Cyberbullying: Role of Parents, Individuals & Organizations

PREVNet Conference
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Introduction

- *Not a review of bullying and its importance*
  - CB is bullying in new clothing
  - CB is a relationship problem
  - CB happens in a context
  - CB and traditional bullying go together
- *Priority of prevention*
- *A developmental perspective*
- *An ecological perspective*
- *What to do when it happens*
Why Prevention?

- 1.3 million Ontario students in grades 4-12 in 2010

- 25% have been cyberbullied during year = 337,000!

- We can’t go after all of them
Prevention: A Public Health Approach

- Heart vessel disease starts in childhood
- **Primary prevention**: Before disease is present, create conditions where it cannot take hold
- **Secondary prevention**: When disease is present but not visible, eliminate it or halt further progression
- **Tertiary prevention**: When disease is present and damage obvious, reduce the consequences
A Classification of Preventive Strategies

Level of Prevention

Primary

Secondary

Tertiary

Goals

Prevent Disease

Detect & control disease before it harms

Reduce harms
Prevent Bullying (*primary*): Individuals & Families

- Secure attachment
  - Starts at birth

- Nurturing, loving environment

- Keep lines of communication open
  - Meals together is a great strategy
Introducing Electronic Tools to Your Child

- **Set guidelines for electronic tools**
  - Location of computer, how much time they can spend on the Internet, any restrictions
  - Responsible online behaviour
  - Stay updated on what is happening online (*this varies by age*)

- **Discuss appropriate monitoring with your child**

- **First-time access to phone and internet**
  - Enroll them in a short course on ‘netiquette’ or how to behave online
  - Sign a contract that states that you can look at their messages and revoke their privileges if they are sending negative messages
    - easy in the early teen years when they want access
    - As they age, relax your supervision and respect their privacy

- **Help your child keep their passwords secure**
Prevent Bullying (*primary*): Schools & Organizations

- Create climate where bullying can’t thrive
  - *Peaceful Schools International*
- Grow individual strengths & social skills
Evidence-Based Programs to Develop Social And Emotional Skills

- PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies)
- The Fourth R
- Roots of Empathy
- Second Step

Note: no programs have been shown to reduce cyberbullying
Detect Warning Signs (secondary): Individuals and Families

- ‘Vulnerable’ child?
  - shy? poor social skills? doesn’t fit in?

- Unhealthy environments
  - exposed to tension/abuse/violence at home?
  - sports, after-school programs?
  - unhealthy school climate?
Detect Warning Signs (secondary): Organizations

- Little emphasis on social and emotional learning
- Superficial approaches to bullying prevention
- No code of conduct or code of conduct not followed
- No meaningful student input into code
- Poor morale
- High rates of disciplinary referrals & suspensions
Prevent Harm and Repetition When Bullying Occurs (tertiary): Individuals & Families

- New symptoms such as belly ache or headache especially on school days
- Avoiding school
- Avoiding electronic tools
- Decreased grades, social isolation, signs of injury
  - *If due to bullying then it is time to act*
What to Do when You Detect Cyberbullying

- Stop & block
- Save
- Talk
  - with your child/teen about what happened and ways of stopping this in the future
- Consider:
  - informing your child’s school
  - calling a help line
  - reporting it to the police.
Steps to Take if Your Child is Bullying

- Talk to them about why they are bullying
- Help them understand that bullying hurts
- Teach them to stop and think before acting
- Help them learn to regulate their emotions
- Talk to your child’s school
Prevent Harm and Repetition When Bullying Occurs (tertiary): schools

- Duty to act when school climate is affected
- Restorative practices
- “No Blame Approaches”
- Progressive discipline
- meet with youth involved
- Consider contacting police
Special Issues
Parents and Schools as Partners

- For most youth, schools are the most effective arenas for intervention.
- Parents and schools working together form a strong alliance.
- Some schools more engaged than others.
- If not satisfied with school response, seek help up the chain of command.
Parents as Advocates

- Advocate for more attention to:
  - Social and emotional skills
  - Empathy
  - School climate

- Ensure codes of conduct:
  - Have student input
  - Are not just superficial
Thank you!

