

**HANDBOOK ON CYBERSPACE
AND CYBERBULLYING**

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1 - The Dangers of Cyberspace

Introduction

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, usage of the Internet and other related technology has increased exponentially. This trend can be seen especially among young children and young adults, most of whom are prematurely exposed to massive and unlimited freedom in terms of usage of technology. In a time when the youth is continually subjected to the influence of modern technology, there is a huge need for the regulation of the content that they are exposed to. Since the Internet is a vast network with no single point of regulation, monitoring and policing its effects is nearly impossible. Our only hope of countering the negative aspects of cyberspace and Internet is to educate the relevant parties and to raise awareness about this issue. Consequently, it is important to educate the youth about the darker side of the Internet – how to recognize its many detrimental aspects and protect themselves against them.

What is Cyberspace?

Cyberspace is the term that is generically used to describe the electronic medium that is used to facilitate all communication and sharing that is done online. It involves a worldwide network that is used for communication and exchange of data and information. It must be noted that this a virtual (non-physical) space.

The possibilities of cyberspace are endless. It allows users to share information, to communicate, have discussions and virtual meetings, conduct businesses, engage in entertainment activities like gaming and so much more.

The word “cyberspace” was introduced by William Gibson in 1984 in his book, *Neuromancer*. Although this term is thought to be out-dated by some, it is still extensively used to describe any feature or any aspect that is related to the Internet.

What is Cybercrime?

Cybercrime is a form of criminal activity that is done with the help of computer or by the networks of the computer. This form of crime is anonymous and often targets computers or sites. The computer in question can be of any type - it may be a personal computer, a mobile phone or any other. If the computer is used as a means to further illegal activities, or if it is the target of a crime, the process can be defined as a cybercrime. Cybercrimes take many forms, such as committing fraud, child pornography, identity theft or violation of privacy and much more.

Merriam Webster defines cybercrime as “*criminal activity (such as fraud, theft, or distribution of child pornography) committed using a computer especially to illegally access, transmit, or manipulate data.*”

For the purpose of ease of understanding, the dangers associated with cyberspace have been categorized into four as follows:

1. Crime-related dangers
2. Privacy-related dangers
3. Adverse effects on psychology
4. Malware

1. Crime-Related Dangers

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is bullying that takes place over digital technology, like social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms and so on. It is repetitive and willful harm that is inflicted on a person over any kind of digital media, and this kind of harm can affect one's reputation, psychology, mental well-being and sometimes even physical well-being through indirect means.

According to the Cyberbullying Research Center, the definition of ‘cyberbullying’ comprises of four elements:

- ***Wilful***: The act of cyberbullying must be wilfully done, and not unintentional.
- ***Repetitive***: The act continues as a pattern, and not a single incident
- ***Harmful***: There must be a negative and detrimental effect on the target
- ***Electronic devices***: The act happens over some kind of digital media and this is what differentiates cyberbullying from traditional bullying

Sexual Implications (Gender Discrimination/ Sexual Predators and Sexual Harassment)

Gender discrimination in the cyberspace typically involves unwelcome, verbal and visual comments and remarks that insult individuals because of their gender or that use stimuli known or intended to provoke negative emotions. These include behavior such as posting pornographic pictures in public or in places where they deliberately insult, telling chauvinistic jokes, and making gender related degrading remarks.

Sexual harassment in social media is where any user with an unknown user ID can abuse, share degrading pictures, share one’s own pictures of their sexual part to another user (mostly a female), commenting a vile comment, spamming and so on can go unnoticed and unreported. A more volatile form of sexual harassment is “sextortion” where the predator extorts from people their nude images which they have themselves shared and coercing into performing sexual activities with the person extorting the pictures. It is a way of sexual blackmail.

Many a time, there is a well-drawn connection between gender discrimination and sexual harassment, as sexual harassment is often done through physical means. When this kind of harassment is done through the act of cyber stalking, it leaves a deep impact in the minds of the victim.

Spamming (Phishing, Click Baiting and Like-Jacking)

The term spam refers to Unsolicited Commercial Email (UCE) or Unsolicited Bulk Email (UBE). There are many types of spamming, as follows –

Phishing scams are fraudulent emails appearing to come from some legitimate source but these emails generally lead to some spoofed website or to give out some personal information which results in identify theft. Phishing is also a type of a scam, aimed at gathering private and confidential details.

Click Baiting is the act of posting sensationalist headlines to encourage the user to click through to the content with the aim of generating online advertising revenue. When the user clicks through to the page, the content usually doesn't exist or is radically different from what the headline made it out to be.

Like-jacking is the act of tricking users to post a Facebook status update for a certain site without the user's prior knowledge or intent. The user may be thinking that they are just visiting a page but the click can trigger a script in the background to share the link on Facebook.

Scams

Scams done over the Internet are different methods of fraud and are facilitated by cybercriminals on the Internet. The main purpose of these types of scams can include theft of credit card details, getting user login and password details and even identity theft. Scams happen in many different ways such as phishing emails, social media scams, scams over SMS messages, false tech support phone calls and much more.

Cyber racism

With the onset of Internet boom, it was seen that far righted groups exploited the divisive features of the internet to spread divisive ideas, racial hate and mistrust. This phenomenon is referred to as 'cyber-racism' which was first coined by Les Back in 2002.

Cyber-racism involves online activity that can include jokes or comments that cause offence and hate, name calling or verbal abuse, harassment and intimidation or public commentary that inflames hostility towards other groups.

Catfishing

Catfish is a concept that is very deceptive in nature where a person creates a fake profile to attract specific people mostly to exploit them financially and romantically.

The term catfish was originated from 2010's American documentary called 'Catfish' where the executive producer of the show was once a victim of catfishing when he fell in love with a girl in the internet who claimed to be a nineteen-year-old girl but actually turned out to be a 40-year-old housewife.

2. Privacy-Related Dangers

Online privacy, or internet privacy or digital privacy, refers to how much of your personal, financial, and browsing data remains private when you are using the Internet. In an increasingly connected world, online privacy concerns are fast becoming a larger part of the online community. Users of cyberspace are very vulnerable to privacy related threats, because they constantly enter private information like credit card details while conducting communication or transactions over the Internet.

