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CYBERBULLYING: A GUIDE FORSPANISH-SPEAKING PARENTS

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By

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ABSTRACT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION OF CYBERBULLYING: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING PARENTS

By

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Master of Science in Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy

Everyday countless children and adolescents are being harassed, threaten, hurt, bullied, and targeted in online social networking sites. Such actions are known as cyberbullying. In recent years, cyberbullying has grown into an uncontainable problem that, in extreme cases, has driven children and adolescents to take their own lives. Sadly, because previous generations did not encounter this issue, a generational gap was formed in which parents appear to be at a loss on how to protect their children from becoming victims. Moreover, although this phenomenon is a cross-cultural issue, some ethnicities seem to be more impacted by cyberbullying. The Latino community in the United States is one of those highly affected groups. Spanish-speaking parents have had a difficult time finding and accessing information on cyberbullying. In fact, the lack of technological knowledge and language difficulties of many Latino parents have prompted the need for the creation of resources that specifically target those issues. The present graduate project provides a bilingual (English-Spanish) guide designed particularly to help Spanish-speaking parents that live in the United States learn about cyberbullying. It also offers practical guidelines on actions that can be taken to help and/or prevent their children from becoming victims.

Keywords: cyberbullying, ciberacoso, Spanish, harassment, acoso, Internet
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Over the last decades, technology has drastically changed social interactions particularly among the youth. As traditional activities for previous generations involved outdoor playing, adolescents nowadays seem to prefer more physically distant connections with their peers. New media such as the Internet has revolutionized social interactions and consequently created a world unlike anything seen before. This manner of socialization in cyberspace has become somewhat of a norm for adolescents around the world. In the United States, 80% of teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17, report using social networking sites on a regular basis. Such reports demonstrate that the great majority of households with adolescents in this country are online users (Lenhart et al., 2011). Moreover, the social media phenomenon has reached most ethnicities, languages, genders, and socioeconomic levels. Although such reachability has its advantages, it also creates some drawbacks in the social realm. There is a clear generational gap that have resulted from the use of media sites as parents seem to have a difficult time understanding the technology as well as the desire of their children to engage in such physically isolating activities (“Cyberbullying,” 2010). Furthermore, the use of social online networks by adolescents has created a new platform for social cruelty and bullying. Cyberbullying is defined by Patchin and Hinduja (2006) as “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text.” Cyberbullying was born from online socialization and has taken the place of traditional schoolyard bullying. In fact, it created a new problem for which clear and appropriate solutions have yet to be created and implemented.
Statement of Need

Although cyberbullying is an alarming cross-cultural issue, some ethnicities seem to be more impacted by the lack of knowledge in the prevention and intervention of this form of abuse. First generation Americans of Latino background are especially affected by online bullying (Demaray & Malecki, 2003). Based on cultural norms, Latino families provide high levels of emotional support to their children but generally lack the resources necessary to offer instrumental or informational support (Demaray & Malecki, 2003). In fact, Latinos are less likely than white own a cell phone, have Internet at home, or even access it in other locations (Livingston, 2011). Generally, Latino parents encounter a variety of challenges when they immigrate to the United States that include acculturating to a more technologically based culture as well as language difficulties. Unfortunately, both of those issues directly affect their abilities to provide support for their victimized children. Currently, there is a lack of resources for Spanish-speaking parents to obtain guidance on how to prevent, monitor, assess, and intervene in cyberbullying situations their teens may be involved in. Studies show that Latino parents of teens that use online media are less likely than white or black parents to discuss what should be shared or not on social networking sites (Lenhart et al., 2011). Additionally, Latino parents are 19% less likely to check the browsing history of their teenage children than white or black parents. Furthermore, a study by done by the Pew Research Center concluded that Latinos have lower levels of technology use than do Caucasian and blacks (Livingston, 2011). As stated earlier, lack of technological and informational knowledge may be the reasons for such statistics. Even more, the inability of parents to speak the language their children are communicating online in (mostly English) is a major barrier.
The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau reported that almost 26 million people ages 18 to 64 speak Spanish and that almost half of them speak English “less than very well.” Those estimates clearly show a strong need for resources to be created in the Spanish language in order to reach the Spanish-speaking parent population.

Cyberbullying can have detrimental consequences on the emotional, psychological, and even physical health of our youth. In actuality, cyberbullying has become a serious problem in the mental health field as students that are involved in bullying behaviors show a higher risk of morbidity than those that are not (Srabstein & Piazza, 2008). The increase on the rates of suicides resulting from this type of bullying is also clearly noted. Teens that have been bullied are three times more likely to engage in binge drinking and more than twice more likely to use marijuana and attempt suicide than their non-bullied peers (Goebert, Else, Matsu, Chung-Do, & Chang, 2011). Furthermore, victimized children report serious clinical problems that include anxiety, depression, feelings of insecurity, low self-esteem, isolation and other somatic symptoms (Kim & Leventhal, 2008). Social networking online is not altogether a negative aspect of modern teenage socialization (Lenhart et al., 2011). Nevertheless, cyberbullying is a dangerous social issue that does not seem to be going away anytime soon. Thus, parents need to consider the immediacy of the problem and obtain the necessary tools to help keep their teenage children safe in cyberworld.

**Purpose of this Project**

The purpose of this project is to create a resource that school counselors, marriage and family therapists, social workers, and other mental health workers can use when working with Spanish-speaking parents of victims of cyberbullying. More explicitly, this
project will offer a practical guide to help parents learn how to prevent and intervene if their teenage child is involved in any type of online bullying. A copy of this guide will be available through a public website created specifically for its distribution.

Furthermore, due to the major lack of information about the topic of cyberbullying in Latino parents, this resource will include background information, explanations of behaviors, short and long-term consequences, prevention and intervention activities, and information on legal rights and responsibilities of all individuals involved. A detailed step-by-step guide on how to handle different cyberbullying scenarios (i.e. victim, victimizer, observer, etc.) will be included as well. This manual will be separated into sections each of which will include a topic, pertinent information on it, and recommended approaches, if needed. One of the most important characteristics of this guidebook is that it will be created with a specific focus on the Latino immigrant parent living in United States. In fact, this manual will be written in both English and Spanish and it will include interventions that will not require extensive knowledge of the technology currently being used by adolescents. Ethnic differences will be carefully considered to create a culturally sensitive tool that is practical and ready for use. It is the main intention of this project to provide a practical resource that mental health workers can offer Spanish-speaking parents to guide them in combating cyberbullying issues.

**Terminology**

For the purpose of this study, the following terms will be used based on the definitions described below.

**Cyberbullying**: “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text” (Patching & Hinduja, 2006).
Social networking sites: a web site that enables users to create public profiles within that web site and form relationships with other users ("Social Networking Site,” 2012).

Typically, social networking websites offer their users a community online that allows them to share and explore common interests, present and past experiences, and activities. They usually offer different ways for users to interact such as through chat, electronic messaging, email, video, voice chat, file-sharing, blogging, forums, discussion groups, and applications. The most popular social networking site currently is Facebook (“Social Networking,” 2012).

Virtual worlds: Also known as virtual reality. It is generally used to describe any virtual world represented in a computer, text-based or in a graphical representation. It refers to an artificial environment created with computer hardware and software. When presented to the user, it appears and feels like a real environment where he/she can interact instantaneously (in real time) with others ("Virtual Reality,” 2012).

Cyberspace: the digital world formed by computer networks, particularly, the Internet. The term cyberspace generally refers to the online world, which is a place that actually exists as a medium of communication in a non-physical space (“Cyberspace,” 2012).

Posting: Refers to publishing a message in an online forum or newsgroup using the Internet (“Posting,” 2012).

Chat rooms: a Website for conversation that take place online live and in which any number of computer users can type messages to each other and communicate. Most chat rooms present and discuss a specific topic while others are purely for meeting or socializing with fellow Internet users. Some more elaborate chat rooms are designed as 3D environments, where you select an avatar that represents you in this virtual meeting
place (“Chat Rooms,” 2012).

**Instant Messaging or IM’ing:** a type of communications service that allows the user to create a private chat room with another individual so they can communicate in real time over the Internet. It is similar to a telephone conversation but using communication based on text, not voice (“Instant Messaging,” 2012).

**Being online:** The state of being connected to the Internet. When used as an adjective, it describes various activities that Internet users are performing such as online chatting, online shopping, online games, online searching, online communities, and on and on (“Online, not OnLine or,” 2012). Furthermore, it illustrates that a person is connected to a computer Internet service using a modem. In other words, the person is actually *on the line* (“Online,” 2012).

**Bridge to Next Section**

The organization of this project will include, first, a review of the literature on bullying and cyberbullying. Second, a section dedicated to discuss factors related to the implementation and distribution of the finished project. Third, a complete copy of the guidebook, which will be accessible to mental health workers so they can offer it to Spanish-speaking parents. And fourth, the author will include a summary of the completed product adding comments and reactions experienced during the development process. It is the hope of the author that this resource will aid Spanish-speaking parents understand the harmful issue of cyberbullying in a more holistic manner and to provide them with an easy-to-understand guide for practical interventions.
Chapter 2
Review of Literature

Introduction

Previous generations relied heavily on face-to-face encounters as the anchor for their social lives. The introduction of modern technology has considerably changed the way we socialize and has provided us with both, negative and positive, experiences. The following literature review will explore critical issues that are relevant to the concept of cyberbullying. Some of those topics will include a historical background on bullying, the different types of bullying, an in-depth view of cyberbullying, and the most common events that lead to it. In addition, a review of how cyberbullying occurs, its prevalence and impact on all individuals involved will also be addressed. Next, it will look at the relationship between cyberbullying and the Latino community. And finally, it will address its consequences and legal ramifications as well as known interventions and practical prevention methods.

