


Cyberbullying

by

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ABSTRACT

A literature review of research pertaining to cyberbullying was completed. Findings indicate that cyberbullying is becoming more prevalent as students spend an increasing amount of time using technology that keeps them connected to people at all hours of the day. There are many different ways in which cyberbullies reach their victims, including instant messaging over the Internet, social networking web sites, text messaging and phone calls to cell phones. There are different forms of cyberbullying including, but not limited to, harassment, impersonation, and cyberstalking. It has been found that there are differences between not only the prevalence of cyberbullying between males and females but also the ways in which males and females cyberbully. Like bullying, cyberbullying is a serious problem which can cause the victim to feel inadequate and overly self-conscious, along with the possibility of committing suicide due to being cyberbullied. Two such cases are included in this paper. There are numerous ways in which schools and parents can prevent cyberbullying and ways in which they can intervene if it has occurred.

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Chapter I: Introduction

According to Belsey (2004) “cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others” (Belsey, 2004). In 2006, the National Crime Prevention Council worked with Harris Interactive Inc., to create a study on cyberbullying. The study found that 43% of the 824 middle school and high school-aged students surveyed in the United States had been cyberbullied in the past year (cited in Moessner, 2007).

The Pew Internet and American Life Project on cyberbullying conducted a similar study in 2006 which found that one out of three teens have experienced online harassment (cited in Lenhart, 2007). Pew also found that the most prevalent form of cyberbullying was making private information public; which included e-mails, text messages, and pictures (cited in Lenhart, 2007). The findings of the Pew research also indicated that girls are more likely to be part of cyberbullying than boys. Older girls, between the ages of 15 and 17, are the most likely to be involved in some form of cyberbullying, with 41% of those surveyed indicating that they have been involved in some type of cyberbullying (cited in Lenhart, 2007).

Cyberbullying is different from traditional bullying due to the anonymity that the Internet can provide. Cyberbullies do not have to own their actions due to the anonymity and cyberbullying is often outside of the legal reach of schools and school boards since it often happens outside of the school (Belsey, 2004). According to Willard (2006), there are different forms of cyberbullying. These forms include flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing, trickery, exclusion, cyberstalking, and cyberthreats.

As previously mentioned cyberbullies often believe they are anonymous to the victim and therefore tend to say more hurtful things to the victims than they would if they were face-to-face (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). However, Juvonen and Gross (2008), found that 73% of the respondents to their study were “pretty sure” or “totally sure” of the identity of the cyberbully.

Cyberbullying is more likely than other forms of bullying to go unreported to parents and administrators. This is due to victims feeling they needed to learn to deal with it themselves and also being afraid that if they tell their parents, their internet privileges will be reduced or taken away. It has been found that 90% of respondents in the Juvonen and Gross study (2008) reported not telling adults about cyberbullying incidents due to these reasons. Victims of cyberbullying may experience stress, low self-esteem, and depression. It has been found that cyberbullying can also have extreme repercussions such as suicide and violence. Marr and Field (2001) referred to suicide brought on by bullying as “bullycide” (Marr & Field, 2001, p. 1).

A particular victim of cyberbullying that led to “bullycide” is Megan Meier. Megan was a 13-year-old female from Missouri who was cyberbullied to the point that she hung herself in her closet in October of 2006 (Pokin, 2007). Megan thought that she was talking with a 16-year-old boy named Josh on MySpace. During the six weeks they were talking, Megan’s mom kept a close eye on the conversations. On October 15th, 2006, Megan received a message on MySpace from Josh which said, “I don’t know if I want to be friends with you anymore because I’ve heard that you are not very nice to your friends.” The next day, students were posting bulletins about Megan and Josh had sent her another message which read, “Everybody in O’Fallon knows how you are. You

are a bad person and everybody hates you. Have a shitty rest of your life. The world would be a better place without you.” That day, Megan’s parents found her hanging in her closet and rushed her to the hospital, where she died the following day (Pokin, 2007).