- **Information Mishandling**

Certain Internet sites request your personal information to get access to their services. This data is stored in cookies and can be accessed later by these sites. This data is not always kept private

and can be accessed by anyone, and easily mishandles, leading to serious consequences. Tech giants use this information to personalise user experience, but they also sometimes sell user information to marketing companies. Due to activities like e-banking and e-businesses, the lack of privacy over the Internet has further increased.

- **Spying and Snooping**

When you carry out transactions online, trackers keep track of your personal preferences and record your search history and online activities. Just used for advertising purposes, to show users advertisements according to their needs and interests. However, this information can sometimes be used by cybercriminals to carry out illegal activities that can threaten your online presence, as well as your personal life.

3. Adverse Effects on Psychology

Inferiority complex, body image and depression brought upon by abusive language

Spending too much time online poses a challenge in one's mental health which often leads to depression. The cause of depression can be many; it can range from seeing one's peer boasting about their life in social media to dealing with some abusive comments in their posts. Often the social media platform becomes a breeding ground for lower self-image, low self-confidence, inferiority complex and often these "victims" suffer from body shaming instances as the social media world demands an unrealistic beauty expectation from their fellow members.

Internet Addiction

Internet addiction is a mental condition that involves excessive use of the internet, usually to the extent where it is harmful to the user. When someone is constantly online, this behaviour becomes compulsive and they may then be described as addicted to it. This is recognized as a problem, but there is some debate as to whether this can be defined as a type of addiction.

Internet addiction can be of different types:

- **Cybersex Addiction**

This type of addiction involves excessive indulgence in pornography, adult websites, adult chat rooms and more. This can be harmful to the user's ability to form real world romantic or sexual relationships due to unrealistic expectations or standards set by addictive sites

- **Net Compulsion**

These are interactive online activities that can be harmful when done in excess, such as online gambling, trading stocks, online auctions and compulsive online shopping. These activities can be detrimental for one's financial status and distrust their personal life.

- **Online Relationship Addiction**

This type of addiction involves finding relationships online, and often neglecting real life relationships as a result. Certain individual might even conceal their true identity in online relationships, leading to fraud or catfishing.

- **Gaming Addiction**

This type of addition involves excessive engagement in computer games and can be detrimental to the psychology and even physique of the gamer.

4. Malware

Any kind of software with malicious intent is called malware. They can infect computers or other electronic devices and either cause loss of data or any other kind of damage to the device. They can take over partial control of a device's operations and interfere with normal functioning. The two most common ways that malware come into your system are through Internet and email. So, whenever you are connected to the Internet, your system is at risk.

- Virus

A virus is a piece of program that attaches itself to another program. When this program is inadvertently executed by the user, the virus replicates itself, and infects other computer programs, modifying them in such a way that malfunction or self-destroy.

- Trojan Horse

Trojan Horses are extremely dangerous because they represent themselves as a useful program, and the users unknowingly install it to their system. After this, the attackers who are in control of the Trojan Horse gains access to the system. Then, this program is used to steal financial information or install other forms of malware, like ransomware.

- Ransomware

This type of malware restricts your access to your device, or else it encrypts all your files. It then forces you to pay a ransom to regain access to them. It will demand payment in cryptocurrency, which is very hard to track. Malware is easily obtained from online criminal marketplaces and defending the system against it is very difficult.

- Worms

A worm is a type of malware that replicates itself and spreads copies of itself all over your device. They come into computers through email. Worms can change and delete files, and they can even install additional malicious software onto a device. It can even allow a hacker to gain control over a device and its confidential information.

Conclusion

The Internet had pervaded the lives of millions of people around the world, and has become constant in the lives of many. Today, people are constantly interacting with cyberspace for even the most basic activities. With the many advantages of using the Internet, we also encounter the dangers it brings. These can be privacy related, crime related and sometimes even have negative impacts on the psychology of online users, especially the youth. It is important that we have a comprehensive knowledge about the many dangers of the Internet in order to truly be able to reap its benefits.

2 - Cyberbullying and how it differs from Traditional Bullying

Introduction

Having proper knowledge of what cyberbullying is, as well as its various manifestations, is vital for all young people, and all responsible adults. Knowing what this phenomenon is the first step towards counteracting it and making a stand against it, while keeping oneself safe from it. This chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of cyberbullying - its definition, how it differs from traditional bullying, the types of bullying and much more.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyber bullying is a form of harassment or bullying using electronic devices. This also known as online bullying. This phenomenon has become common among teenagers. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It's a repeated behavior, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming. As mentioned in the previous chapter, cyberbullying is characterised by it being wilful, repetitive, harmful and done over electronic devices.

What is Traditional bullying?

The definition of traditional bullying can be easily explained through an example - when someone says or does something harmful for another person on purpose, this activity is known as traditional bullying. Most common types of traditional bullying are physical bullying and verbal bullying. Punching, kicking, stealing are some examples for physical bullying and name calling, teasing in a harmful way and threatening are some examples for verbal bullying.

A Comparison of Traditional bullying and Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is much more dangerous than traditional bullying. When it comes to similarities, in both cyber bullying and traditional bullying, the bully uses techniques such as threatening and causing harm to someone else. In both cases, the victim suffers from symptoms such as loss of interest on the things they love, loneliness and depression. However, cyber bullying takes place over an electronic device or social media, while traditional bullying happens in real life.

The effects of cyberbullying are much harder to detect than those of traditional bullying. This is because traditional bullying often leaves physical scars in the victims, that can be later used to corroborate any accusations of wrongdoing. These physical scars also provide an opportunity for a friend or a loved one of the victims to notice what is happening and offer help. Similarly, the act of traditional bullying happens within a physical landscape, like a school or a park, and there might be bystanders who can offer help, or in the very least, act as witnesses.

In contrast, cyberbullying happens over electronic devices or electronic media, and such bullying is much harder to detect. This type of bullying might take the form of text messages, videos or any other media and are limited to within an electronic device. This makes it harder for an external party to identify the act of bullying and offer help (unless the victim himself reaches out and asks for help, which is unlikely in certain cases). The consequences of cyberbullying also cannot be seen as physical scars like bruises. There are more likely to be mental scars, like low self-esteem, anxiety or depression. All of these are harder to detect than physical scars, which makes intervention in cyber bullying much more difficult than intervention in traditional bullying.