Historical Background

In the past, bullying was a physical social issue that showed a clear distinction between bullies and those being bullied. In most instances, bullying involved face-to-face contact, which typically included a clear imbalance of physical power (Law, Shapka, Hymel, Olson, & Waterhouse, 2012). Law et al. (2012) explain that, in those instances, retaliation would usually take place at a later time, most likely when the victim was more prepared. The action of bullying was characterized by performing repeated aggressive behaviors with intentions of doing harm and that involved an interpersonal relationship where there was an imbalance of power (Olweus, 1994). Furthermore, literature alludes
to the term *peer abuse* or harassment as other definitions of bullying (Olweus, 1994; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). When looking at its psychosocial consequences, Patching and Hinduja (2006) noted that bullies as well as victims were at an increased risk of having developmental problems that could extend into adulthood. In fact, studies demonstrated that bullies were more likely to be involved in other negative behaviors such as drinking alcohol and smoking (Nansel et al., 2001). Additionally, bullies and victims showed poorer psychosocial and emotional adjustment and engaged in more problem behaviors than those not involved in bullying.

Previous generations also saw a gender difference as most bullying episodes involved direct physical aggression and most often occurred within a male context (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1994). On the other hand, indirect forms of bullying such as spreading rumors or lies were more common among girls. In fact, Nansel et al. (2001) demonstrated that males were both the victim and the perpetrator significantly more frequently than females (Conners-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell, McKelvey, & Gargus, 2009). In addition, bullying was reportedly more prevalent among males than females and occurred more frequently during middle school than in the high school years (Nansel et al., 2001).

As our world adapted to modern technology so did social interactions in students. With the development of social networking sites and technologically advanced instruments of communication, bullying acts reached higher levels (Snakenborg, Acker, & Gable, 2011; Beale & Hall, 2007; Diamanduros, Downs, & Jenkins, 2008). Current research reports that cyberbullying is experienced by 20 to 35% of students (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Furthermore, 60% of students reported having been ignored by others
while online, 50% were disrespected, and almost 30% received negative name-callings. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the majority of those engaged in online social networking report having positive experiences and are happy to be able to communicate in that manner (Lenhart et al., 2011).

**Types of Bullying**

Violence in schools has become much more prevalent than in previous generations. Bullying is directly or indirectly involved in most episodes of school violence (Li, 2007). There are several types of bullying that although different, tend to have the same despairing results on the victims. Olweus (1994) defines traditional bullying as when a student is “exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students.” Negative actions are described by Olweus (1994) as a close synonym of aggressive behavior in adolescents. In other words, someone performs a negative action when he or she intentionally inflicts, or tries to inflict pain, injury, or discomfort on another (Olweus, 1994). Although the literature shows no general consensus on the description of the main types of traditional bullying, most research focuses on 1) physical bullying, 2) verbal bullying, and 3) social bullying (Law et al., 2012). Physical bullying most likely would involve a larger individual using physical power over a weaker individual. Hawker and Boulton (2000) refer to verbal bullying as the type that involves the target being teased, laughed at, ridiculed, called names, and/or being threatened. In essence, verbal bullying is described as being “mental.” Social bullying, also called relational bullying, occurs when the victim is not allowed to take part or be in a group, is not talked to, rejected, or told they will not be liked unless they do what the perpetrator is telling them to do (Hawker & Boulton, 2000).
Research shows that there are several bully classifications within the types of bullying. Conners-Burrow et al. (2009) define these classifications as victims, bullies, bully-victims, and children that are not involved. Children who fit the victim category are usually more introverted, quiet, depressed, and anxious. They are more likely to be seen as less socially acceptable by their peers (Conners-Burrow et al., 2009; Diamanduros et al., 2008). Bullies, on the other hand, tend to be aggressive, dominant, impulsive, deliberate, proactive, and goal-oriented (Conners-Burrow et al., 2009). The bully group shows a great need to have power, control, and to dominate others using aggressive behaviors. The third classification is the bully-victim group, which refers to students who become bullies after being victimized. These students often exhibit behavioral problems, do poorly in school, and are reportedly more disliked by their peers (Diamanduros et al., 2008; Conners-Burrow et al., 2009). The last category includes the students who are not involved. Studies have shown that children that are not involved in any type of bullying generally feel more socially accepted, have stronger social support, less depression, anxiety, and stress problems among other positive outcomes when compared to the other three groups (Conners-Burrow et al., 2009).

Another type of bullying (not part of the traditional bullying group) that has caught the attention of school officials and parents is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is different from traditional bullying in that it is public, relentless, insidious, and many times anonymous (“Cyberbullying,” 2010). The construct of cyberbullying will be explained more in depth in the next subsection. It is important to note that whether in cyberspace or in the schoolyard, bullying is still a significant problem it highly affects the psychosocial development of children (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Patchin & Hinduja,
2006; Conners-Burrow et al., 2009; Li, 2007; Snakenborg et al., 2011). 54% of participants in a study conducted by Li (2007) reported having been victims of traditional bullying and over 25% of those had been cyberbullied as well. Furthermore, one in three students claimed to have bullied others in the same study. Results such as this, support the view that the bullying problem merits immediate attention by school officials, counselors, parents, and all individuals involved (Li, 2007; Diamanduros et al., 2008; Hoover & Olsen, 2001).

**Definition and Construct of Cyberbullying**

The invention of the Internet has changed drastically the way we communicate and interact with each other. Nowadays, children and adolescents use more cellular telephones, the Internet, and other mobile communication-based technologies than all other population groups (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). Such exposure places youngsters in a precarious position in relation to bullying. Cyberbullying has not only followed on the footsteps of traditional bullying but has remarkably expanded its grasp (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Due to the newness of that phenomenon, literature on the subject is still somewhat vague particularly when it comes to its definition. Nonetheless, Patchin and Hinduja (2006) provide the most widely used definition, which states that cyberbullying is a “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text.” The nature of cyberbullying includes traditional bullying characteristics such as teasing, name calling, and false rumors in addition to the posting of embarrassing pictures, forwarding sexually explicit photos, and public threats of violence or death among other actions that may hurt or intimidate the victim (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). For some adolescents cyberbullying can be equivalent to “social death” (“Cyberbullying,” 2010). In fact, one
study shows that over 58% of students thought that this form of bullying was even more damaging than physical bullying (Miller & Hufstedler, 2007).

Unfortunately, physical separation between bully and victim is no longer enough to prevent the harmful effects of peer abuse (Patching & Hinduja, 2006). Beale and Hall (2007) describe six major mediums that can be used by cyberbullies to reach their target without having physical proximity. Those means include e-mail, chat rooms or bash boards, phone text messaging (SMS), instant messaging (IM), voting booths, and websites. Furthermore, since the creation of MySpace and Facebook, social networking sites such as those have been cited as the most common cyberbullying tool followed only by text messaging (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009).

There are some specific issues that are inherent to cyberbullying. To illustrate, there is a great sense of anonymity that shields bullies from any consequences or event accountability for their actions (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Snakenborg et al., 2011). Modern technology offers teenagers an invisible screen behind which they can hide so they do not have to be accountable for their actions; hence fear of suffering personal consequences is greatly diminished (Beale & Hall, 2007). Bullies have an arsenal of weapons at their disposal such as temporary e-mail accounts or the use of pseudonyms to hide their identity while online. Furthermore, making use of computers or cellular phones to intimidate others requires less energy exertion and allows the bully a wider range to express hurtful and psychologically damaging comments (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Contrary to traditional bullying where males were mostly the perpetrators, cyberbullying seems to be a preferred method for female bullies. A study conducted by Hoff and Mitchell (2009) demonstrated that cyberbullying affected 56.1% of participants
and that, out of those, 72.1% females reported having been victimized compared to 27.9% of males.

The phenomenon of cyberbullying is generally classified in two forms, direct and indirect bullying (by proxy) (Snakenborg et al., 2011). Direct bullying involves the transmittal of messages from bully to victim. Indirect bullying, on the other hand, occurs when the bully enlists others to harass the victim (Snakenborg et al., 2011; Lenhart et al., 2011). Direct bullying can take the form of personal communications being copied and publicized, sending negative large amounts of icons or emoticons to the victim, altering photos to be sent to others, or posting content about an individual that a “reasonable person” could see as cruel, threatening, embarrassing, or harmful (Snakenborg et al., 2011; Beale & Hall 2007).

Another characteristic of cyberbullying involves the lack of supervision in cyberspace. Because of an increase in the presence of computers in private environments (such as bedrooms) and the use of cellular phones to access social networking sites, it is extremely hard and, at times, almost impossible to supervise adolescents online (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Moreover, teens frequently know more about technology than their parents and even their school officials do. There is no doubt that the issue of cyberbullying is on the raise and that its consequences can be detrimental for the emotional and psychological well being of our youth (Diamanduros et al., 2008). Therefore, awareness can have a fundamentally positive impact on such a harmful social problem.

**Motives Behind Cyberbullying**

Although there are several reasons for the emergence of cyberbullying,
relationship problems seem to be at the top of the list. Hoff and Mitchell (2009) revealed that 91% of participants in their study reported being cyberbullied because of relationship issues. Furthermore, as the relationship variable was analyzed deeper, it showed that 41% of harassment occurred due to a break-up, 20% to envy, 16% to intolerance, and that 14% of participants reported having been “ganged up” on. Additionally, the students participating in this study stated that romantic break-ups resulted in feeling rejected and angry which led to retaliation by cyberbullying. Interestingly, in some cases, the bullying was not geared toward the ex-partner but instead to their new girlfriend or boyfriend (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). In relation to the second classification of envy, respondents stated that it emerged as a result of being rejected, ignored, or jealous of the characteristics and/or achievements of others. Participants that claimed that cyberbullying emerged from intolerance explained that bullies acted in that manner because they felt scared, sad, isolated, or helpless themselves. Nevertheless, Hoff and Mitchell (2009) concluded that prejudice against sexual orientation, personal disabilities, religion, and gender was significantly present. Finally, students that reported ganging up as a popular trait of cyberbullying stated that that action was taken in order to reject and isolate the victims from the group. When looking at the results of this study, it is evident that adolescents involved in these types of behaviors suffer from an inability to handle social tensions, particularly when they involve relationship conflicts (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009).