Although Megan’s parents did know about Josh and what he had been saying to her, there was no way of knowing that these messages would lead to her suicide. It was found that Lori Drew, the mother of one of Megan’s former friends, had created the fake MySpace account with her daughter. Drew was convicted of three misdemeanor charges of computer fraud for her involvement in creating the phony account which tricked Megan, who later committed suicide. This conviction was the country’s first cyberbullying verdict which was ruled on November 26th, 2008 (Steinhauer, 2008). On July 2nd, 2009, federal judge George H. Wu threw out the conviction. Judge Wu tentatively acquitted Drew of the previously mentioned misdemeanor charges, stating that the federal statute under which Drew was convicted is too “vague” when applied in this particular case. Further stating that if he were to allow Drew’s conviction to stand, “one could literally prosecute anyone who violates a terms of service agreement” in any way (Cathcart, 2009).

This study examines ways in which schools can prevent cyberbullying and, when necessary, intervene when cyberbullying does occur. In finding a possible solution to cyberbullying, victims will feel safer, not only in their homes, but at school as well.

Statement of the Problem

Cyberbullying is a new form of bullying that follows students from the hallways of their schools to the privacy of their homes. Many victims of cyberbullying are bullied

from the moment they wake up and check their cell phone or e-mail, to the time they go to bed and shut off their computer or cell phone.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this comprehensive literature review is to further understand cyberbullying which continues to occur more frequently as technology becomes more readily accessible by the masses, especially students; and to explore ways of preventing cyberbullying before it happens, and intervening after it has occurred. The study was conducted in 2009.

Research Questions

This study addressed three research questions.

1. What is the prevalence of cyberbullying and what are the different forms of cyberbullying?
2. What are the differences between males and females when it comes to cyberbullying?
3. What are some prevention and intervention techniques for cyberbullying?

Assumptions & Limitations of the Study

It was assumed that the research reviewed has been done by researchers with integrity. It was also assumed that the literature reviewed would clearly identify the prevalence and seriousness of cyberbullying. In addition, the literature review would show different forms of cyberbullying and the differences between males and females when it comes to cyberbullying. Finally, the literature would show recommended preventions and interventions for parents, victims and schools.

Possible limitations of the study were that the topic of cyberbullying is relatively new and therefore a lot of the research is overlapping by reciting the same studies.

Definition of Terms

There are some terms that need to be defined in this study for clarity and further understanding. Additional terms, including the different types of cyberbullying and Internet language can be found in Appendix A.

Bullycide. Bullying which results in the victim's suicide (Marr & Field, 2001).

Cyberbullying. Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and defamatory online personal polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others. (Belsey, 2004, n.p.)

Screen Name. A screen name is a made up name that people use in order to identify themselves. These names are generally not anywhere near the person's real name and are easily changeable.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Foreword

This chapter includes a discussion of the prevalence and seriousness of cyberbullying, followed by the different forms of cyberbullying. In addition, the chapter will include the differences between males and females when it comes to cyberbullying and a review of the Dawn-Marie Wesley case of bullycide. The chapter will conclude with recommended prevention and intervention techniques for cyberbullying.

Prevalence & Forms of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to cause harm to others (Belsey, 2004). According to the National Crime Prevention Council and Harris Interactive, Inc.'s study in 2006, 43% of the students surveyed had been cyberbullied within the last year (cited in Moessner, 2007). That same year, the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that one out of three teens have experienced online harassment (Lenhart, 2007).

According to an article in the NASP *Communiqué* (2007), a poll conducted by the Fight Crime: Invest in Kids group found that more than 13 million children in the United States aged 6 to 17 were victims of cyberbullying. The poll also found that one-third of teens and one-sixth of primary school-aged children had reported being cyberbullied (Cook, Williams, Guerra, & Tuthill, 2007).