Remember that cyberbullying is much easier to do than traditional bullying, because there is less likely to be a deterrent or any kind of audience. It also does not require physical strength. A lot of people, especially young people, opt for cyberbullying as a safe and easy way to hurt someone, as opposed to physically confronting them. It must also be remembered that cyberbullying is just as harmful as traditional bullying, sometimes even more so. Being subjected to cyberbullying can be severely detrimental to someone's health, and can lead to them being publicly shamed as well.

Types of Cyberbullying and how they are done

Harassment

Cyberbullies use different strategies, such as the ones mentioned below to harm another person.

1. Reporting the victim

Social media platforms allow users to report someone. Bully uses this report button to delete the victim's social media account. This strategy is also known as **Warning Wars**. By doing this bully tries to mentally harass the victim.

2. Text wars

The bully sends hundreds of harmful texts to the victim and by doing this bully tries to mentally harass the victim.

3. Posting rude comments

This is another strategy used by bullies to harass the victim, and can take place over various social media platforms.

4. Posting embarrassing information

Bullies share rumors and embarrassing posts about the victim in social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and twitter.

Impersonation

A cyberbully impersonates another person and try to cause harm to that person's life. The cyberbully uses strategies mentioned below to harm the victim.

1. Developing a profile similar to victim's profile.

- A cyberbully creates a social media profile similar to the victim's profile, posts inappropriate information and tries to change the victim's social media image.

2. Pretending to be someone else by creating a fake social media account.
 - Also known as **catfishing**, this is a common phenomenon in today's era where social media and dating apps are amply used.
3. Hacking victim's social media account and change information.

Video Shaming

There are different strategies of video shaming.

1. **Cyber-baiting**
 - Cyber baiting is the process of creating an incident and making that person emotionally upset and recording that incident.
2. **Video sharing**
 - This involves sharing a video of the victim online, which embarrass the victim.
3. **Recording the victim without the consent and later share that video.**

Why do people cyberbully?

People cyberbully for different reasons. Sometimes, the need to bully someone over the Internet stems from that person's own insecurities. At other times, they may be trying to seek revenge for something happened between them and the victim in real life. Whatever is the reason, cyberbullying can seriously harm someone:

Here are a few reasons as to why people turn towards cyberbullying:

- They might think it is harmless or just a joke.

- They might have pent up energy or restlessness within them, and turn to cyberbullying as a way to stave off boredom.
- They might be trying to assert power over others, or to become popular or feared by others and are trying to use cyberbullying as the way to do it. They will be empowered and encouraged if other people think this is funny or entertaining.
- People who were themselves bullied at some point, will sometimes cyberbully as a way of getting back at people who hurt them.
- They might believe that the other person deserves to be cyberbullied.

What age groups are subjected to Cyberbullying?

Most of the time, young people between 12 to 17 years are subjected to cyber bullying. Sometimes, even adults are being cyberbullied as well. According to a study conducted by “*Pew Research Centre*”, it was found out that at least 59% teenagers in the USA have experienced cyberbullying. 42% of the teens have reported that they have been called offensive names and 32% of teens mentioned that bullies have spread false rumors about them. About 95% of the teens use mobile phones and therefore it has become the most common media where teens are bullied.

This study has also found out that teenage boys and girls are equally likely to experience cyberbullying, but, that there are some differences in the specific types of harassment they encounter. Instagram is found to be the most common platform in which cyberbullies use to harm their victims.

Conclusion

Cyberbullying is, as mentioned above, harassment done through electronic media, and is just as serious a phenomenon as traditional bullying. Cyberbullying can be done unintentionally or intentionally, and its root cause range from insecurity to the need for revenge. By educating ourselves and the youth of what cyberbullying is, we can take the first step towards fighting it.

3 How to recognize cyberbullying

Introduction

Anyone can become a victim of cyberbullying at any point and it is very different from physical bullying because cyberbullying can happen consciously or unconsciously. There are instances where the victim himself or herself doesn't know that he or she has been victimized. Thus, people around the victim such as parents, friends and acquaintances should be aware how to notice it. This chapter is a quick overview on how subtle changes of victims can even be identified especially through observation.

How do I differentiate between harmless jokes and cyberbullying?

When people joke around, sometimes it's hard to tell if someone is just having fun or trying to hurt you. Sometimes they'll laugh it off with a "just kidding," or "don't take it so seriously". If you feel hurt or think others are laughing at you instead of with you, then the joke has gone too far. If it continues even after you've asked the person to stop and you are still feeling upset about it, then this could be bullying. When bullying takes place online, it can result in unwanted attention from a wide range of people including strangers. If you feel bad and it doesn't stop, then it's worth getting help. Stopping cyberbullying is not just about calling out bullies, it's also about recognizing that everyone deserves respect – online and in real life.

How to identify a victim of cyberbullying?

It has been found that most of the victims show following changes when they are bullied:

- Suddenly deleting a social networking profile and account.
- Appearing bunch of new texts from different email addresses or phone numbers.
- Suddenly avoids using their mobile device or computer, or they begin spending much more time texting, gaming or using social networking sites.
- Becomes more secretive about their online activities and may avoid talking about their computer or mobile device.
- Mood swings.
- Avoid social gatherings.
- Poor performance in studies or at work.
- Eating and sleeping disorders.
- Loses interest in things that mattered to them.
- Either oversleeps or does not sleep enough
- Seems worried or nervous when using devices
- Changes their eating habits, either eating excessively or losing their appetite.

How do I know if I'm a cyberbully?

Sometimes, you yourself might be a cyberbully. It might be intentional or unintentional on your part, but it can hurt someone deeply. You might have done something on social media that you regarded as a joke, but had actually hurt someone and has to be classified as cyberbullying.

Here are some instances of cyberbullying to help you recognise if you yourself have ever bullied someone:

- Sending cruel texts or posting mean comments about someone. Even if they are done in retaliation to being bullied, it still counts.
- Harassing other players when you are playing online video games.
- Posting or releasing photos that you know will embarrass or hurt someone.