Another reason for the occurrence of cyberbullying involves the need of bullies to feel powerful and in control of others (Diamanduros et al., 2008). Bullies seem to gain certain satisfaction when they hurt and intimidate their victims, which correlate with their
need to dominate. In cyberbullying, the abusers group is typically comprised of students that are seen as outliers or outsiders (Diamanduros et al., 2008). These bully groups can be subdivided into some common categories such as the “vengeful angels,” “the power-hungry,” “the revenge of the nerds,” and the “mean girls.” The most important characteristic of these types of groups is that they are the result of a bonding process that involves the grouping together of members that are similar in one or more characteristics and the excluding of others who do not meet their criteria (Diamanduros et al., 2008). Additionally, participants of groups such as these tend to not only bully outsiders but also their fellow group members creating a cycle of abuse that is extremely difficult to break (Li, 2007).

A study conducted by the National Crime Prevention Council (2007) reported several reasons why teenagers think that their peers bully. To illustrate, 81% of teens reported that people bully because “they think it’s funny” while 64% claimed that the bullies took those negative actions because they simply did not like the person they were bullying. In the same study, 45% of teens thought that bullies viewed their victims as losers and almost six out of ten participants noted that the cyberbully “probably didn’t see the action as a big deal.” Furthermore, almost half of the students reported that cyberbullying happens because the perpetrator does not foresee any tangible consequences or feels that he/she would simply not get caught (“Teens and Cyberbullying,” 2007; Snakenborg et al., 2011).

Incidentally, many internet users are socially isolated adolescents with a strong need to belong which puts them at risk of being easily influenced to act in ways that they would not in the physical world (Li, 2007). Snakenborg et al. (2011) concluded that
although any student can be a target for cyberbullies, it is those who are withdrawn, isolated, insecure, and generally weaker, in at least one aspect, that are more at risk of becoming victims. In fact, Hoff and Mitchell (2009) showed that 52% of participants in their study reported that anonymity highly contributes to cyberbullying as it gives bullies more power beyond anything they can experience if engaged on face-to-face abuse.

Overall, cyberbullying seems to be motivated by the same reasons as traditional bullying but it adds actions such as anonymity and virtual social grouping that make it an even more insidious and far-reaching problem (Goebert et al., 2011). In fact, studies show that on an individual level, the secretive nature of the act particularly the anonymity it involves, is a strong incentive for bullies to attack their victims (Beale & Hall, 2007; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

**Tools Used in Cyberbullying**

Adolescents are very creative when it comes to finding ways to hurt each other in cyberspace. Cyberbullying takes place in several different forms. Some of those include sending derogatory text messages, threatening e-mails, publicizing confidential e-mails or pictures, sending harassing messages, excluding peers from cybersocial groups, setting up slanderous websites or even cybercontrolling or monitoring the behavior of others using electronic means (Goebert et al., 2011; Beale & Hall, 2007; Diamanduros et al., 2008). Moreover, multiplayer online games and virtual worlds can also be venues for bullies to harass and target their victims (“Cyberbullying,” 2010). Online players may use their fantasy characters to enact sexually degrading actions that may offend or insult other players. To illustrate, an online support group for sexual abuse survivors reported an example of that type of harassment in which the aggressor enacted graphic sexual
abuse for the group’s participants to see (Li, 2007). Generation Y, especially adolescents ages 13 to 17 are an online population. 78% of teens report having been using the Internet for three or more years and eight out ten claimed that they used the Internet “yesterday” (“Teens and Cyberbullying,” 2007). Patchin and Hinduja (2006) state that there are two major electronic devices that bullies use to harass their targets in cyberspace. The personal computer is one of the most commonly used tools. Bullies can use that medium to send aggressive e-mails, instant messaging, or as mentioned earlier, post obscene slanderous messages as well as to develop websites that promote or spread false derogatory rumors. Another popular common instrument used by bullies in the last several years is the cellular phone as it gives them access not only to text messaging but also the Internet (Diamanduros, et al., 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

In the last decade, social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook became the preferred platforms used by cyberbullies (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). Patchin and Hinduja (2006) explain that life in cyberspace is remarkably intertwined with life in the physical world. Consequently, 25% of teens have had an experience on social networking sites that have resulted in face-to-face arguments while 22% report that they have ended a friendship with someone because of something that occurred in cyberspace. Moreover, 6% of students stated that they had gotten in trouble at school because of an experience that took place on a social networking website (Lenhart et al., 2011).

In addition to the devices mentioned earlier, Snakenborg et al. (2011) added new instruments that are being misused by bullies nowadays. Some of those include video-hosting sites such as YouTube, webcams (sending and receiving photos or videos), and virtual learning environments set up by schools for teachers and students to share
assignments and educational information. Furthermore, the creation of the social networking sites Twitter and Facebook opened up a wide battlefield for bullies to do their misdeeds (Snakenborg et al., 2011; Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). Cyberbullies most commonly use these sites in the following ways. First, they tend to post inappropriate material, which may include threatening or humiliating text or images. Second, they hack into someone else’s account and alter their content in order to humiliate or embarrass the owner of the account. Third, they hack another person’s account and use it to send slanderous content to the owner’s contacts. And fourth, bullies create a false profile using another person’s name in order to embarrass them or publicly humiliate them with the information they include in such account (Snakenborg et al., 2011).

Technology has undoubtedly changed the rules of bullying as it not only promotes the removal of social inhibitions but also reduces accountability, which consequently makes it easier for misusers to engage in acts of cyberbullying (Li, 2007).

**Prevalence**

Cyberbullying is such a recent phenomenon that statistics on its prevalence change constantly. Perhaps one of the most current and thorough studies on the topic is the one completed in 2011 by the Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project, which included a wide variety of categories related to adolescents and social networking sites. This study concluded that 88% of teens that use social media have witnessed people be cruel or mean on these sites (Lenhart et al., 2011). Out of these teens, 55% report seeing such behaviors on a regular basis. Moreover, 19% of teenagers report having been bullied in the past year and out of those 8% claimed to have been bullied online through e-mail, instant messaging or on a social network site. Additionally, 67%
of teens in the study stated that they had witnessed others joining in harassing a victim and 21% reported having joining in themselves. The study also revealed that teens who have public profiles instead of private ones are almost twice as likely to have had a bad experiences on social sites.

As mentioned earlier, research on the prevalence of cyberbullying is not unanimous. Li (2007) reports that almost 14% of teens report having been cyberbullied, 60% of those being females. Almost 15% of participants in this study admitted to bullying others using electronic means. Additionally, more than half of the students stated that they knew somebody being cyberbullied. In addressing who was doing the bullying, Li (2007) found that 31.8% of victims were bullied by classmates, 11.4% by people not from their schools, and 15.9% by other sources. Shockingly, 40.9% claimed that they had no idea who had bullied them online. Moreover, 60% of victims claimed to have been cyberbullied one to three times while 18% reported four to ten times, and 22.7% agreed on more than ten times. Another important finding of this study is that it showed that frequently victims of cyberbullying become bullies themselves and that there is a high likelihood that bullies will become victims at one time or another.

Another study suggested that 19% of participants were involved in some type of online aggression, either as the victim or the perpetrator, in the previous year (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Furthermore, it was reported that 84% of abusers knew their victim in person while only 31% of victims knew their bully in person. Findings such as this demonstrate the influence that anonymity has in cyberbullying. In 2001, the Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project reported that about 17 million of adolescents 12 to 17 years old used the Internet regularly (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).
2005, the same center estimated that 90% of teens in the same age range were using the Internet daily and that more than half of participants in their study had personal cellular phones (Snakenborg et al., 2011). That amount has increased tremendously as more and more households gain access to the Internet and other electronic devices (Lenhart et al., 2011; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Furthermore, the media usage in 8 to 18 year-olds has increased 2.25 hours in the past 5 years (Snakenborg et al., 2011).

The National Crime Prevention Council (2007) released a study that explored the issue of cyberbullying among middle and high school aged students in the United States. It revealed that, as mentioned earlier, adolescents 13 to 17 years old are an online population as they use the Internet and several other electronic devices on a regular basis. Furthermore, the study indicated that 43% of teens reported having had some type of cyberbullying experience. The incidence of online bullying seems to be higher among females than males and reportedly, is more prevalent among 15 and 16-year-olds. Interestingly, cyberbullying seems to follow a bell-curved pattern, as its incidence is lower among 13-year-olds, peaks in 15-year-olds, and decreases in 17-year-olds (“Teens and Cyberbullying,” 2007). Studies such as this one show cyberbullying is an issue that is here to stay and that prevention and awareness are key to decrease its negative effects on our youth.

**Impact on Bullied and Bullies**

Cyberbullying may have more detrimental consequences than traditional bullying as it has a greater potential to reach a wider audience (Goebert et al., 2011). A study lead by Goebert and colleagues (2011) demonstrated that victims of cyberbullying are 2.5 times more likely to abuse substances and alcohol as well as two times more likely to
suffer from depression. This type of bullying has also been linked to a significant likelihood of suicide attempts. Furthermore, Goebert et al. (2011) explains that as youth has limited support and skills to deal with the bullying, they may choose to abuse substances or engage in self-injury in order to escape the pain and suffering they are experiencing (Nansel et al., 2001). Moreover, research further shows that the positive relation between bullying and suicidal risk is even more pronounced in the lesbian, gay, and bisexual population as well as the one of children with special needs (Kim & Leventhal, 2008). Furthermore, victims of bullying demonstrate poorer social and emotional adjustment (Nansel et al., 2001; Li, 2007; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Demaray & Malecki, 2003). In other words, they might have greater difficulty making new friends, not have satisfying relationships with their peers, or become more socially isolated. Social isolation in and of itself may make a child a prime target for bullying (Nansel et al., 2001). As Hoover and Olsen (2001) indicate, the most common reason why some children are being bullied and others are not, is that the victims are seen as not “fitting in.” On the topic of social isolation, it was noted that victims of bullying are avoided by their peers for fear of becoming victims themselves or of loosing their social status (Nansel et al., 2001).

Research shows that bullies, victims, and bully-victims are considerably at higher risk of experiencing accidental or self-inflicted injuries, abusing over-the-counter medications, hurting animals and other people purposely, using weapons, and being absent from school (Srabstein & Piazza, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Furthermore, bullies and bully-victims suffer a higher risk of health, safety, and educational risks. Some of those risks involve injuries that require hospitalization, alcohol and drug abuse,
smoking, runaway episodes, fire setting, carrying weapons to school, having poor grades, and frequent school absences (Srabstein and Piazza, 2008). All of these factors may easily exacerbate these students’ mortality risk. After all, suicide is the third leading cause of death for American adolescents (Kim & Leventhal, 2008).