Forms of cyberbullying go beyond name calling and enter a world of impersonation and cyberthreats. According to Willard (2006), there are nine main forms of cyberbullying: flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing, trickery, exclusion, cyberstalking and cyberthreats. Flaming is online fights using electronic

messages with angry and vulgar language. Harassment is another form in which the cyberbully repeatedly sends insulting messages via the Internet. Denigration is “dissing” someone online which can include sending or posting gossip or rumors about a person that could damage their reputation or friendships. Impersonation is pretending to be someone else in order to get that person in trouble with other people or to damage their reputation and friendships. Outing is sharing someone’s secrets, embarrassing information, or photos online without his/her permission. Trickery is similar to outing, in which the cyberbully will trick the victim to reveal secrets or embarrassing information and then share it with others online. Exclusion is intentionally excluding someone from an online group. Cyberstalking is repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates a significant amount of fear in the victim. Lastly, cyberthreats are defined as either threats or “distressing material,” general statements that make it sound like the writer is emotionally upset and may be considering harming someone else, themselves, or committing suicide (Willard, 2006).

According to Willard, there are three related concerns in addition to the nine forms of cyberbullying. These are students disclosing massive amounts of personal information via the Internet, becoming ‘addicted’ to the Internet to the point where their lives are highly dependent on their time spent online, and the prevalence of suicide and self-harm communities in which depressed youths will sometimes access to gain information on suicide and self-harm methods (Willard, 2006).

In *Confronting cyber-bullying* (2009), Shariff overviews additional concerns related to cyberbullying. These are anonymity, an infinite audience, prevalent sexual and homophobic harassment, and permanence of expression. Anonymity refers to the

anonymous nature of cyberspace in which people are able to hide behind screen names that protect their identity, which was mentioned earlier in this chapter. The online audience is described as being infinite due to the large number of people that are able to see what is written by the bully and the tendency of onlookers to support the perpetrators rather than the victim (cited in Shariff, 2009). Shariff's third concern is the emergence of sexual and homophobic harassment on the Internet, which she feels may be related to gender differences in the way that males and females use communication technology. The Internet has a permanence aspect that is difficult to erase because once anything is posted online, millions of people can download and save it immediately, and share it with others.

Heirman & Walrave (2008) have similar concerns. They also list anonymity and infinite audiences, although they add other concerns as well. These are 24/7 attainability, the private nature of online communication, and the absence of non-verbal communication cues. As they describe it, 24/7 attainability refers to the fact that the bullying follows the victims home and is present online and on the victim's phones, all hours of the day. The internet never turns off and therefore the victim can be bullied at anytime, anywhere that they have their computer or phone with them. They also can be bullied when they do not even know about it. This could happen if the bully posting something online without the victim knowing about it until hours or days later. In that case, a lot of other people have the opportunity to view the post or web site and draw their own conclusions. At that point, the damage has been done (Heirman & Walrave, 2008).

The private nature of the internet refers to people having private e-mail and social networking accounts secured with passwords and therefore are difficult to monitor. In the school yard, bullies would often be noticed by teachers and other faculty if they were taunting or hurting another student. However, online, there are not any teachers watching over what is going on. Parents often do not know what their children are doing online and therefore the child could be being bullied or a bully themselves and there is nothing anyone can do about it unless the victim tells their parents what is going on. This does not happen often, due to victims often feeling that if they tell an adult about it, the problem will get worse. The absence of non-verbal communication cues when it comes to the Internet is another factor that Heirman & Walrave find concerning. The absence of these cues may lead to people sharing their most intimate stories with people without realizing what they are doing. With the absence of someone sitting there listening to the other person share their story, non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions are missed. This can lead to the storyteller divulging more information than they normally would with a particular individual or one or the other taking a statement the wrong way and becoming upset easier than they would if they were face to face (Heirman & Walrave, 2008).