- Create blogs, memes, or posts that make fun of someone and humiliate them.
- Setting up fake accounts or profiles to hurt, ridicule or insult someone.
- If you aren't sure if you're cyberbullying, here are some examples.
- Exposing someone's private information over social media.
- Unnecessarily spamming someone over social media or messaging apps, especially with negative and cruel messages.

Kids and cyberbullying

Unfortunately, many kids don't tell their parents they're being cyberbullied. They may not know what exactly counts as bullying online. Thus, it is important to educate children that if someone makes them uncomfortable in the cyberspace even in small scale, that's cyberbullying. Even if kids do realize they're being bullied, they may not be sure how to handle the situation. Rather than speaking up, they may just stay silent while they try to figure it out. They may be worried that if they complain, the bullying will get worse. Or they may feel that some attention from others—even if it's negative—is better than none. Kids may also be afraid of losing online privileges. They might be nervous that their parents will address the problem by taking away their cell phones and computers.

Moreover, ignorance or negligence of parents regarding cyberbullying can put children at risk of stress, depression and other mental health problems. So, being vigilant on kids' behaviour is the best way to save them from dangers in the cyberspace. Parents are much capable of noticing even their subtle changes than any other. It should be noted that children are more likely to be victimized online and keeping them away from technology is not the way to handle this. Guarding them from online threats while parents are providing them access to technology is important.

How can a parent know if their child is a cyberbully?

Sometimes, even parents may be unaware of the fact that their child is harassing someone online. It is important for parents to be vigilant about their children's online presence, because young children are especially vulnerable to cyberbullying. Here are a few tips to help parents understand if their child has become a cyber bully:

- Using their device and social media in late hours of the night.
- Withdrawing themselves from friends and family.
- Refusing to discuss what they are doing online.
- Had violent tendencies.
- Appears to be overly proud of their technological skills.
- Had increased disciplinary issues at school.
- Is using multiple online accounts, or accounts under fake names.
- Gets excessively and unusually upset if they are not allowed to use their devices.

Conclusion

Sometimes, recognising cyberbullying can be difficult, because cyberbullying can be done unintentionally or intentionally. Similarly, cyberbullying takes place over electronic media and cyberspace, which are unregulated and ungoverned spaces, which means that harassment can easily happen within these spaces. Thus, it is important for all of us to be able to identify it when someone is either carrying out the act of cyberbullying, or is being cyberbullied, as this will help us stand against this act.

4 – Consequences of Cyberbullying

Introduction

Cyberbullying differs from physical bullying especially because it happens in a digital space and it affects people mentally and emotionally more often. The pain or injuries of victims aren't superficial and they might be deeper than what others see. On the other hand, it is important to keep in mind that cyberbullies themselves go through various consequences. Thus, it is apparent that both victims and bullies go through the same consequences in different phases.

The different types of consequences

When bullying happens online it can feel as if you're being attacked everywhere, even inside your own home. It can seem like there is no escape. The effects can last a long time and affect a person in many ways:

- **Mental consequences**

Feeling upset, embarrassed, stupid and even angry. These victims also feel fear, confusion, guilt, shame, stress, and anxiety. Cyberbullying is associated with anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide, or suicidal ideation for the victims. In addition, cyber victims have a higher risk of lower academic achievements or less performance in the workplace, less concentration, and low self-esteem. Isolation from friends and colleagues can also be visible among victims.

- **Emotional consequences**

Feeling ashamed or losing interest in the things you love. Suffering from emotional instability.

- **Physical consequences**

Tired (loss of sleep), or experiencing symptoms like stomach aches and headaches. Cyberbullying can have detrimental effects on the victim's health. Eating disorders, weight gain or loss, sleeping disorders, and being less energetic are some examples of the decline in physical health.

The feeling of being laughed at or harassed by others can prevent people from speaking up or trying to deal with the problem. In extreme cases, cyberbullying can even lead to people taking their own lives.

Psychological State of Cyberbullies

It is important to note that understanding the psychological state of a cyberbully plays a major role in the prevention of cyberbullying. It has been proven by the researchers that cyberbullies also show emotional difficulties, mental dilemmas, and behavioural changes. Sometimes, it's hard for them to get along with people. They are also more likely to be hyperactive, have conduct problems, abuse alcohol, and smoke cigarettes. Engaging in cyberbullying can badly affect the personality of bullies, especially if it strikes their self-esteem and they tend to show characteristics such as exploitation, authority, and self-efficacy. One of the key features of cyberbullies is aggressive behaviour. They always find it difficult to cope with others and they struggle with anger management.

However, having above mentioned personality traits doesn't mean that your child /friend /partner is a cyberbully. But, those may be the signs of a cyberbully. And also cyberbullying may be an indicator of an individual who can't manage depression or emotional instability. He/she might find cyberbullying as a way to release his /her repressed emotions and thoughts. It must be noted that men or boys tend to engage in cyberbullying more than women or girls. A person who has been personally abused or has witnessed abuse at home tends to become a cyberbully. Being exposed to child abuse and traumatic experiences can be the untold story behind a cyberbully. They may be victims too. Victimization is a cycle and a victim might become a cyberbully one day. Thus, cyberbullies may also need help and the way others treat a cyberbully could help to save another person from danger. Cyberbullying cannot be removed if we do not understand the psychological characteristics that would push someone to cyberbully in the first place.

Conclusion

As surmised from the above-mentioned facts, cyberbullying brings about negative consequences, not just for the victim, but also for the bully. These consequences can be mental, emotional and even physical in nature. Cyberbullying can leave scars that can cause a lifetime of fear and insecurity for the victims. The bullies themselves may face legal repercussions or ostracization from the society once their wrongdoing is exposed. Such consequences make it clear that it is vital that we, as a society, take every measure possible to mitigate the problem of cyberbullying.