Bullied children report a wide range of clinical problems such as anxiety, sleep difficulties, bed wetting, depression, the development of school phobia, low self-esteem, loneliness, isolation, and somatic symptoms (Kim & Leventhal, 2008; Srabstein & Piazza, 2008). Additionally, victims show a drop in grades, a negative change in interests, feelings of worry, fear, anger, powerlessness, sadness or stress (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Demaray & Malecki, 2003). On the other hand, bullies tend to report more depression and engage in antisocial behaviors as well as have legal problems as adults (Kim & Leventhal, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Moreover, bully-victims experience more psychopathology and problematic family and educational profiles (Kim & Leventhal, 2008). In contrast, children not involved in bullying behaviors demonstrate less depression and more social and parental support (Conners-Burrow et al., 2009). The effects of bullying on the self-esteem of the victims can be devastating and without an adequate support system, can lead to substantial maladaptive outcomes (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Hawker & Boulton, 2000).

Hoff and Mitchell (2009) noted that, unique to cyberbullying, psychological negative effects seemed to be heighten when the victim did not know who was doing the bullying and thus tended to increase the feelings of powerlessness and fear. A study by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) revealed that 56% of cyberbully victims participating reported feeling angry, 33% stated feeling hurt, 32% expressed feelings of
embarrassment and one in eight claimed they felt scared. Moreover, females, particularly ages 13 to 15, were more open to report these feelings than their male counterparts (“Teens and Cyberbullying,” 2007).

**Cyberbullying in the Media**

Unlike schoolyard bullying that hardly made the local news, cyberbullying seems to make headlines nationally and internationally with frightening frequency. Among other reasons, the relatively easy access to mobile communication technology has made it easier for people to share these types of incidents. In 2006, Megan Taylor Meier’s suicide made headlines in national media (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). Megan was an all-American teenager from Missouri who after receiving a message stating, that “the world would be a better place without you” committed suicide. She was 14 years old. Megan was bullied online by Lori Drew, the mother of a former friend, using a MySpace account. In 2009, Lori Drew was convicted of three counts of accessing protected computers without authorization in order to gain information that helped her inflict emotional distress on Megan (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). Mrs. Drew faced up to three years in prison and a fine of $300,000.00.

International stories have also made headlines among national media. A report from Australia told the story of a nine-year-old girl who continuously received pornographic e-mails from a classmate (Li, 2007). In Canada, a 15-year-old boy became a reluctant celebrity when, without his authorization, some of his classmates posted a personal video online. The boy felt humiliated as millions of people downloaded the video. He sought counseling and his family made a lawsuit against the perpetrators (Li, 2007). In 2007, a Japanese teenager killed a classmate because she claimed being angry
about messages posted about her online (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). Also in Japan, peers took pictures of an overweight boy in the locker room and distributed them to his schoolmates (Li, 2007). Another incident in Canada involved David Knight, an adolescent that became the target of a hate campaign created by his schoolmates (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). The bullies established a “Welcome to the Site that Makes Fun of David Knight” website where they posted humiliating pictures and messages and even invited people all over the world to join the campaign.

Several other illustrations have been broadcasted nationwide. A boy in middle school was harassed by his ex-girlfriend who created a website completely devoted to share rumors about him (Li, 2007). The girl made threats, created a smear campaign, and openly described what she would feel seeing him be “torn apart.” Another incident took place in an affluent community of Southern California. Many Calabasas High School students were involved in the scandal that centered around a website called schoolscandals.com which allowed subscribers to spread vicious gossip and threatening racists remarks (Li, 2007). The principal of the school acknowledged that many of his students had been negatively affected by the content of the website in and off campus. He became involved and was able to stop the site eventually but not before it passed the 30,000-membership mark.

One cyberbullying story that has touched Americans countrywide is the Ryan Patrick Halligan’s story. Ryan had been bullied by a schoolmate and his friends since he was in fifth grade (Eisenberg, 2007). The bullying started being face-to-face taking place on school grounds and included verbal and physical aggression. Ryan was constantly tormented getting to the point of asking his parents to move him to another school or
even trying home school. By the seventh grade, the bullies added online aggression to their arsenal. They began taunting the boy online and harassing him by spreading false rumors and recruiting other peers to join the assaults. On October 2, 2003 Ryan committed suicide by hanging himself only two weeks after a boy had told him that it was about time he killed himself (Eisenberg, 2007).

The more recent suicide of college student Tyler Clementi made international headlines. Clementi was a freshman at Rutgers University in New Jersey when his life took a fatal turn (Parker, 2012). Dharun Ravi, Tyler’s roommate, and his friend Molly Wei began spying on Tyler’s homosexual liaisons soon after the beginning of the semester. Ravi and Wei gossiped about such encounters on Twitter and even tried to share films they had illegally obtained depicting those meetings. Tyler expressed his distress about the online harassment several times and to several people. On September 22, 2010, Tyler jumped to his death from the George Washington Bridge (Parker, 2012). Events such as the ones mentioned clearly demonstrate the powerful and lethal consequences that cyberbullying can have in the lives of our youth.

**Cyberbullying in the Latino Community**

There is a gap in literature in regards to the prevalence of cyberbullying in the Latino community. In fact, past research has not been able to conclusive demonstrate or negate that there are racial differences in the prevalence of bullying (Demaray & Malecki, 2003). Earlier studies indicated that ethnicity is not a significant factor in the occurrence of bullying. On the other hand, more recent studies demonstrated that although Latino students report less victimization, they were moderately more likely to experience it with more frequency (Demaray & Malecki, 2003). Thus, modern research
suggests that different ethnicities may experience bullying differently but that its prevalence is not necessarily affected by racial constructs.

What has been noted is that the amount of social or emotional support children receive can fairly predict future victimization (Conners-Burrow et al., 2009). To illustrate, a study conducted with primarily Hispanic children living in the United States revealed that victims and bully-victims acknowledged generally having less social support than their bully counterparts. Furthermore, social support might help teens decrease the negative psychological effects associated with bullying, i.e. internalizing problems (Conners-Burrow et al., 2009; Demaray & Malecki, 2003). As mentioned earlier, Latino families provide high levels of emotional support to their relatives. Interestingly, Latino adolescents seek more support from their parents and other adults than White adolescents, which can highly benefit Latino kids’ psychological adjustment (Conners-Burrow et al., 2009; Demaray & Malecki, 2003).

Nansel and colleagues (2008) released a study that showed demographic variations on the prevalence of bullying behaviors. Bullying occurred more often in middle school and Latino adolescents reported somewhat higher involvement in the bullying of others that did black teens but less when compared to their White peers. More specifically, this study noted that 10.4% of Latino participants reported bullying others on a weekly basis, 12.0% did it sometimes, 24.4% once or twice in a current term, and 53.2% reported no bullying behaviors at all (Nansel et al., 2008). Regarding being bullied, 8.1% of students reported being bullied weekly, 8.0% sometimes, 24.5% once or twice in a school year, and 59.4% reported no victimization whatsoever.

The lack of resources or information about modern technology makes difficult for
Latino parents to help prevent their kids from being cyberbullied. A study by the Pew Research Center and American Life Project showed that Latino parents do not consistently report checking their children’s digital footprints such as the websites they are browsing or their profiles on social networking sites (Lenhart et al., 2011). Additionally, only 35% of Latino parents in the study reported befriending their children on social networking sites or even using parental controls. Latino parents even report feeling that technology is not as important to keep their kids connected to their friends or to gain information about the world (Lenhart et al., 2011). Consequently, it can be deduced that Latino teenagers are at a higher risk of not knowing how to prevent or get help with interventions when involved in a cyberbullying situation.

Legal Ramifications

As the phenomenon of cyberbullying becomes more common, the legal system is doing its best to find ways to protect the legal rights of both, victims and perpetrators. In 2008, Congress passed one of the most important legislations to specifically protect children from cyberbullying (Snakenborg et al., 2011). The Protecting Children in the 21st Century legislation addresses several issues that provide support and protection to minors. At the State level, 44 states currently have a legislation that includes several aspects of bullying (Snakenborg et al., 2011). Nevertheless, it is quite challenging for legal entities to demonstrate that an act of cyberbullying has been committed. Its anonymous nature, not-quite-clear power differential, and difficulty in demonstrating serious intent to harm are some of the reasons why authorities find it so difficult to prosecute the offenders (Snakenborg et al., 2011).

School administrators often find themselves in a precarious position as it relates to
cyberbullying. School districts and their staff have been held liable for negligence when cyberbullying has caused harm to their students (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). As literature suggests, there are some instances when violations are clear and should be reported and legally dealt with appropriately. Some of those cases include death threats, intimidation that is excessive or discriminatory, sexual exploitation, or serious threats of violence. Unfortunately, not all actions are as easily defined. An illustration of such conundrum involved a Pennsylvania court case where a school district, superintendent, assistant principal and the student’s teacher were accused of violating the student’s rights (Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). The problem began when the assistant principal confiscated the student’s cellular phone to view recent phone calls and text messages in order to prove suspected cyberbullying. The court took the side of the student and assigned liability to the school district and its employees. Being knowledgeable of the legislations that are effective in their own states could help school personnel develop comprehensive policies to address cyberbullying (Diamanduros et al., 2008). Some states are in the process or have already established legislation that involves school policy on cyberbullying. For instance, the state of Washington is on the process of developing specific legislation that includes cyberbullying but openly limits the school’s jurisdiction to when the bullying occurs in campus and involves only its students. Moreover, other states such as South Carolina have already developed policies that address electronic acts of bullying and harassment such as the Safe School Climate Act, 2007 (Diamanduros et al., 2008). This act limits the schools’ reach to acts that occur at school, on any type of school property, or during school-sponsored activities. Nonetheless, other states such as Arkansas, have successfully established jurisdiction for schools that extends beyond
school grounds. The Arkansas House Bill 1072 also known as ACT115 was introduced in 2007. The main point it addresses states that “…if the electronic act is directed specifically at students or school personnel and maliciously intended for the purpose of disrupting school and has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose…” can be construed as a violation of such act (Diamanduros et al., 2008).