There are numerous ways in which cyberbullies reach their online victims. According to Willard (2006) these ways include sending cruel, vicious and sometimes threatening messages, creating web sites with content about the victim without the victim knowing, or posting pictures online asking other people to rate things such as who is the biggest loser in the school. Other cyberbullies may break into the victim's e-mail account to send e-mails posing to be the victim, engage the victim in a conversation via instant

messaging and send the information collected to other people, or take pictures of the victim without them knowing, such as in the locker room (Willard, 2006).

According to Beale and Hall (2007), the six main ways are e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms/bash boards, small text messaging, Web sites, and voting booths. E-mail is used to send harassing and threatening messages to the victims and although it is possible to trace where the e-mail was sent from, it is often difficult to prove exactly who sent the e-mail. Instant messaging (IM) allows for 'real time' communication. Although most IM programs allow users to create a list of screen names that they do not want to contact them, it is easy for bullies to create new screen names and therefore still be able to contact the victim. Chat rooms or bash boards are a lot like instant messaging, however, instead of one-on-one real time communication, there is a group of people who are all talking together at the same time (Beale & Hall, 2007).

"Bash board" is a nickname for an online bulletin board in which students can write whatever they want, without it being known who they are. Often students will write untrue, taunting statements about other students for the world to see. Small text messaging (SMS) are text messages that are sent and received via mobile phones. Text messages can include words, numbers, or an alphanumeric combination. Voting or polling booths are part of Web sites that are made for the distinct purpose of mocking, antagonizing, and harassing others. These sites allow the users to vote anonymously online for the "ugliest," "fattest," "dumbest," "biggest slut," and so on, boy or girl in their school (Beale & Hall, 2007).

Differences between males and females when it comes to cyberbullying

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project survey in 2006 about cyberbullying, girls were more likely than boys to say they have experienced cyberbullying; 38% of online girls reported being bullied compared to 26% of online boys. Furthermore, girls aged 15 to 17 are the most likely to have experienced cyberbullying, with 41% of respondents from that group reporting they had been cyberbullied compared to 34% of girls ages 12 to 14. It was also found that nearly 4 in 10 social network users have been cyberbullied, compared with 22% of online teens who do not use social networking sites (cited in Lenhart, 2007).

From the same poll, it was found that online rumors tended to target girls as well; 36% of girls compared to 23% of boys. Online rumors can include someone making a private e-mail, instant message conversation, text message, or embarrassing photo of the victim, public without the victims consent. One in eight online teens reported that they had received a threatening e-mail, text message or instant message. Older teens, especially 15 to 17 year old girls, were more likely to report they have been threatened online (cited in Lenhart, 2007).

According to a study conducted in 2008 by Hinduja & Patchin, females are as likely, if not more likely, to be involved in cyberbullying in their lifetime. Although, when students were asked about their recent experiences of being cyberbullies, males and females responded equally. When asked about lifetime participation, females reported higher rates of participating in cyberbullying, which leads one to believe females engage in these activities for a longer period of time. Females tend to take pictures of victims without them knowing and posting them online more than males did. Females also tend

to post things online to make fun of someone more often, although males tend to send e-mails to make them angry or to make fun of them. Although traditionally males tend to bully in more outward and public ways, according to this study, females are more likely to ensure that their victims are embarrassed in front of a larger audience since they use social networking sites instead of e-mail more often than males do. When it comes to being a victim of cyberbullying, the results are about the same. Females are more likely to have experienced the effects of cyberbullying than males, although the difference disappears when they were asked about the last 30 days. The data shows that females are 6% more likely to have been cyberbullied in their lifetime than males. Females also have increased rates of being cyberbullied by someone at their school and having threats made online be carried out at school (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008).