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Canadian Prevention Science Cluster: Atlantic
www.cpscatalantic.org
CPSCatlantic@gmail.com
Resources

- PREVNet: What Parents Need to Know
  - www.prevnet.ca/bullying/parents

- National Crime Prevention Council
  - www.ncpc.org/topics/cyberbullying/stop-cyberbullying

- ERASE Bullying
  - www.erasebullying.ca/resources/resources.php

- Stopbullying.gov
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Cyberbullying Workshop 7 May 2013 -- Tips from PREVNet Workshop Participants

Date last updated: 27 May 2013


These tips were collected from workshop participants. They reflect their successes and advice in dealing with cyberbullying.

Useful Resources
- Cybertip.ca – reporting of incidents
- Ministry of Education – parent pamphlets
- Canadian Center for Child Protection – resource sheets
- Public health standards (2010) – healthy family dynamics
- Consider having preventive and immediate approach – whole school approach & comprehensive community approach
- Needhelpnow.ca
- Kids help phone

Successful activities
From Avon Maitland DSB – students took a pledge about character traits and actions – got rid of the WINIT program (got a sticker) – suspensions went down – more effective

- UNICEF Canada – [www.rightsrespectingschools.ca](http://www.rightsrespectingschools.ca) – what school change initiative for schools to explore children’s rights
- Ensemble – Montreal org uses a program called Imprints – Peer to Peer anti-bullying approach [www.ensemble-rd.com](http://www.ensemble-rd.com)
- Kids help phone

- David Suzuki’s “Surviving the Teenaged Brain”. What’s going on neurologically in the mind of a teen?
- Parents! Get equipped (good public health advertising is needed)
- To comment on a stream of negative conversation
- Parents stay involved, keep talking to kids
Strategies for intervention / prevention that have worked

THINK before you text, tweet, facebook. Is it true, hurtful, illegal, necessary and kind?

Is it:
- True
- Hurtful
- Illegal
- Necessary
- Kind

- Respect Ed, “Beyond the Hurt” – Red Cross
  - Youth driven, but adult supported (and funding support)
  - Youth must be trained and adult supported
  - Adults have a role to play in coordination
- “We Day”, “pink shirt day” “day of pink”, all days/weeks
  - Adults need to coordinate various activities
  - “pink day” is everyday
- Discussions around bullying at school, surrounding various media activities
  - Discussions around empathy
  - And how to respond to bullying
- The Responsive Classroom, K-8; 9-12 grades another linked program
  - Building community
  - Extensive teacher trainer
  - Morning meetings, greeted by peers
- Canadian Center for Child Protection
  - Child find has a cyberbullying program
  - Kids have an average of 5 email accounts
- Conversations with children at home; try to understand the technology that they are using.
- Policy on phones in schools/classrooms; focus efforts on how to use phones appropriately rather than eliminating phones altogether
- Radian 6; New Brunswick (now international)
  - Social media monitoring company
  - Generally do it for companies social profiles
  - 1 wk/yr volunteer with local organization
- Using local social norms about positive bystander behaviour
- Educating funders & parents & all organizations about the comprehensive & in-depth (unsuperficial) programming required to create positive school climates.

Thames Valley DSB
- The Fourth R
  - gr. 7, 8, 9 Health curriculum
  - Gr. 9, 10, 11 English curriculum

Steps to Respect
- Gr. 3-6 *train teachers every school year

Issue based theatre:
- 3 drama line’s through safe schools
- Create / write plays (drama teachers)
- Students perform plays
- Teacher written follow up
- Teachers train students to facilitate
- Students lead, follow up discussion

**Forum Theatre**
- Interactive theatre
- Write plays – use role play to develop skills of students
- Tribes – to build and inclusive culture

**Prevention Strategies**
- Education / Awareness
  - Educate children about the harmful effects of cyberbullying
  - Educate teachers: make mandatory CB training / detection part of program requirement at Teachers Colleges.
- Parents being actively involved in their children’s online activities
- Parents educating themselves about the new technologies, social media platforms in order to be able to keep up with their kids.
- Boundary setting
- Maintaining a network of parents – knowing who your child’s friends are. Go directly to the parents as soon as problems start to be detected and “nip it at the bud” before it escalates.
- Keep open lines of communication between child/parent also between parent/teacher
- Limiting & closely monitoring use of electronic devices/smart phones at school
- Application that deletes your picture (SNAP CHAT) within a sender depicted amount of time

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