The landmark case that is used in most cyberbullying claims involves the case of *Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Cmty. Sch. Dist*. 393 U.S. 503 (Willard, 2007). In this instance, the Court concluded that students have constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression that are in effect in and out the schools. Additionally, the Court agreed that if the speech interferes with the work of the school or affects the rights of others, school personnel have the right to take action to prohibit such speech (Willard, 2007; Diamanduros et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the districts must be able to demonstrate that their actions were influenced by reasonable facts and were taken to anticipate disruptions of school related activities and not by a desire to simply avoid the discomfort of dealing with unpopular views (Willard, 2007).

In 2008, California enacted a comprehensive law targeting cyberbullying. Gene Mullin, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Education, proposed the enactment of Assembly Bill 86, which targeted instant messages, text messages and e-mails, sent to individuals in and off school premises that were of a bullying nature (Smith, 2011). The Bill turned into law the same year. In 2011, Assemblywoman Nora Campos proposed an amendment to the AB 86 to include comments or pictures posted on social networking sites by cyberbullies. Such amendment was approved under the Assembly Bill 746 (Smith, 2011). Some of the penalties include suspension and even expulsion as described
in the Education Code Section 48900-48927 (Wilson, 2008).

When it comes to state or federal laws regarding cyberbullying, current literature suggests that schools and all individuals involved thread lightly and carefully as the balance between free speech and protection against cyberbullying is not always clear-cut (Willard, 2007; Miller & Hufstedler, 2009; Diamanduros et al., 2008; Snakenborg et al., 2011; Beale & Hall, 2007). Moreover, it is important to point out that the ubiquity and newness of cyberbullying has created an ever-changing need for new legislation (Willard, 2007; Smith, 2011). Fortunately, the law is changing to perform more appropriately its duty to protect victims (Smith, 2011).

Prevention and Intervention

The use of technology by our youth is not inherently a negative issue. The majority of adolescents that are online users enjoy and positively benefit from social networking sites on a daily basis (Lenhart et al., 2011). Nevertheless, there are well-documented precautions that can be taken to avoid ill effects. To illustrate, Patchin and Hinduja (2006) state that parents should monitor their kids’ online activities with regularity and teachers should also supervise computer use in classrooms (Goebert et al., 2011; Miller & Hufstedler, 2009). Furthermore, parents must discuss the nature of their teen’s interactions while online as well as their rights and responsibilities (“Cyberbullying,” 2010). Parents should also teach their kids to never post or disclose anything that they would not want “the whole world” to know. Further, they must teach their teens to reach out to an adult if they encounter any sign or threat of online bullying against themselves or others (“Cyberbullying,” 2010). Goebert and colleagues (2011) also recommend regular discussion of technology use between parents and their children.
in order prevent or assess cyberbullying. Moreover, they conclude that schools must develop clear guidelines for appropriate use of their technological devices.

Beale and Hall (2007) provide a series of prevention and intervention strategies to address cyberbullying. First, they suggest that students should be educated on the subject by integrating cyberbullying lessons into the school’s curriculum. Second, school policy should be up-to-date by including different forms of online bullying. Third, parents must be educated on the topic and encouraged to discuss the consequences of committing online bullying, which can include acts of discipline, civil litigations, and even criminal prosecutions. Fourth, professional development seminars should be conducted to educate school faculty and staff on how to detect, assess, prevent, and intervene on cyberbullying cases. And fifth, adults must create a climate in which teenagers feel encouraged and comfortable to report any and all forms of bullying.

Raising students’ awareness about cyberbullying is a top priority if this phenomenon is to be decreased and even stopped (Diamanduros et al., 2008). In fact, ethical and security issues must be addressed prior to the use of technology by our youth. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) established the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) which were designed to specifically address the technological expectations of students according to their grade levels (Diamanduros et al., 2008). One of the categories in the NETS directly applies to the issue of cyberbullying through its Digital Citizenship directive. Such standard requires that “students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior” (Diamanduros et al., 2008).

Although the literature provides many different suggestions regarding prevention
and intervention of cyberbullying, there is a lack of empirical research on the topic. Snakenborg et al. (2011) reports having found no peer-reviewed empirical studies for actual prevention or intervention methodology. Nevertheless, it was reported that there are some approaches that have been advocated by state and local governments, schools, parents, and even teenagers. Generally, those approaches are categorized in three groups which include 1) laws, rules, and policies that address the appropriate use of media and establishment of controls, 2) curricular programs developed to educate online users on safe Internet and electronic media use as well as how to avoid or deal with cyberbullying, and 3) technological approaches that may help prevent or at least decrease the potential for cyberbullying (Snakenborg et al., 2011).

Currently, there are some comprehensive programs that were specifically designed to address the cyberbullying issue. Some examples of those include the iSAFE Internet Safety Program, Cyberbullying: A prevention Curriculum, Sticks and Stones: Cyberbullying, Lets Fight It Together: What We All Can Do to Prevent Cyberbullying and the Bullying Prevention Program (Snakenborg et al., 2011). In general, these programs include some kind of video or Webisodes that relate to cyberbullying and provide a series of scripts that encourage students to discuss cyberbullying and their efforts to prevent and address it.

Nowadays as adolescents learn more about online bullying, they are voicing their own views. A study that asked teenagers what they thought was the most effective way to prevent cyberbullying showed that 71% of participants believed it was blocking people (“Teens and Cyberbullying,” 2007). Furthermore, most students reported that refusing to pass along negative messages and telling their friends to stop cyberbullying were also
very effective methods. The same study reported that more than five in ten teenagers believed that online groups and Internet service providers should be able to provide moderators that can block harassing messages. Moreover, 45% of participants stated that parents should talk to their kids about the negative consequences of being cyberbullies and that any incident should be immediately reported to an adult. Interestingly, most teens believed that school interventions would not be effective in the prevention of cyberbullying (“Teens and Cyberbullying,” 2007). Overall, teenagers believe that cyberbullying prevention should take place at three different levels, which include individual actions, online institutions, and education for parents.

Effective intervention requires a strong understanding of the social and environmental factors that enable its occurrence and/or can prevent it from happening (Nansel et al., 2001). Having that knowledge may help create school and social environments that promote healthy relations among peers and a high intolerance for cyberbullying. In addition, providing education for parents that addresses appropriate ways to deal with their child’s negative online behaviors could also help reduce cyberbullying incidents (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). In general, literature shows that a multifaceted prevention and intervention approach is the most effective way to combat the cyberbullying problem (Goebert et al., 2011).

**Synthesis and Relation to the Proposed Project**

The purpose of this chapter was to review literature related to the topic of cyberbullying. The literature acknowledges that social networking has drastically changed the way our youth interacts and communicates with each other. It also concludes that there is not much research conducted that can purposely show how
different ethnicities are affected by online bullying. Furthermore, it demonstrates that there is not enough research on the effects that cyberbullying has on the Latino population. Nevertheless, in regards to prevention and interventions, research reveals a great need for specifically designed measures that can be used by targeted groups. The purpose of this project is to provide an exclusively designed guide for Spanish-speaking parents to use in the prevention and intervention of cyberbullying on their children. Additionally, the main goal of this project is to help Spanish-speaking parents and their children navigate the cyberworld in a healthy, safe, and enjoyable manner.
Chapter 3

Project Audience and Implementation Factors

Introduction

Research on cyberbullying has demonstrated that it has detrimental consequences on the emotional, psychological, and physical health of both, victims and bullies. In fact, as it was reported, individuals involved in bullying behaviors show a higher risk of suicide, substance and alcohol abuse, and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Furthermore, according to the research, cyberbullying is a serious issue among our youth and is rapidly becoming a permanent social trend that knows no boundaries. Sadly, it also indicates that there is a lack of information and resources for Spanish-speaking parents that are in need of guidance on how to help their kids deal with this type of problems. The following subsections will detail how this project was developed, its intended audience, the personal qualifications of the author, and the equipment needed to put it into practice. Additionally, the last part of this section will include a complete outline of the final product.

Development of the Project

In the last decade, cyberbullying has become a frequent topic in the media. A few years ago, I heard about the case of Megan Taylor Meier, a 13-year-old girl that committed suicide in 2006. Megan was an average teenager living in Missouri when she began being harassed online by the mother of one of her schoolmates. After months of constant harassment, the bullying became so unbearable that Megan ended up taking her own life. I was deeply touched by her story since, as a teenager, as I had dealt with my own bullying issues. I followed the legal court case that proceeded Megan’s death
wishing it would result in a law that would help prevent another senseless death. At the time, I was new to social networking and had recently convinced my group of friends to join me in the cyberworld. After finding out about cases such as Megan’s, I started to fear that their experience might not be as positive as I had told them it would be. Thus, I became vigilant of the online activities of others and realized that cyberbullying was becoming a frequent social phenomenon that was affecting my own social circle. As my family and friends joined the online crowd, I was able to see the interaction among their different social groups. Soon thereafter, I began noticing subtle (in a couple of cases not so subtle) bullying in my teenage nephews and nieces’ cybersocial groups. I spoke with their parents and found out that they had no idea what cyberbullying was and even less, how to handle the situation. I tried to find information online in Spanish for them (as they do not speak English) but there was nothing that could provide them with hands-on information. When the time came for me to develop a project for my culmination experience, I felt that a resource for Spanish-speaking parents would be very beneficial not only for my relatives and friends, but also for the Spanish-speaking community living in the United States.