Hinduja & Patchin (2008) researched the reasons why females participate in and experience cyberbullying more often than males. They found that due to females being more verbal and cyberbullying being text based, it is more likely for females to partake in cyberbullying. Females also tend to bully in more emotional and psychological ways, such as spreading rumors and gossiping, which is more in line with cyberbullying. Females tend to be less confrontational when in a face to face situation and therefore the anonymity of the online community may be more appealing to them. Hinduja & Patchin also state that females are generally culturally and socially constrained when it comes to using aggression or physical violence, however, are not under those constraints while they are online. Females are often more apt to require social support and in order to gain that, they often gang up against other females. The online community is an easy and

quick way to gang up against other females and to have many people views it which adds to the humiliation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008).

In the documentary, *It's a girl's world*, the differences between girls bullying and boys bullying was explored. Traditional bullying for boys was more physical, whereas girls tended to spread rumors, exclude other girls from their social cliques, and use teasing or name calling. Females who bully other females tended to be manipulative, aggressive, mean, and control the victim through fear (Glazier, 2003).

In the film, psychologist Shelley Hymel said,

In a period of life where these girls are just developing a sense of morality, they're already morally disengaging. They see this as normative and as ok. We're moving from the sort of girl as the sweet, petite, quiet, obedient stereotype to a real advocacy I'm seeing in girls of being a bitch is cool. (cited in Glazier, 2003, n.p.)

Throughout the documentary, the case of a 14-year-old girl from Canada, Dawn-Marie Wesley, who killed herself after being bullied at school and on the phone, was discussed. According to Dawn's friends and the friends of D.W., the ring leader of the girls who bullied Dawn, Dawn was not the type of girl to spread rumors and they wondered why D.W. taunted Dawn so much. The last thing Dawn heard before she killed herself was D.W. yelling and screaming at her over the phone and threatening Dawn's life. Within two hours, Dawn and D.W.'s friends were notified that Dawn had hung herself in her room with a dog leash and that a suicide note had been left behind in which Dawn wrote about being bullied (Glazier, 2003). In the film, psychologists Debra Pepler and Wendy Craig stated "this is a universal process. It transcends country, it transcends

socio-economic status. It is a process that unfolds when girls come together” (cited in Glazier, 2003, n.p.).

Recommended Preventions & Interventions

According to Willard (2006), there are many ways that schools, parents, and students can help prevent cyberbullying and intervene when cyberbullying has occurred. The steps that Willard suggested for schools contain elements of increasing awareness of cyberbullying concerns; empowering educators, students, parents, and community members with knowledge of how to prevent and respond to cyberbullying; provide warning to cyberbullies and their parents about the negative consequences; and effective supervision and monitoring of online activities. Willard also stated that it is important to develop a plan of action to engage in effective threat analysis for any reports of cyberbullying that raises concerns of suicide or violence (Willard, 2006).

There are eight main steps that Willard suggested for addressing cyberbullying. They include engaging in participatory planning, conducting an assessment, ensuring an effective anti-bullying program is in place and reviewing policies and procedures related to Internet and mobile communication devices. Additionally it is important to conduct professional development of individuals in the district, include parents on prevention and identification of cyberbullying, educate students about cyberbullying and what to do about it, and finally, to assess the cyberbullying prevention and intervention plan periodically to determine its effectiveness (Willard, 2006).

The first step was engaging in participatory planning in which cyberbullying concerns are incorporated into safe schools planning, including district technology staff on the school safety committee, and including non-school participants which may include

parent organizations, social service agencies, and law enforcement. Step two was assessing conduct that could need assessment which can be done by conducting a survey of students to identify incident rates, locations of incidents (on or off campus), and factors that may be preventing students from reporting incidents. Step three was to ensure that an effective anti-bullying program is in place. This program would consist of core values, predictive empathy, peer norms against bullying, peer intervention skills, and effective administrative responses (Willard, 2006).