5 - Cyberbullying: Up Close and Personal

Introduction

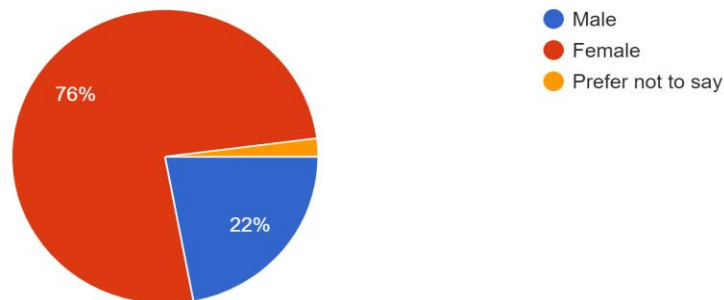
Cyberbullying is a huge issue that is currently prevailing in this modern world. With the pervasiveness of technology many cases related to cyberbullying started coming out. The need to address this issue is crucial, and it is being ignored by many. However, Pioneers Youth organization put their attention into this topic so that we can be an aid to the society in prevailing this problem.

What ages are more susceptible to being cyberbullied?

A survey on “Cyberspace and Cyberbullying” was conducted with the intention of collecting the suggestions and opinions of people on this topic. According to the results that we got, it seems as if most people who are suffering from cyberbullying are females and most of them are between the ages of 15 to 20 years.

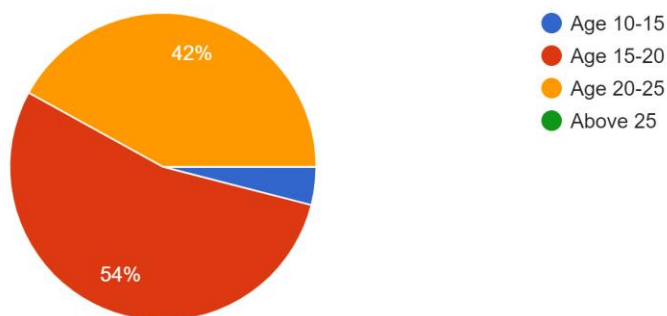
What is your gender?

50 responses



Select your age group

50 responses



This manifests that teenagers are most likely to become the victims of cyberbullying. The next section will examine why this is so.

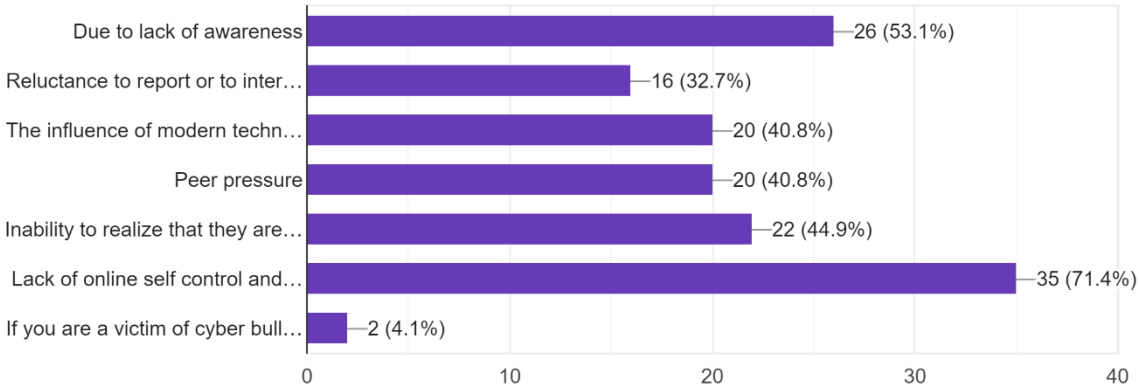
Why are the youth more likely to be cyberbullied?

As seen by this survey, teenagers are more susceptible to cyberbullying than any other age group. This may be because of many reasons like constant usage of social media and lack of awareness, but one of the most common reasons that people pointed out in the survey was “**Due to lack of self-control and emotional maturity**”. So, what is self-control and emotional maturity? And why do these aspects interconnect with youth and cyberbullying?

Self-control is the **ability to control oneself** and **emotional maturity** is **when someone can manage their emotions no matter what happens**. This does not mean that youth has to be heartless and rock-like in every circumstance; instead it means the need of psychological maturity to handle a situation like cyberbullying. We all admit that this is the technological era and the need to be connected with technology is a must now. So, in that situation, we are also ought to know that cyberbullying is highly prevalent in today’s society.

Why do you think teenagers often tend to become the victims of cyberbullying?

49 responses



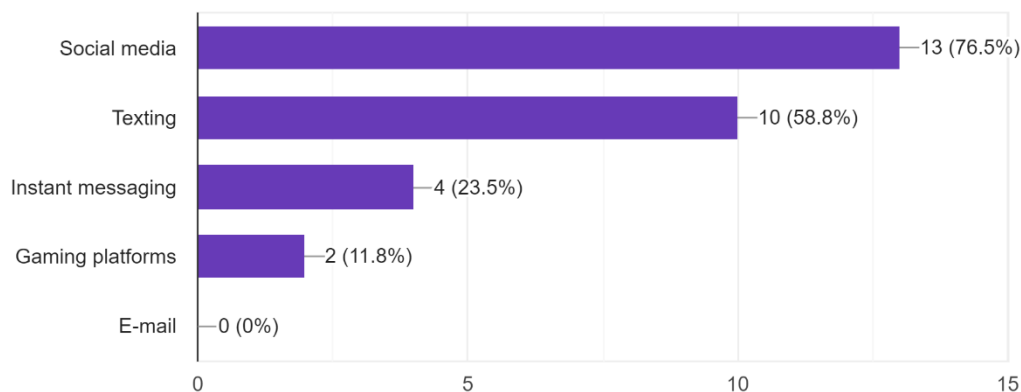
Therefore, as teenagers or as human beings we need to adjust to this problem. It is essential to be aware about Cyberbullying because you never know when and where you could face it. So, we should take control of this issue and eliminate it from the world.

Where does cyberbullying mostly happen?

Cyberspace is a vast area, and there are many platforms through which cyberbullying can actually take place. This may be through social media, gaming platforms, instant messaging apps and many more. According to the survey done by Pioneers Youth, social media and texting were two mediums through which cyberbullying mostly took place. This is possibly because of the fact that the youth is always present within these platforms, and because these platforms have a larger outreach than other platforms like gaming.