After making a decision of what type of project I wanted to develop, I began the creation process. With the help of my committee’s Chair, I found several different alternatives for the making and distribution of my guidebook. I changed the actual product and manner of distribution a couple of times along the way until I found what I felt was the most appropriate and accessible method. The final product is the result of much research, work, and personal creativity driven by a desire to produce an instrument that might help prevent pointless deaths such as that of Megan Meier.
Intended Audience

The proposed project is intended for school counselors, teachers, social workers, marriage and family therapists, school psychologists, and any other mental health workers that have access to the Internet and work with the Spanish-speaking community. It is the intention of the author that these mental health workers acquire the guidebook online, print it, and offer it to parents that need education on what their kids may be or are encountering on social networking sites. Additionally, technology savvy parents have the opportunity to access this resource on their own. Although its final intended audience is Spanish-speaking parents living in the United States, the present guide can be used by any parent, regardless of ethnicity, that is proficient in the English or/and Spanish language. Furthermore, parents whose kids have not been involved in cyberbullying experiences can also benefit as this guide provides prevention measures in addition to interventions.

Personal Qualifications

The mental health professionals that will distribute this guidebook would have complied with the licensing requirements of their specific professions and abide by the regulations set forth by their licensing boards. In addition, these professionals are required to have a minimal technological knowledge so they are able locate the resource online. Moreover, they need to understand the cyberbullying phenomenon enough to be able to answer any questions the recipient of the guide might have. Proficiency of the Spanish language is not needed as it is written in both, English and Spanish languages.

Environment and Equipment

The distribution of this resource requires a computer, a printing instrument,
Internet access, and the appropriate program to download the information (i.e. PDF or PowerPoint). There is no specific environment required for its distribution as such action can take place in a school, mental health setting, or even in community activities. Actual online access of the product can be done in a private (i.e. an office) or public setting such as a community library.

**Project Outline**

The present project will be divided into several sections that will encompass major factors related to cyberbullying. The following is an outline of the proposed guidebook.

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Chapter 4

Conclusion

Summary

The purpose of this project was to provide a resource to help Spanish-speaking parents living in the United States understand and deal with the issue of cyberbullying. In recent years, cyberbullying has grown into a grave and, in some cases, fatal problem for our youth. Literature on the topic acknowledges that social networking has drastically changed the way children and adolescents interact and communicate with each other (Snakenborg, et al., 2011; Beale & Hall, 2007; Diamanduros, et al., 2008). Moreover, studies demonstrate that it has detrimental consequences on the emotional, psychological, and physical health of both victims and bullies (Diamanduros et al., 2008). In addition, reports show that adolescents that are involved in cyberbullying present a higher risk of suicide, substance and alcohol abuse, and psychological problems including anxiety and depression (Goebert et al., 2011).

The use of modern media such as the Internet has created a new world for social interactions that has brought about positive as well as negative outcomes for users. In fact, for the first time ever, people are able to connect with other people from all over the world instantaneously and thus sociability has greatly increased. Although such reachability has its advantages, it has also prompted drawbacks in the social construct. To illustrate, whereas traditional bullying used to take place in school grounds and the victim most often knew the bully, nowadays social networking sites have created a platform for social cruelty and bullying that reaches kids in their own homes and in a more insidious and anonymous manner. Studies show that the majority of adolescents
that use social media have observed people be cruel or mean to others on these sites (Lenhart et al., 2011). In fact, more than half of the teenage users that participated in such studies report witnessing cyberbullying on a regular basis. Moreover, because the newer generations are constantly connected (online), cyberbullies have a technological arsenal at their disposal. Research has concluded that cyberbullying is rapidly becoming a permanent social trend and that it is up to all individuals involved to develop a plan of action that prevents such behaviors from ever taking place (Li, 2007).

One of the most negative consequences of social online networks is the generational gap that has ensued between parents and their children. Many parents indicate that they have difficulty understanding the technology and desire of their children to engage in such physically isolating activities. Because these parents never experienced life in cyberspace before, they find themselves at a loss when it comes to knowing how to protect their children from the dangers that this manner of socialization presents.

Cyberbullying is not only generational issue but also a cross-cultural one. Literature suggests that it has permeated most ethnicities, languages, genders, and socioeconomic levels (Demaray & Malecki, 2003; Conners-Burrow et al., 2009). Furthermore, those studies also note that some ethnic groups seem to be more affected by cyberbullying than others as their lack of information on the subject prevents them from taking appropriate and timely action. Spanish-speaking parents living in the United States are one of the most highly impacted groups. Research shows that Spanish-speaking parents have lower technological knowledge than their English-speaking counterparts as well as less access to the Internet and computers in general (Livingston,
In addition, research also indicates that there is a general lack of information and resources that Spanish-speaking parents can access when they need guidance in confronting socio-technological issues such as cyberbullying (Lenhart et al., 2011).

The present project is designed to be accessed by mental health practitioners, teachers, and other professionals that work with the Spanish-speaking community and wish to provide information on cyberbullying to parents in their own language. Furthermore, technology savvy parents will have the opportunity to access the guide on their own. The complete guidebook created for this project has been posted on the website *Stop Cyberbullying – Pare el Ciberacoso* at www.stopcyberbullying-pareelciberacoso.com. An important characteristic of this resource is that it provides a *practical* easy-to-understand guide for parents that are familiar with social networking sites and those who are not. It also addresses the language and technological barriers previously mentioned as the website is friendly-user and in both languages, English and Spanish.

**Evaluation**

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of this project, a group of Latino mothers was asked to review the material and answer a questionnaire related to the information provided. The evaluation included six participants that regularly attended a support group for Spanish-speaking mothers that are survivors of domestic violence. Group members reported having children between the ages of 5 and 17 years old. Most of the their children were born in the United States or immigrated when they were very young. All of these children are bilingual and all except one had an electronic device they could use to access the Internet.
As part of the evaluation, group members were provided with a copy of the guidebook developed for this project. Each of the members took turns reading a different section aloud. After finishing reviewing the booklet, they were given a questionnaire that addressed questions regarding the information they had just read (Appendix C).

The answers to the questionnaire showed that five out of six participants agreed that they did not know much about cyberbullying before they read the guidebook. Also, all group members reported knowing more about the subject after reading the material. In addition, all participants agreed that the booklet was easy to read and understand. And lastly, all group members stated that they had learned ways to help deal or prevent their children from becoming victims of cyberbullying after reading the presented material.

**Discussion**

The results of the evaluation showed that the presented handbook has practicality and that it can be used to effectively assist Latino parents learn about cyberbullying. Nevertheless, they also show a deeper systemic problem. When looking at the answer to the question of parents having previous knowledge of the cyberbullying issue, their answers (five out of six answered “none”) reflect that there is a complete lack of information or that it is not being properly disseminated. One of the purposes of this resource is that individuals that have access to the Internet find the guidebook and provide it to parents that are not able to directly obtain it. Unfortunately, it is highly likely that because many parents have not even heard about cyberbullying before, this resource will be sought only on an as needed basis, which may be somewhat late since the victimization would have already happened. Moreover, a fundamental part of this guide includes the understanding and prevention of cyberbullying, which cannot take
place if the individual is accessing the information to find a way to deal with an already existing problem. Therefore, the author concludes that a better method of dissemination needs to be implemented so this project can be more effectively used.

**Future Work**

The completion of this project highlighted the need for more work to be done. For instance, currently there are not sufficient or even effective methods of spreading information on the prevention of cyberbullying. In fact, there is a critical need to get this information to the right people at the right time. One of the ways that this could be achieved is by integrating lessons on cyberbullying into school curricula so that if or when students encounter cyberbullying they have enough knowledge to take appropriate action before further victimization occurs.

Literature indicates that cyberbullying has reached most ethnicity groups, which poses the question of how these groups are learning about the issue (Lenhart et al., 2011; Demaray & Malecki, 2003; Nansel et al., 2008). When considering such query, the author concluded that resources such as the one presented in this project need to be translated into more languages so that parents from other cultural backgrounds can also benefit from the information provided. It is important to note that this guidebook may be used (if translated) by any other minority group in the United States as most share the same lack of technological knowledge and language barriers as the Latino community.

Another important aspect of the eradication or even diminishing of cyberbullying is to get law entities involved. Legislature in many states, including California, is still vague on what the legal repercussions of committing acts of online bullying are. Therefore, advocates against cyberbullying, and projects such as the present, must be
used to encourage legal authorities to see the urgency of this issue and the need for new laws that address the problem in a more comprehensive manner.

Currently, social networking sites have not really taken a stand against cyberbullying. One of the objectives of the development of this project was to generate awareness and knowledge about the topic. It is the hope of the author that such awareness motivates people to urge social networking sites owners to develop a method to teach young users how to protect themselves while using their sites. An option to do so is the creation of a tutorial that prospective users under the age of 18 must take before they are given an account. As mentioned before, cyberbullying is an all-encompassing issue that must be dealt with in an all-encompassing way.

Finally, during the completion of this project, the author learned that there is a strong need for more research to be done on the subject. As of today, we still do not quite understand what drives young people to commit such acts of cruelty and perhaps most importantly, how to prevent and even eradicate the problem. Cyberbullying is a social issue that will not go away unless a holistic approach is taken. The community, parents, law entities, social networking site owners, schools, and all people involved must be willing to take action and to do what is necessary to end this problem before it takes one more life. Furthermore, the author believes that it is the responsibility of every human being to care for and help those in need, hence standing by is no longer an option, standing up is the only way to be.
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Prevention and Intervention of Cyberbullying: A guide for parents

www.stopcyberbullying-pareelciberacoso.com

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Science in Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy

By

Berenice D. Rosillo

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December 2012
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Life in cyberspace is remarkably intertwined with life in the physical world.
(Patchin & Hinduja, 2006)

What is cyberbullying?

“...willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text.”
(Patchin & Hinduja, 2006)

✧ It includes characteristics of traditional bullying such as teasing, name calling, and the spreading of false rumors.

✧ It also involves posting embarrassing pictures, forwarding sexually explicit photos, and public threats of violence or death among
Why does it happen?

Relationship problems are the most prevalent reason for the emergence of cyberbullying. Examples of those problems include break-ups, envy, intolerance of others, jealousy, feeling rejected or ignored, and not liking the victim’s inner or outer personality.

It may occur as a result of prejudice against sexual orientation, personal disabilities, religions, ethnic background, and gender.

Cyberbullying involves the need of bullies to feel powerful and in control of others.

Some bullies do it because they think is funny or entertaining.

Bullies may not conceptually understand the pain they are inflicting on their victims.