Step four consisted of reviewing policies and procedures related to Internet and mobile communication devices, which may include restricting the use of mobile communication devices during the school day and monitoring of Internet use. An anonymous report box in which students may submit reports of bullying and cyberbullying concerns may also be utilized. Step five conduct professional development of individuals in the district, the depth of the development and understanding necessary would be determined by their status, however all administrators should be aware of bullying and cyberbullying basics. Step six included the parents by educating them on strategies to prevent cyberbullying and detect if their child is a cyberbully or a victim of one. Step seven provides student education about cyberbullying in which lessons would incorporate cyberbullying into life skills or bullying prevention classes. Finally, step eight was to evaluate the cyberbullying prevention and intervention program periodically to determine its effectiveness (Willard, 2006).

In the article *Addressing CyberBullying in Schools* by Fryer (2006), there were ten steps that may be utilized in order to address this issue. The steps are to proactively collaborate, sponsor awareness events, conduct hot spot surveys, provide anonymous

drop boxes, address cyberbullying in the school district's computer use policy, and advance action team planning. Additionally, encourage class meetings, implement network secure access restrictions and create a culture of responsibility and accountability. It is suggested that school proactively collaborate with teachers, administrators, educational community and students to address bullying and cyberbullying before a high-profile incident occurs. The reason for this is that even though people may think that it is not happening in their school, chances are, that it is. It is important to prevent a large incident before it can happen. Sponsoring awareness events includes making students aware that bullying and cyberbullying are not appropriate or tolerated inside or outside of school. These events should start in the beginning of the school year and continue throughout. Much like with proactively collaborating, it is important to get a variety of people involved in these awareness events. As far as types of awareness events, there are various programs that facilitate the discussion, prevention and intervention of cyberbullying, which are discussed later in this paper. Hot spot surveys invite students to identify locations around the school in which illicit and prohibited activities occur. Often, students will be provided with a map of the school and the opportunity to mark where things such as alcohol or drug use and bullying are occurring. Students are also encouraged to write on the back of the map explaining what occurred and where it happened. It is also important for schools to provide anonymous drop boxes in which students can report bullying and other illicit activities (Fryer, 2006, n.p.).

Fryer also suggests that the school district's computer acceptable use policy should specifically address bullying and cyberbullying, along with a series of

consequences. It is recommended that this document be signed by the parent and student to ensure that both are aware of the policy and consequences. It is also advised that schools create a review committee with members of all aspects of the school which will meet and take action when there are incidents of cyberbullying. Suggested members of this committee include administrators, school psychologist, school counselor, librarian, technology coordinator, school resource officer, community mental health resource person and at least one key regional resource person. Not all members will be called upon for all incidents, however, it is important for them to all be on the same page and have the same action plan. Class meetings are another way of preventing cyberbullying. The culture of the classroom has a large impact on how students treat each other, both inside and outside of the classroom environment. Through class meetings, students would be invited to be responsible members in a society in which they are held accountable for their actions and are committed to helping address and resolve issues such as cyberbullying. Often, class meetings may begin with compliments and proceed to agenda items, which may include conflict resolution techniques (Fryer, 2006, n.p.).

It is important for school districts to be aware of computer network security options and how to enforce them on all computers. Students and faculty that use computers in the district should be required to sign in whenever they gain access to the school network so that their activities can be tracked and monitored. This takes away some of the anonymity that computers and the Internet have which generally decreases cyberbullying and other illicit uses of school computers. Overall, it is important for everyone in the school district and community to support a culture in which everyone is held accountable for their actions and a sense of shared responsibility (Fryer, 2006, n.p.).

Many of the steps that Fryer suggested were similar to those that Willard (2006) suggested in the same year. There are also cyberbullying prevention programs including the CyberSmart! Cyberbullying Package which is free to schools nationwide and designed to be integrated into the existing curriculum by classroom teachers. According to the CyberSmart! Education Company (2009), CyberSmart! launched the nation's first research-based cyberbullying prevention curriculum in partnership with the National School Boards Association's (NBSA) Technology Leadership Network and the Character Education Partnership (CEP), Character Education Partnership, National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and the National Cyber Security Alliance. More specifically, CyberSmart! developed their Cyberbullying Package by "examining all current research findings and using best practices from the fields of cyber security, school violence prevention, and character education to impact behavioral change" (CyberSmart! Education Company, 2009).

