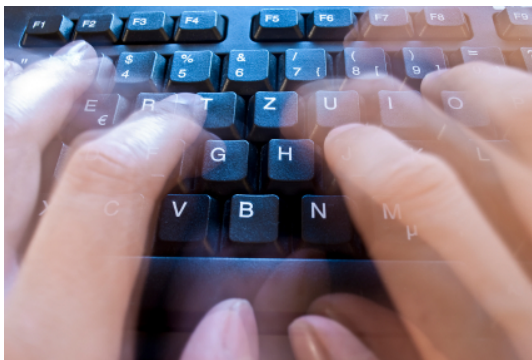


WHAT MAKES YOUTH MORE LIKELY TO ENGAGE IN CYBERBULLYING BEHAVIOURS?



Cyberbullying, generally defined as harassment that occurs through digital devices (e.g., mobile phones & Internet technologies) is a common phenomenon, especially among youths in the developed countries. Here are some common factors that can contribute to youth engaging in cyberbullying behaviours, with suggestions on how to minimize these risks:

UNRESTRICTED ACCESS TO THE DIGITAL DEVICES. Children and teens with unrestricted access to digital devices are more likely to get involved in bullying behaviours. Although it is not always true that restriction is an antidote to bullying that occurs online, restriction on the use of digital devices can provide some protection to online bullying but it may not be the most popular option for young people. However, having a computer in the open space in the house and discouraging the use of digital devices in the bedroom, especially at night, have been recognized as important protective factors for minimizing cyberbullying behaviour.



UNSUPERVISED USE OF THE DIGITAL DEVICES. Young people who are not supervised in their use of digital devices and the Internet as well as those who have unsupervised friends in Social Networking Sites are at a higher risk of engaging in cyberbullying. Supervision of youth activities online is important for curbing the risks associated with cyberbullying behaviours. For example, developing a family policy on the use of mobile phones and sharing security information such as children's passwords for Social Networking Sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and email), with ongoing parent monitoring of these sites may protect children and teens from engaging in cyberbullying behaviours.

LOW LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AMONG ADULTS. Children and young people whose parents and teachers are less technologically savvy are more likely to get involved in cyberbullying. Parents and teachers need to update their skills on the use of digital devices. Technological knowledge will not only help them in knowing what children and students are doing online but also in providing guidance and advice on the effective use of these technologies.

UNFAMILIARITY OF THE SOURCES OF HELP AND SUPPORT SYSTEM. Youth who are less informed of the sources of help and support when they are bullied online are more vulnerable to further bullying and its associated negative impacts. Being informed of the sources of help and support for cyberbullying incidents is not only important, but also essential in efforts to stop, or at the very least, buffer the effects of online bullying.

LACK OF EFFECTIVE POLICIES ON CYBERBULLYING. There is a high chance of cyberbullying behaviour in contexts with no clear and effective policies compared with institutions or communities with effective policies, laws, and regulations overseeing online behaviours.

In sum, there are a number of individual and systemic factors that need to be minimized to reduce cyberbullying. Collective efforts are needed to address these cyberbullying related risks and to enhance the protective factors.

