF PROBLEM

Bullying is a widespread problem in the United States.

- In 2007, about 32% of students aged 12 to 18 reported being bullied at school during the school year. The most common types of bullying at school included being made fun of, being the subject of rumors, and being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on. Only about a third of victims notified a teacher or another adult about it (Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009).
- Among children and youth aged 17 and younger, about 1 in 5 report being physically bullied, and about 3 in 10 report being teased or emotionally bullied in their lifetime. Among children aged 10 to 17, about 8% report having been the victim of Internet harassment (Finkelhor et al., 2009).
- Research indicates that children with disabilities or special needs are at a higher risk of being bullied than other children (Rigby, 2002).
- Gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth are more likely to report being bullied than are heterosexual youth (Berlan et al., 2010).
- Bullying also has a negative impact on other students at school who are bystanders to bullying. Other children may be reluctant to get involved or do not know how to get help (Banks, 1997). Bullying creates a climate of fear and disrespect in schools and has a negative impact on student learning (Swearer et al., 2010).
- Nationwide, 19.9% of students had been bullied on school property during the 12 months before the survey (2009 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System-YRBSS)
- A study by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids (2006) investigated how often children (6-11 year-olds) and teens (12-17-year-olds) had been cyber-bullied during the previous year. One-third of teens and one-sixth of the children reported that someone said threatening or embarrassing things about them online.
- The number of youth between ages 10 and 17 in 2005 that indicated they had been involved in cyber-bullying was twice what youth had reported in 1999/2000 (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006).

- Children who are bullied are more likely than their peers to be depressed, lonely, and anxious; have low self-esteem; feel unwell; have more migraine headaches; and think about suicide (see Limber, 2002, for summary).
- Girls frequently report being bullied by both boys and girls, but boys report that they are most often bullied only by other boys (Melton et al., 1998; Olweus, 1993).
- By self-report, boys are more likely than girls to bully others (Nansel et al., 2001; Banks, 1997). Girls are more likely to bully each other using social exclusion (Olweus, 2002).
- In a Cox Communications (2009) survey of 13-18 year-old, 15% said they had been cyber-bullied online; 10% had been cyber-bullied by cell phone; 7 % said they had cyber-bullied another person online; and 5% had cyber-bullied another person by cell phone.
- Verbal bullying is the most frequent form of bullying experienced by both boys and girls. Boys are more likely to be physically bullied by their peers (Olweus, 1993; Nansel et al., 2001); girls are more likely to report being targets of rumor spreading and sexual comments (Nansel et al., 2001).
- Most teens (60% of boys and 70% of girls) see online bullying as a serious problem and feel that there should be stricter rules about it (70% of boys and 80% of girls) (Cox Communications, 2009).

SOURCE: Data above obtained from http://findyouthinfo.gov/topic_bullying.shtml & <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults/cyber-bullying.aspx>

WHAT IS BULLYING

Bullying is a form of youth violence, aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying usually includes:

- attack or intimidation with the intention to cause fear, distress, or harm that is either:
 - physical (e.g., hitting, punching);
 - verbal (e.g., name-calling, teasing); or
 - psychological/relational (e.g., rumors, social exclusion);
- a real or perceived imbalance of power between the bully and victim; and
- repeated attacks or intimidation between the same children over time (Farrington & Ttofi, 2010).

Bullying can occur in person or through technology, called "electronic aggression" or "cyber bullying."

In recent years, technology has given children and youth a new means of bullying each other. With technological innovations and increased access to technology, youth are more likely to own and use cell phones, computers, and other electronic devices. According to a 2009 presentation from the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 93 percent of teens between the ages of 12 and 17 go online and 63 percent report that they are online every day. Cell phone ownership has also increased dramatically from 45 percent in 2004 to 71 percent in 2008. Teens frequently communicate through a variety of technologically based sources including text messages, cell phone calls, social networking site messages, instant messages, and e-mails (Lenhart, 2009).

CYBER-BULLYING

Increased access to technology has benefits, but it also has the potential for abuse.

Cyber-bullying, which is sometimes referred to as online social cruelty or electronic bullying, has been defined as "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself" (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376).

Cyber-bullying can involve:

- Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images
- Posting sensitive, private information and/or lies about another person
- Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad
- Intentionally excluding someone from an online group (Willard, 2005)

Children and youth can cyber-bully each other through:

- Emails
- Instant messaging
- Text or digital imaging messages sent on cell phones
- Social networking sites
- Web pages
- Blogs
- Chat rooms or discussion groups
- Other cyber technologies

Cyber-bullying vs. Traditional forms of bullying

Electronic aggression or cyber-bullying differs from traditional bullying in the following ways:

- Cyber-bullying can occur any time of the day or night.
- It is highly accessible and can occur at any time both at school and at home.

- Messages and images can be distributed to a wide audience very quickly.
- It is often anonymous, making it difficult to identify the perpetrator and therefore may encourage youth to engage in behavior that they wouldn't do face-to-face.
- Youth may be nervous to report cyber-bullying because they fear adults will limit their access to technology.
- Bystanders and witnesses to cyber-bullying are anonymous, viewing the harmful material on a website but not dealing with it face to face.

Sources:

http://findyouthinfo.gov/topic_bullying.shtml

FindYouthInfo.gov is the U.S. government website that helps you create, maintain, and strengthen effective youth programs. Included are youth facts, funding information, and tools to help you assess community assets, generate maps of local and federal resources, search for evidence-based youth programs, and keep up-to-date on the latest, youth-related news. Along with the topic of bullying, information, strategies, tools, and resources for youth, families, schools and community organizations related to a variety of cross-cutting topics that affect youth are available.



<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults/default.aspx>

The *Stop Bullying Now!* Campaign is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). You can learn all about bullying and what you can do to stop it. There are resources targeted at kids and adults, in a variety of formats including games, cartoon webisodes, tip sheets and more. The web site and the Resource Kit are also available in Español.

Take a Stand. Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!

***Additional Information** can also be found through Pacer's National Center for Bullying Prevention. The Center unites, engages, and educates communities nationwide to address bullying through creative, relevant, and interactive resources at:

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>

They also have websites dedicated to kids and teens:

<http://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/> & <http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/>