The need to belong to a group, any group, may influence the decision to become a bully.

The anonymity and lack of foreseeable consequences may also contribute to the incidence of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying seems to be motivated by the same reasons as traditional bullying but it adds actions such as anonymity and virtual social grouping that make it an even more insidious and far-reaching problem.
Who are the victims?

Although any child/teenager can be a target for cyberbullies, it is those who are withdrawn, isolated, insecure, and generally seen as weaker, who are more at risk of becoming victims. More specifically, teenagers who are homosexual, bisexual, with special needs, lower socioeconomic status or belong to an ethnic minority are more frequently targeted.

Victims tend to be

- withdrawn
- isolated
- insecure
- depressed
- anxious
- seen as weak
- seen as “not fitting in”

Who should they watch out for?

Cyberbullies tend to have an aggressive, dominant, impulsive, deliberate, proactive and goal-oriented personality.

They show a strong need to have power, control, and to dominate others using aggressive behaviors.
How prevalent is it?

The National Crime Prevention Council (2007) released a study that explored the issue of cyberbullying among middle and high school aged students in the United States. It revealed that adolescents 13 to 17 years old are an online population as they use the Internet and several other electronic devices on a regular basis. Furthermore, the study indicated that 43% of teens reported having had some type of cyberbullying experience. The incidence of online bullying seems to be higher among females than males and reportedly, is more prevalent among 15 and 16-year-olds. Cyberbullying seems to follow a bell-curved pattern, as its incidence is lower among 13-year-olds, peaks in 15-year-olds, and decreases in 17-year-olds (“Teens and Cyberbullying,” 2007).

Another Study…

The Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project completed one of the most current and thorough studies on the topic in 2011. It concluded that 88% of teens that use social media have witnessed people be cruel or mean on these sites (Lenhart et al., 2011). Out of these teens, 55% report seeing such behaviors on a regular basis. Moreover, 19% of teenagers report having been bullied in the past year and out of those, 8% claimed to have been bullied online through e-mail, instant messaging or on a social networking site. Additionally, 67% of teens in the study stated that they had witnessed others joining in harassing a victim and 21% reported having joined in themselves. The study also revealed that teens who have public profiles instead of private ones are almost twice as likely to have had a bad experience on these social sites.
What is the impact on victims? And bullies?

**Victims of cyberbullying**
- are 2.5 times more likely to abuse substances and alcohol
- are 2 times more likely to suffer from depression
- have a significant likelihood of suicide attempts
- may choose to engage in self-injury (i.e. cutting)
- may have poorer social and emotional adjustment
- might have greater difficulty making new friends
- might not have satisfying relationships with peers
- become more socially isolated
- report a wide range of clinical problems such as anxiety, sleep difficulties, bed wetting, depression, the development of school phobia, low self-esteem, loneliness, isolation, and somatic symptoms
- show a drop in grades
- have a negative change in interests
- have feelings of worry, fear, anger, **powerlessness**, sadness and **stress**.

**Adolescents who bully others** report more depression and engage in antisocial behaviors. They tend to have more legal problems as adults.

**Bullies and Victims**
are at higher risk of accidental or self-inflicted injuries, abusing over-the-counter medications, hurting animals and other people purposely, using weapons, and being absent from school. Both groups also experience more psychological problems. Additionally, they tend to have more issues/problems in family and educational settings.

Does your child have any of these? Keep reading to find out what do...
How does it occur?

Adolescents are very creative when it comes to finding ways to hurt each other in cyberspace.

Cyberbullies may use computers, cellular phones, iPods, iPads, and many other electronic devices to complete their objectives.

As of today, social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr) multiplayer online games, virtual worlds, chat rooms, video hosting sites (i.e. YouTube) and virtual learning environments are the most preferred venues for bullies to harass their victims.

How do they do it?

- sending derogatory text or instant messages
- threatening or aggressive e-mails
- publicizing confidential e-mails or pictures
- sending harassing messages
- excluding peers from cybersocial groups
- setting up slanderous websites
- cybercontrolling or monitoring the behavior of others using electronic means
Is my kid at risk?

CHECKLIST

- My child has access to the internet, at home and/or other places
- My child owns a cellular phone
- My child has access to an electronic device such as an iPod or iPad
- My child has an account in a social networking site (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc....)
- My child has an e-mail and/or instant messaging account

If you answered yes to any of these questions:

Yes! Your child is at risk!
How can I prevent my child/teen from becoming a target?

**Prevention and Intervention**

Parents should,

- learn about cyberbullying and talk to their kids about it.
- monitor their kids’ online activities regularly (i.e. passwords, befriending them on social networking sites).
- discuss their children’s digital citizenship -rights and responsibilities in the cyberworld.
- advise their teens not to post or disclose any information or pictures they would not want “the whole world” to see or know about them.
- advise their kids to reach out to an adult if they encounter any sign or threat of online bullying, against themselves or others.
- make sure that teachers are supervising computer use in classrooms.
- request that schools educate students on the subject and even integrate cyberbullying lessons into their curricula.

**STAY INVOLVED!**
What should I tell my kid to do?

Use the FOUR-STEP PROCESS!

- The four-step process:
  - **Stop** – do not respond, do not engage.
  - **Save** – all messages related to the cyberbullying.
  - **Block** – use the *blocking option* in their browser to prevent further communication with the cyberbully.
  - **Tell** – a trusted adult about the incident and report the abuse to the social networking site.
Can I take legal measures?

- If your child is being cyberbullied, contact an attorney. Cyberbullying could be considered defamation, invasion of privacy, or purposeful infliction of emotional distress.
- You can also file a complaint with the social networking site or telephone company, as cyberbullying is most likely a violation of their terms of use.
- If the bully used school property to perpetrate the abuse, contact the school.
- Most states have passed some kind of legislation to reduce the incidence of cyberbullying. Laws for its prevention and intervention continue to adapt to fit new circumstances.
- Each state has its own set of laws and is the responsibility of parents to become informed of their children's rights or seek legal advice from an expert.

SAVE ALL EVIDENCE!

Cyberbullying can be a crime.
How can I talk to my kid if he/she has not experienced cyberbullying?

- Ask your child if she/he has been a victim or has witnessed cyberbullying.
- Assure your kid that you trust him/her to handle any situation they face while online but that you would like them to confide in you about it.
- Bully-proof your child by building up his/her self-esteem and resilience.
- Look for traits in your child that can lead to victimization (see page 4).
- Make it clear that you will not restrict ALL online activities if you are told about cyberbullying incidents.
- Encourage your child to be a helpful bystander by reporting witnessed cyberbullying.
- Stress the importance of taking an immediate and *appropriate* course of action if victimization were to occur.

**TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH**

Everyone should be involved in the prevention of cyberbullying, including parents, teachers, school officials, legal entities, and the community in general...

**TALK TO YOUR CHILD!!!**
If you wish to receive an electronic copy of this information in handout form, please send your request to berenice.rosillo.77@gmail.com or print it from www.stopcyberbullying-pareelciberacoso.com
References


Prevenión e Intervención del Acoso Cibernético: Guía para padres

www.stopcyberbullying-pareelciberacoso.com

Un proyecto de graduación presentado en cumplimiento parcial de los requisitos
Para Maestría de Ciencias en Consejería, Terapia Matrimonial y Familiar

Por

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Dicembre 2012
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¿Qué es el acoso cibernético (o cyberbullying)?

“...daño intencional y repetido infligido por medio de texto electrónico.”
(Patchin & Hinduja, 2006)

1. Incluye características del acoso (bullying) tradicional, tales como burlas, insultos, y la difusión de rumores falsos.
2. También implica la publicación de fotos vergonzosas, el remitir fotos sexualmente explícitas, y las amenazas públicas de violencia o muerte entre otras acciones que podrían herir o intimidar a la víctima.
(Miller & Hufstedler, 2009)
¿Por qué ocurre?

Los problemas de pareja son la razón más frecuente que propicia el acoso cibernético. Ejemplos de estos problemas incluyen rupturas, envidia, intolerancia de los demás, celos, sentirse rechazado o ignorado, y el disgusto por la personalidad interior o exterior de la víctima.

Puede ocurrir como resultado de prejuicios contra ciertas orientación sexuales, discapacidades físicas o mentales, religiones, orígenes étnicos y el sexo de las víctimas.

El acoso cibernético implica la necesidad de los agresores de sentirse que tienen poder y están en control de los demás. Algunos agresores (bullies) lo hacen porque piensan que es divertido o entretenido.

Estos agresores no pueden realmente comprender el dolor que infligen en sus víctimas.

La necesidad de pertenecer a un grupo, cualquiera que este sea, puede influir en la decisión de convertirse en agresor.

El anonimato y la falta de consecuencias previsibles también pueden contribuir a la incidencia del ciberacoso.

El acoso cibernético parece estar motivado por las mismas razones que el acoso tradicional, pero añade acciones tales como el anonimato y la agrupación social virtual que lo convierten en un problema aún más insidioso y de largo alcance.
¿Quiénes son las víctimas?

Aunque cualquier niño/adolescente puede ser objetivo de ciberacosadores, los que son callados, aislados, inseguros, y considerados como generalmente débiles, están en mayor riesgo de convertirse en víctimas. Específicamente, individuos que son homosexuales, bisexuales, con discapacidades físicas o mentales, de bajo nivel socioeconómico o que pertenecen a una minoría étnica también están en mayor peligro de ser victimizados.

Los niños y adolescentes que no son aceptados socialmente por sus compañeros están en mayor riesgo de ser víctimas de el ciberacoso. En general, estos niños son introvertidos, callados, padecen de depresión, y ansiedad. Por otra parte, los adolescentes que son homosexuales, bisexuales, son mental o físicamente discapacitados, de bajo nivel socioeconómico o pertenecen a una minoría étnica también están en mayor riesgo de ser víctimas.

Las víctimas tienden a ser:

3. callados
4. aislados
5. inseguros
6. deprimidos
7. ansiosos
8. vistos como de carácter débil o influenciable
9. vistos como que no encajan en grupos sociales populares

¿De quién deben cuidarse?