If yes, then where did you face cyberbullying?

17 responses

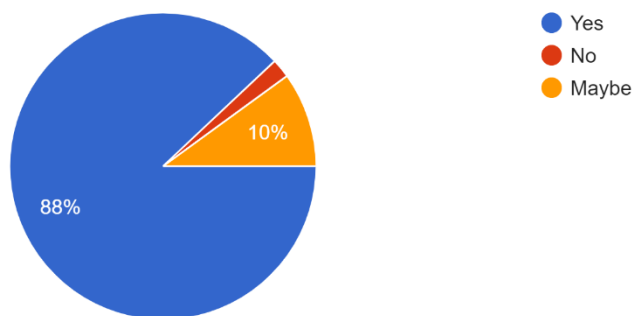


What should be done by the authorities?

Currently in Sri Lanka there is no law or policy to control this issue but it can be noted that most of those who responded to the survey were in favour of the idea that the government should pay

Do you think the legal system should focus more on this issue?

50 responses



more attention to mitigating this at a policy-level.

In addition to this, since most of the participants were teenagers, many innovative ideas were brought forth by them to help mitigate the issue of cyberbullying:

Some of those answers were:

“Anyone who acts in a harmful way in any online platform, they will receive the same punishments when it is done physically”

“One cannot bully/threaten someone using phrases which would be detected automatically. Also, there should be an authority where we can get true identity information of people if someone’s a threat to us”

“Regulation of accounts and quitting the blame game of "children who engage in the internet more than their studies deserve it cause they called it on themselves." Strict laws should be made for cyber regulation, be it bullying, fraud, or sexual harassment..”

“I don't think regulating social media would give any chances to punish the bullies. Perhaps in situations like doxing, IF, there are enough evidence to prove that this group or individual has led to a demise of an individual or has caused some certain harassments or given threats, i believe it's possible to punish the bullies by sending them into rehab and allow the victims to consult therapists provided by the gov or something.”

These ideas came out from the youth of the South Asian region and they reflect their thoughts on this issue along with the solutions. Therefore, if we let the youth contribute to decisions on what needs to be done to mitigate this problem, there might be a lot of modern solutions which might speed up mitigating cyberbullying from the world.

Conclusion

As we have found out from this survey, young people are extremely susceptible to cyberbullying due to various reasons such as their lack of self-control and emotional immaturity. However, young people are also innovative and have strong opinions about this matter. So, by allowing the youth to contribute to the decision-making processes of this matter, we can help decrease the growing propagation of cyberbullying among the youth.

6 - Creating Awareness on Cyberbullying and the Dangers of Cyberspace

Introduction

Cyberbullying is just a fraction of the dangers within cyberspace. Commonly referred to as online bullying, this is rocketing among teenagers in this day and age. Cyberbullying can bring about adverse mental, physical, emotional and social effects on both the victims and the bullies. Thus, awareness-raising is vital due to detrimental effects that have been surfacing rapidly over the years.

Why is raising awareness important?

Raising awareness about the dangers of the Internet (like cyberbullying), about how to protect oneself about that to do when confronted with such an issue is extremely important. The following are some reasons as to why raising awareness is vital in today's society.

Encourages the older generations to see social media in a positive light, while being aware of its dangers.

Social media and new technology are not things that we can simply get rid of, because they are so imbibed into our daily lives. Young people can gain many benefits from new technology, if it is used with caution. Many adults tend to view technology in an entirely negative light, but they have to be made to understand that technology has many advantages that the youth can benefit from. As adults, they are obliged to make sure that their children use technology safely and with moderation. Raising awareness on the right way to use technology can thus help adults keep their children safe on the Internet.

Helps the youth to use the Internet with moderation and keep themselves safe.

Sometimes, ignorance itself is the root cause for many dangers associated with the Internet. By raising awareness about the Internet, its dangers, and how to protect oneself, young people are more likely to behave appropriately on the Internet, and take preventative measures to avoid any wrong doing or danger.

Encourages policy makers to understand the severity of the issue and enact laws to protect the victims

When we raise awareness about the dangers within cyberspace, it becomes a phenomenon that is talked about in public. Those who are victims of such dangers may come forward, and it will start a conversation within society. This will encourage policy makers to take heed of this issue and to try to rectify it at a legal standpoint.

Helps change attitudes within the society.

When more and more people become aware of the dangers of activities like cyberbullying, they are less likely to engage in such activities, and more likely to discourage and stand against them. Raising awareness can make small changes, like making someone understand that it is not right to 'like' a mean comment, but this is still a step in the right direction. When more and more people become aware, there will be attitudinal change, and the prevalence of activities like cyberbullying will reduce.

Sensitizing people towards this issue

Sensitizing the society about the issue of cyberbullying is the core of awareness raising, and this is what we ideally try to achieve – that people become aware and react to the issue of cyberbullying. The more aware people become, the more likely they are to sympathise with and support the victims.

How can we raise awareness?

There is a lot that people, especially the youth, can do to raise awareness about these issues. The following are a few:

Teaching children about Internet dangers at a young age.

Children of today start using technology at a very young age. Children need not necessarily be taught the basics how to use the Internet, or how to use social media, because the tech-savvy younger generation can easily learn these by themselves. However, children need to be taught how to behave appropriately on the Internet, and what they can do to protect themselves. This should ideally be done at school, but can also be something that parents teach their children.

Having awareness campaigns over social media

Social media, when used appropriately, can be a powerful tool used to create social change. By conducting awareness campaigns about issues like cyberbullying over the Internet, we can reach a wider audience and reduce the likelihood of cyberbullying within the society.

Reaching out to government officials and policy makers

Young people can choose to approach their local leaders and representatives and talk to them about issues like these. They can help the youth to get connected with relevant institutions that can promote their cause and provide the support needed to rectify these issues.

Sharing your story and/or knowledge

If you are someone who has experienced cyberbullying, or someone who has an expertise in this field, sharing your story and your knowledge will have a huge impact. By sharing your story online, or accepting speaking engagements if you are invited, it is possible to add credibility and strength to this cause, and encourage more people to join it as well.