The CyberSmart! Cyberbullying Package provides an opportunity for open discussion with students about cyberbullying and build a sustained cyberbullying prevention campaign which involves the entire school community. The Cyberbullying Package focuses on helping students develop critical thinking and decision-making skills and being able to define problems and issues themselves. The package also addresses research that most victims do not disclose online harassment to adults, the critical role of the bystander, and that "getting tough" on the bullies themselves is not effective. Within the CyberSmart! Cyberbullying curriculum, there are numerous different lessons depending on the grade of the students involved. The lessons are designed to be used in grades K-12. There are many hands-on activities which require students to speak up

about their experiences and to create things such as anti-cyberbullying posters and making a video to show their parents and others who would benefit from further cyberbullying information (CyberSmart! Education Company, 2009).

Another anti-cyberbullying program is Netsmartz which was launched in collaboration with Compaq, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA) and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). The Netsmartz Workshop was launched in 2001 to reach over 3.3 million youth served each year by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America to test the effectiveness of the workshop. Netsmartz Workshop features lessons which are interactive and activities which provide children of all ages with a way of learning how to use the Internet responsibly and how to remain safe while they are online. The Netsmartz program has been praised by Vice President Joseph R. Biden who helped secure funding for the project (2001, Compaq).

Another program is i-SAFE which offers free Internet safety lessons in partnership with i-LEARN. I-LEARN used to be available exclusively to the classroom environment but now it is available to the public and divided into different age groups. The program provides teachers and parents with information which they may share with others in order to further educate them about safe and responsible use of the Internet. The i-SAFE program consists of six online education streaming video modules which address various aspects of the online community and the dangers that come with it. The modules include personal safety, cyber-community issues, cyber-predator identification, cyber-security, intellectual property and community outreach. Students that take part in the i-SAFE program are able to become certified i-MENTORS after they have viewed all

modules. An i-MENTOR is capable of addressing issues such as cyberbullying, cyber-security and cyber-predators (Carlson, 2006).

Chapter III: Summary, Critical Analysis & Recommendations

Cyberbullying is on the rise with the advance and availability of technology at our fingertips. This chapter will include a summary of the first two chapters of this paper, limitations of this study, implications for future research and implications for practice.

Summary of Noteworthy Results

This literature review addressed three research questions: the prevalence and forms of cyberbullying, differences between males and females when it comes to cyberbullying and prevention and intervention techniques for cyberbullying.

A cyberbullying study by the National Crime Prevention Council and Harris Interactive, Inc. found that 43% of the 824 middle school and high school-aged students surveyed in the United States had been cyberbullied in the past year (cited in Moessner, 2007). There are many preventative actions that school districts and parents can take in order to reduce cyberbullying, however, the difficult part is getting administrators on board and convincing them that cyberbullying is a real and growing problem.

According to a study conducted in 2008 by Hinduja & Patchin, females are as likely, if not more likely, to be involved in cyberbullying in their lifetime (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). This is believed to be due to the nature of cyberbullying, and the anonymity that the internet provides.

According to Willard (2006), there are many ways that schools, parents, and students can help prevent cyberbullying and intervene when cyberbullying has occurred. Willard suggests steps that schools can take which contain elements of increasing awareness of cyberbullying concerns; empowering educators, students, parents, and community members with knowledge of how to prevent and respond to cyberbullying;

and effective supervision and monitoring of online activities (Willard, 2006). In addition to Willard's proposed steps, there are many other programs available to schools and communities that have been found to prevent cyberbullying and intervene when it does happen. One such program is the CyberSmart! Cyberbullying Package which is free to schools nationwide and designed to be integrated into the existing curriculum by classroom teachers.