Los ciberacosadores usualmente tienen una personalidad agresiva, dominante, impulsiva, fuera de control, proactiva y con enfoque en conseguir sus objetivos. Demuestran una fuerte necesidad de tener poder, control y de dominar a los demás usando acciones abusivas y conductas agresivas.
El National Crime Prevention Council (2007) publicó un estudio que exploró el tema del ciberacoso entre estudiantes de secundaria y preparatoria en los Estados Unidos. El estudio reveló que los adolescentes de 13 a 17 años son una población que vive en línea, ya que utilizan la Internet y varios otros dispositivos electrónicos con regularidad. Por otra parte, el estudio indicó que el 43% de adolescentes reportaron haber tenido alguna experiencia con el acoso cibernético. La incidencia de la intimidación en línea parece ser mayor entre las mujeres que entre los hombres y, al parecer, es más frecuente entre los 15 y 16 años de edad. El acoso cibernético parece seguir un patrón de curva de campana, ya que su incidencia es menor entre los adolescentes 13 años, llega al nivel más alto a los 15 años, y disminuye a los 17 años de edad (“Teens and Cyberbullying,” 2007).

¿Qué tan frecuente es?

El Centro de Investigación Pew Internet & American Life Project completó uno de los estudios más actuales y exhaustivos en el campo del ciberacoso en el 2011. El estudio concluyó que el 88% de los adolescentes que usan medios electrónicos de comunicación social han sido testigos de crueldades o malos tratos en estos sitios (Lenhart et al., 2011). De estos adolescentes, 55% reportaron haber visto tales comportamientos con regularidad. Por otra parte, el 19% de los adolescentes dijeron haber sido acosados en el último año y de ellos, el 8% afirmó haber sido intimidado en línea a través de correo electrónico, mensajería instantánea o en un sitio de red social. Además, el 67% de los adolescentes en el estudio declararon haber visto algunos de sus compañeros unirse a otros en el acoso y el 21% reportó haberse unido en el acosamiento de la víctima. El estudio también reveló que los adolescentes que tienen perfiles públicos en lugar de privados son casi dos veces más propensos a haber tenido una mala experiencia en los sitios sociales de internet.
Las víctimas de ciberacoso

- son 2.5 veces más propensas a usar drogas y alcohol
- son 2 veces más propensas a sufrir de depresión
- tienen una probabilidad significativa de cometer intentos de suicidio
- pueden optar por participar en la auto-lesión o el auto-daño (es decir, el cortarse)
- pueden tener más problemas para ajustarse social o emocionalmente
- podrían demostrar mayor dificultad para hacer nuevos amigos
- reportan no poder tener amistades satisfactorias con sus compañeros
- pueden llegar a ser más aislados socialmente
- demuestran una amplia gama de problemas clínicos como la ansiedad, dificultades para dormir, el orinarse en la cama, depresión, desarrollo de la fobia escolar, baja autoestima, soledad, aislamiento, y síntomas somáticos
- muestran calificaciones más bajas
- tienen cambios negativos en sus hobbies o actividades que antes disfrutaban
- muestran sentimientos de preocupación, miedo, ira, impotencia, tristeza y estrés.

Los adolescentes que intimidan a otros muestran más depresión y comportamientos antisociales. Además tienen tendencia a tener más problemas

Agresores y víctimas

10. Tienen un mayor riesgo de lesiones accidentales o autoinfligidas, abusan de medicinas obtenidas sin receta, dañan animales y otras personas a propósito, usan armas con más frecuencia, y no asisten a la escuela con regularidad. Ambos grupos también experimentan más problemas psicológicos y tienden a tener problemas familiares y en los centros educativos.
¿Cómo ocurre?

Los adolescentes son muy creativos cuando se trata de encontrar maneras de hacer daño en el ciberespacio (por internet).

Los ciberacosos pueden usar computadoras, teléfonos celulares, iPods, iPads, y muchos otros dispositivos electrónicos para completar sus objetivos. En estos tiempos, las redes sociales (como Facebook, Twitter y Tumbir) juegos multijugador en el ciberespacio, mundos virtuales, salas de chat, video sitios de alojamiento (como YouTube) y entornos virtuales de aprendizaje son los lugares preferidos de los agresores para acosar a sus víctimas.

¿Cómo lo hacen?

- envían textos o mensajes instantáneos despectivos o denigrantes
- usan correo electrónico (e-mail) para amenazar o demostrar conductas agresivas
- publican e-mails o fotos confidenciales
- envían mensajes de acoso usando instrumentos electrónicos
- excluyen compañeros de grupos cibersociales
- crean páginas web difamatorias
- controlan la conducta de los demás usando medios electrónicos (cibercontrol)
¿Está mi hijo(a) en riesgo?

**LISTA DE VERIFICACION**

- Mi hijo(a) tiene acceso al internet en casa y/o en otros lugares
- Mi hijo(a) tiene celular
- Mi hijo(a) tiene acceso a un dispositivo electrónico como un iPod, iPad, sistema de juego y/o computadora
- Mi hijo(a) tiene cuenta en un sitio de red social por internet (como Facebook, Twitter, etc....)
- Mi hijo(a) tiene e-mail y/o usa mensajería instantánea (instant messages)

Si contestó “Sí” a cualquiera de esas preguntas:

¡SI! ¡Su hijo(a) está en peligro!
¿Cómo puedo prevenir que mi niño(a) o adolecente se convierta en víctima?

**Prevención e Intervención**

**Los padres deben**

- aprender sobre el ciberacoso y hablar con sus hijos sobre ello.
- supervisar las actividades de sus hijos en el internet con regularidad (es decir, tener sus contraseñas, hacerse amigos de sus hijos en sitios de redes sociales en línea).
- hablar con sus hijos de cuál es el comportamiento digital apropiado y de sus derechos y responsabilidades en el mundo cibernético.
- aconsejar a sus adolescentes a no publicar o divulgar información o imágenes que no desean que "todo el mundo" vea o sepa sobre ellos.
- aconsejar a sus hijos a acudir a un adulto si enfrentan algún signo o amenaza de intimidación en línea, contra sí mismos o contra otros.
- asegurarse de que los profesores supervisen el uso de computadoras en los salones de clases.
- solicitar a las escuelas que eduquen a sus estudiantes en el tema e incluso, que integren lecciones de ciberacoso en sus currículos.

¡INVOLUCRESE!
¿Qué debería decirle a mi hijo(a) que haga?

¡Utilice el proceso de LOS CUATRO PASOS!

Proceso de Los Cuatro Pasos:

a. **Parar** – no responder, no participar.

b. **Guardar** – todos los mensajes relacionados al ciberacoso.

c. **Bloquear** – use la opción de bloqueo en su navegador para impedir comunicación con el agresor.

d. **Decir** – a un adulto de confianza lo que pasó y reportar el abuso a la red social.
¿Puedo tomar medidas legales?

- Si su hijo está siendo acosado, póngase en contacto con un abogado. El acoso cibernético puede ser considerado difamación, invasión de privacidad o causa intencional de angustia emocional.
- También puede presentar una queja con los sitios de redes sociales y/o compañías de teléfonos, debido a que es acoso cibernético es muy probable que sea visto como una violación de sus términos de uso en contra de los agresores.
- Si el agresor usa propiedad escolar para perpetuar el abuso, comuníquese con la escuela.
- La mayoría de estados en los Estados Unidos han aprobado algún tipo de legislación para reducir la incidencia del acoso cibernético. Leyes para su prevención e intervención se siguen adaptando para combatir nuevas circunstancias.
- Cada estado tiene su propio conjunto de leyes y es la responsabilidad de los padres el estar informados de los derechos de sus hijos o buscar asesoría legal de un experto.

¡GUARDE LA EVIDENCIA!

El ciberacoso puede ser un crimen.
¿Cómo puedo hablar con mi hijo(a) si el/ella no ha experimentado el ciberacoso?

∇ Pregúntele a su hijo si ha sido víctima o testigo de acoso cibernético.
∇ Asegure a su hijo(a) que usted confía en él/ella para manejar cualquier situación que enfrente mientras usa el internet, y aun así, que le gustaría que el/ella confiara en usted y le contara si tiene algún problema.
∇ Haga a su hijo(a) fuerte para enfrentar el ciberacoso mediante la construcción de su autoestima y aumentado su capacidad de recuperación.
∇ Fíjese si su hijo(a) tiene rasgos que puedan conducir a la victimización (ver página 5).
∇ Aclare que usted no va a restringir todas las actividades del internet si se le cuentan incidentes de ciberacoso, solo las necesarias.
∇ Anime a su hijo(a) a ser un espectador útil y a que denuncie el acoso cibernético en cuanto lo presencie.
∇ Haga hincapié en la importancia de tomar cartas en el asunto de inmediato y de manera apropiada.

TOME UN ENFOQUE DE LLENO

Toda persona debe participar en la prevención del acoso cibernético,
los padres, maestros, autoridades escolares, autoridades jurídicas,
la comunidad en general...

¡HABLE CON SU HIJO(A)!
Si desea recibir una copia electrónica de esta información en forma de folleto, favor de enviar su solicitud a berenice.rosillo.77@gmail.com o imprimala en www.stopcyberbullying-pareelciberacoso.com
Referencias


Appendix C

Evaluation form provided to Spanish-Speaking mothers.

1. ¿Cuánto sabia usted acerca del ciberacoso antes de leer esta guía? (How much did you know about cyberbullying before receiving this guide?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nada (nothing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mucho (much)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. ¿Piensa que entiende mejor el problema del ciberacoso después de leer esta guía? (Do you think you understand better the issue of cyberbullying after reading this guide?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Casi no (not really)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Si, mucho mejor (Yes, much better)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. ¿Qué tan fácil fue de entender es la información que se le proporcionó? (How easy was to understand the information provided?)

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facil (easy)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dificil (difficult)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. ¿Piensa que ha aprendido como intervenir o prevenir que sus hijos se conviertan en víctimas de ciberacoso? (Do you think you have learned how to intervene or prevent your children from becoming victims of cyberbullying?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2</th>
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<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Casi no (not really)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Por seguro (absolutely)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Por favor, provea comentarios adicionales (Please provide additional comments)

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

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