Conclusion

Cyberbullying can be a terrible ordeal for anyone to deal with and it is important to prevent cyberbullying before its consequences worsen. Attitudinal change is one of the best ways to keep people from becoming cyberbullies, or encouraging them in any way. Awareness is also a good way to keep all online users safe

while they are interacting with cyberspace. Thus, raising awareness can be identified one of the best ways of tackling cyberbullying.

7 - How to Prevent and React to Cyberbullying

Introduction

Since cyberspace is a largely ungoverned arena, dangers (like cyberbullying) are usually rampant in it. It is important for all cyberspace users to know how prevent cyberbullying beforehand, as well as how to react if they are ever cyberbullied. Sometimes, the progression of an incident of cyberbullying (or lack thereof) depends upon the victim's response to it. Therefore, this chapter aims to discuss how one should respond to instances of cyberbullying, and what steps we can take to prevent it.

What is cyberbullying prevention?

Preventing cyberbullying is a matter of awareness and response. Knowing the situation and responding to them when their well-being is threatened by bullies or other dangerous users online.

How should you react to Cyberbullying?

When it comes to victims of cyberbullying and the dangers of cyberspace, they sometimes unintentionally make things complicated especially because they don't know how to respond to a cyberbully or to other dangers in cyberspace. The experts even recommend that it would be better if the victims follow these immediate measures.

If you are the victim;

- Don't panic.

- Stop all types of conversations with the bully. You can block his or her phone number and also social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp allow you to block users so that they won't be able keep in touch with you.
- Ignore only if they send negligible texts or if it is a minor teasing because your response might stimulate them to be more violent.
- Keep a record or a diary of what the bully says or send. Keep them as evidence because they might be helpful when you seek the legal aids.
- Ask help from parents, favourite teachers, counsellors etc. Suffering alone is not the solution for your problem.
- Psychological measures to be taken-The parents, family and teachers must be supportive for a victim of cyberbullying to recover emotionally. Cyber bullying can cause adverse issues for the psyche of the victim. Especially, it can cause severe or long-term depression and mental disorders. If you witness a victim, you should provide him emotional security, love and support.
- Don't become another bully-Sometimes, cyberbullying is like a chain or a cycle. A victim tends to become another bully because he or she might consider it as a way of releasing their pressure and a way of taking revenge.

Actions to take as a bystander

Being a passive bystander in an act of cyberbullying is almost as bad as doing the act itself. If you are aware of the fact that someone is being cyberbullied, you should take action, even if it is in your own little way, to help them. Here are a few tips on that regard:

- Don't ever forward a post with content which targets someone.
- Never laugh or support a cyberbullying incident that makes you a part of the crime.
- Call out people who make mean comments online.
- If someone you know is being bullied, do not ignore it. Talk to the victim first and urge them to tell an adult or the relevant authorities. Consider together whether you should

report the bullying. Just standing by can empower an aggressor and does nothing to help. The best thing you can do is try to stop the bullying by taking a stand against it.

- If you cannot stop it, support the person being bullied. If the person is a friend, you can listen and see how to help. If you're not already friends, even a kind word can help reduce the pain.
- At the very least, help by not passing along a mean message and not giving positive attention to the person doing the bullying.

How can I prevent cyberbullying?

Here are some tips that can be useful to prevent cyberbullying.

1. Define it

Get the formal example of cyberbullying. Create an awareness with examples. There are many forms of cyberbullying, from light-hearted by hurtful comments on Facebook to passive-aggressive posts on Instagram to trolling on YouTube to cyberstalking everywhere else. It is important that you are aware of these, and are able to recognise them when confronted with them.

2. Never further victimise the victim

Do not, under any circumstances, insinuate that the victim deserves to be bullied. Be patient and ask the victim about the situation. At least you will know the situation they are dealing with.

3. Know the apps and platform

This is difficult to prevent if you don't understand how the apps work and the most likely ways trolls and others can affect the victim's well-being.

4. Do not encourage bullies

Do not like or share comments that are hurtful to someone. Do not agree with bullying or side with the bully. Always make a stand against bullying.

5. Engage communities and spreading a positivity

You can create pages, newsletters or organizations to create an awareness among youth and elders.

6. If you are the one being bullied, know it's not your fault

What people call "bullying" is sometimes an argument between two people. But if someone is repeatedly cruel to you, that is bullying and you must not blame yourself. No one deserves to be treated cruelly.

7. Use the right respond Strategies

Your way of responding can sometimes make things worse. It is best not to engage with the bully and to simply talk to an adult about it. If you simply have to respond, do not clap back with mean comments or inappropriate language. Always be polite and try to be the bigger man.

How can parents help prevent cyberbullying?

Since parents' knowledge about technology and social media platforms is less when compared to that of kids, victimization of their children in cyberspace has become a burning issue for them. However, sometimes consequences of cyberbullying can be severe due to the ignorance of parents. Here are some tips for parents to prevent their kids from cyberbullying and other evils in cyberspace.

- Do not ignore cyberbullying because your child might be either a victim or a cyberbully.
- Be vigilant and monitor your child's behaviour on the Internet.
- Educate yourself about new technologies, Internet safety and how to deal with cyberbullying.
- Teach them how to respond to a cyberbully.
- Manage their screen time.
- Keep data secure.
- Block access to apps, websites, games with inappropriate content.
- Be aware of anti-bullying apps. (Ex. Kaspersky Safe kids, NearParent (Mobile App), Safe eyes mobile, My mobile watchdog).
- Ensure your children's safety from online gaming dangers.
- Create an environment where you can communicate with your kids as friends.

How to help someone who is being cyberbullied

As mentioned earlier, anyone can become a victim of cyberbullying. If you see this happening to someone you know, try to offer support. Here are some ways to deal with someone who is a victim of cyberbullying:

- It is important to listen to your friend. Why don't they want to report being cyberbullied?
How are they feeling?
- Let them know that they don't have to formally report anything, but it's crucial to talk to someone who might be able to help.
- Remember, your friend may be feeling fragile. Be kind to them. Help them think through what they might say and to whom.
- Offer to go with them if they decide to report.