Limitations of this Literature Review

Limitations of this literature review are that this being a literature review, there is not any new research being presented or results. Cyberbullying being a relatively new type of bullying limits the amount of research that has been conducted and therefore the amount of literature available for this review. That also limits the extensive research pertaining to the effectiveness of the proposed prevention and intervention techniques and programs.

Implications for Future Research

There is a need for more research to be completed in the scope of cyberbullying, including effectiveness of suggested prevention and intervention programs. Additionally, it is important to continue surveying the prevalence of cyberbullying. Developing and utilizing a student survey for middle and high school students about cyberbullying could assist in keeping track of the prevalence. Developing an internet based survey which will be e-mailed to all incoming freshman to universities such as UW-Stout, and community colleges about their experiences with cyberbullying would be another viable option. Comparing the difference between the university students and the community college students may be beneficial as well.

Implications for Practice

Implications for practice and working with those affected by cyberbullying include ensuring that students, administration, parents and community members are aware of and educated about cyberbullying. It is important that victims of cyberbullying know to make adults aware if they are cyberbullied, document e-mails, instant messages or text messages that they receive from a cyberbully and work with their parents and administrators to alleviate the bullying. Parents should be aware that monitoring their child's internet activity, placing the computer in a common room instead of in the child's bedroom, and talking with their child about cyberbullying may help reduce the occurrence of cyberbullying in their home. School districts should implement an anti-cyberbully program such as CyberSmart! to increase awareness of cyberbullying, develop policies surrounding computer use and consequences for those that cyberbully. Schools may also implement drop boxes around the school in which students can anonymously report instances of cyberbullying that they have seen or been involved in.

Summary

A literature review of research pertaining to cyberbullying was completed. Findings indicate that cyberbullying is becoming more prevalent as students spend an increasing amount of time using technology that keeps them connected to people at all hours of the day. There are many different ways in which cyberbullies reach their victims, including instant messaging over the Internet, social networking web sites, text messaging and phone calls to cell phones. There are different forms of cyberbullying including, but not limited to, harassment, impersonation, and cyberstalking. It has been found that there are differences between not only the prevalence of cyberbullying

between males and females but also the ways in which males and females cyberbully. Like bullying, cyberbullying is a serious problem which can cause the victim to feel inadequate and overly self-conscious, along with the possibility of committing suicide due to being cyberbullied. Two such cases are included in this paper. There are numerous ways in which schools and parents can prevent cyberbullying and ways in which they can intervene if it has occurred.

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Appendix A: Additional Terms

Cyber bullying Lingo (adapted from the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use).

Away Message: custom-written automatic reply used to greet any instant messages the user receives while absent

Instant Messaging – software allowing users to chat online in “real time” from their computers or via wireless devices

JK – An acronym for “just kidding.” Some young people follow hurtful comments with “jk,” absolving themselves of any responsibility for their statement.

POS – An acronym for “parent over shoulder.”

Profile – A biographical form, in which members record their hobbies, likes and dislikes.

Text Messaging – The use of cell phone keypads to type short messages that can be instantly sent to other cell phone users.

Three-Way Instant Messaging – An upgrade of the three-way phone call, in which two people instant message from the same computer, but suggest only one person is present. This is followed by sensitive questioning of others about the “quiet” third party, who is able to view what people “really think” of him or her.

Appendix B: Common Chat/Text Acronyms

(adapted from Hinduja & Patchin, 2008).

AFAIK	As far as I know
AFK	Away from computer
A/S/L?	Age/Sex/Location?
BRB	Be right back
BTW	By the way
JK	Just kidding
LMAO	Laughing my a** off
LOL	Laughing out loud
OMG	Oh my God
PAW	Parents are watching
TTYL	Talk to you later
WTGP?	Want to go private? (into private chat)
WTF?	What the f***?
YBS	You'll be sorry