- Most importantly, remind them that you're there for them and you want to help.
- If your friend still does not want to report the incident, then support them in finding a trusted adult who can help them deal with the situation.
- Remember that in certain situations the consequences of cyberbullying can be life threatening. Doing nothing can leave the person feeling that everyone is against them or that nobody cares. Your words can make a difference.

Conclusion

All users of the Internet are obliged to make sure that they behave appropriately while using this vast resource. Knowing how to keep oneself safe, and taking preventative measures to avoid dangers like cyberbullying is important when we use the Internet. Following the above-mentioned tips, and behaving respectfully towards fellow Internet users can help make the Internet experience fruitful and pleasant for everyone.

8 – Laws regarding cyberbullying

Introduction

Cyberbullying is a growing issue in the digital era, and can cause many detrimental effects to online users, particularly the youth. Mitigating this issue requires legal intervention just as much as it requires the support and awareness of the public. A law can be a strong force that can prevent an act of wrongdoing, so any law that is available against cyberbullying will act as a deterrent. Such laws will also protect the victims of cyberbullying and ensure that they the criminals are brought to justice. This chapter focuses on the legislature that is available to counteract instances of cyberbullying in Sri Lanka and India.

Laws in Sri Lanka

Unfortunately, Sri Lanka does not have comprehensive laws that address the issue of cyberbullying. Certain laws touch upon issues that are closely related to cyberbullying, such as sexual harassment over the Internet, but cyberbullying itself is not addressed. For example, Section 345 of the Penal Code of Sri Lanka can be used to address sexual harassment. Section 483 deals with Criminal Intimidation, and Section 372 is about Extortion. According to the Penal Code of Sri Lanka, the above crimes are prohibited. Although these crimes are ones that frequently occur over cyberspace, the Penal Code does not specifically address bullying over cyberspace (cyberbullying). This leaves the users of the Internet vulnerable without a legislature to protect them if they face these crimes over cyberspace.

The Computer Crimes Act No. 24 of 2007

The Computer Crimes Act No. 24 of 2007 is a piece of legislature that more closely addresses issues that come with cyberspace. This law identifies computer crimes and codifies penalties against computer criminals. Section 6(1) of the Computer Crimes Act No. 24 of 2007 states that the following is a punishable offense according to the law of Sri Lanka:

“Any person who intentionally causes a computer to perform any function, knowing or having reason to believe that such function will result in danger or imminent danger to public order”

The problem here is that the phrase “disorderly conduct” is not defined anywhere in the Constitution of Sri Lanka, which renders it impossible to determine whether or not a certain act can be classified under “disorderly conduct”, and thus, makes it difficult to bring computer criminals, to justice. If the definition for this phrase exists within the legislation of Sri Lanka, it is a law that can be used to bring cyberbullies to justice.

Source: [Harassment Beyond Borders: Can Victims Be Protected By Cyber Bullying In Sri Lanka? - Colombo Telegraph](#)

Laws in India

The Indian Penal Code of 1860 also does not directly address the problem of cyberbullying, but certain sections do deal with crimes that may be related to cyberbullying. Like the Penal Code of Sri Lanka, the Indian Penal Code also fails to have specific sections that are dedicated to cyberbullying.

For example, according to Section 507, any person who frightens or threatens someone on the Internet, they can be punished under this section. Section 354(D) states that anyone who stalks someone or monitors their day to day activities on the Internet without their knowledge, will be punished. Section 499 prohibits defamation of someone. Even though these sections are available, they are not always helpful in addressing the issue of cyber bullying.

Information Technology Act, 2000

The Information Technology Act of 2000 (Amendment 2008), was passed for dealing with crimes that took place over the Internet. However, this act does not make any mention of cyberbullying, although it is a serious issue that causes many major consequences to its victims. This act provides some remedies to address cyberbullying.

According to Section 66(D), if someone cheats another person by portraying a different image of themselves over the Internet or social media, they can be punished under this section. Section 66(E) punishes those who take photos of others and publishes them on the Internet without their consent. Section 67 punishes people who circulate or upload vulgar content on Internet or social media. Unfortunately, these sections do not help bring cyberbullies to justice, neither do they protect the victims of cyber bullying.

Source: [Cyber-bullying in India and Applicable Laws \(uniquelaw.in\)](http://uniquelaw.in)

Conclusion

As seen by the above-mentioned information, certain governments have failed to codify comprehensive laws that can help deter cyberbullying, punish those who engage in this activity or protect the victims of this crime. This is an unfortunate failure as it leaves many people, mostly the youth, vulnerable to the terrible consequences of cyberbullying.

9 - Internet Etiquette

Introduction

Even though the Internet itself is largely ungoverned and unregulated, we, as users of the Internet, can still choose to behave decently within this space. Following basic rules of etiquette while engaging in cyberspace is very important, as it ensures that there will be no petty disagreements or feud that will then escalate into major problems.

What is Internet Etiquette?

Just like a set of rules in school or ethics at a workplace, Internet Etiquette, otherwise known as Netiquette, is an ethical code of behavior generally recognized on the internet. It is similar to being polite to someone in public and/or assisting someone with a task. The same way a person would behave in public would be the same behavior on the internet, it's just that a cyber upgrade was involved.

Basic rules on the Internet

While there are no legally enforced rules on internet etiquette, due to the internet not being able to be divided via a country's jurisdiction, there are 10 general guidelines that can be as examples to internet etiquette.

According to (Christennson.P, 2017);

1. Avoid posting offensive comments
2. Respect a person's privacy by not sharing personal details of someone
3. Do not spam by sending large amounts of emails
4. Having good sportsmanship in games no matter of the result
5. Do not troll people by annoying them in online platforms
6. Sticking to the topic when posting or commenting in web forums or YouTube or Facebook comments respectively

7. Do not use Offensive language
8. Avoid replying to negative comments with more negatively, instead the cycle with a positive comment
9. If someone asks the question and you know the answer, help them out
10. Thank someone who helps you out

Conclusion

Internet etiquette are not codified rules, they are simply customs to be followed to show respect and goodwill while using the Internet. However, adhering to Internet etiquette is advantageous for all online users, because it creates a safe space for everyone to engage in, as well as it can help prevent many serious dangers that are currently associated with the Internet.

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