



“Eyes on Bullying...The growing problem of cyberbullying” Teleseminar

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**EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC. (EDC)
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Kim Harrison: On behalf of Education Development Center Welcome to today’s Eyes of Bullying conference call. My name is Kim and I’ll be your Host.

Before we get started I’d like to mention that this audio call is being recorded and you are currently in a listen only mode. I’d also like to acquaint you with some of the ways you can participate today.

We will be taking live questions over the phone at the end of the presentation. At that time, you may chose to pose a question to our presenters by pressing star 1 on your telephone keypad. You will then be placed into queue until you’re prompted that your line is open for questioning.

Finally, if you experience any technical difficulties during today’s event, please press star 0 on your telephone touchpad and the operator will put you directly in touch with me.

Now, without any further delay, I'd like to turn today's program over to your moderator Kim Netter. Kim, the floor is yours.

Kim Netter: Thank you Kim. Welcome listeners. My name is Kim Netter and I will be your moderator for the next hour as we discuss cyberbullying and how to prevent it.

As the other Kim just mentioned, please feel free to press star 1 at any point during the teleseminar because we can take your calls have them in queue and can bring them up at any point in time. You will plenty of opportunity to ask questions through the teleconference - teleseminar and we'll be happy to take your calls throughout the next hour.

So today's teleseminar is entitled "Eyes on Bullying...the Growing Problem of Cyberbullying." This is the second, of three teleseminars prepared by the Eyes on Bullying program at Education Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts, which is funded by the IBM Global Work Life Fund.

This seminar is designed to help prepare caregivers and parents to take a new look at bullying and how to help prevent it for the children and youth they care for. You can find the Eyes on Bullying program on the Web at www.eyesonbullying.org.

Today we've invited four experts from the Bullying Prevention field to discuss cyberbullying. So what is cyberbullying? Why do we hear so much about it now in the media? And how does cyberbullying differ from plain old school yard bullying and how is it similar? Does cyberbullying hurt even though it may not result in a black eye?

If you were never cyber bullied as a child or if you've never heard of cyberbullying before now how do you know what to tell your children? Do boys and girls face different types or amounts of cyberbullying? What do we as adults need to learn to guide a younger generation through this largely uncharted territory known as cyberbullying?

Are you a parent, grandparent or caregiver who cares for children of grade school or middle school age? Do you work with children in after school programs, boys and girls clubs, sports teams or other youth organizations? We want to hear from you. You have the opportunity to join us in this conversation over the next hour simply by pressing star 1 on your touch pad and going into queue with the operator.

Today we will be looking at the issue of cyberbullying with a spotlight on how you can prepare children to deal effectively with some new forms of bullying arising from new every day technology.

To get us started in this discussion, we are now joined by Dr. Ron Slaby. Ron is a Senior Scientist at Education Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts. As a developmental psychologist, educator and researcher Ron has investigated and taught courses on violence prevention and media effects on young children at both Harvard University. He is co-developer of the Eyes on Bullying program and co-author of the Middle School curriculum that first introduced us to the important role of bystanders and preventing and stopping bullying entitled, "Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders."

Welcome Ron.

Ron Slaby: Thank you Kim.

Kim Netter: This first question is, really, when we think about cyberbullying is this truly a new problem or is it an old problem in a new era?

Ron Slaby: Well, I'd have to say that cyberbullying is an old problem and it's the old problem of bullying as we all know but it's done in new ways; for example, using communication technologies. And so cyberbullying is really - can be defined as using communication technologies to hurt others in ways that qualify as bullying.

For example, the traditional forms of bullying involve deliberate, repeated and power imbalanced hurtful behavior. And if you - it's typically done face-to-face or sometimes behind your back. But if you consider cyberbullying using technologies to bully, it suddenly extends the range and the scope and the types of bullying that you can do.

For example, the technologies of the Internet, cell phones, other communication videos, other communication devices have really created wonderful benefits and kind of new ways to help people and to communicate with people but they've also brought with them new ways that you can also hurt people.

For example, the technologies permit others - permit you to hurt other with words and images and with doing it instantly, doing it at a distance, doing it in front of a broad audience and sometimes doing it under the protection of anonymity. So the new technologies offer you kind of new ways to do old things.

Kim Netter: So what you're saying in some respects is that it's an escalation of what has been around from time in memorial because there are different avenues that kids can use to bully each other?

Ron Slaby: Yes and quickly escalate and it can quickly also be combined with traditional forms of bullying. So that since it's a - I think it's interesting that probably none of our adult audience has really experienced cyberbullying as children - as young children. Maybe you have as adults but not as children. And so it's because these new technologies were not available at that time. So it means that we adults need to learn a great deal more about the kinds of things that can happen with these technologies in order to be in a position to prevent the cyberbullying that might occur.

Kim Netter: Because one would say that you can't disallow your child any access to what - to the technologies that are out there; that's just not feasible or it's not possible.

Ron Slaby: Well, technology is a part of our lives these days. There are ways that you can restrict or curtail and there are certain principles that you'll need to use when using the technology properly. And I think that's where adults and children need to communicate together and learn together what constitutes the limits of respectful, you know, behavior using those technologies.

Kim Netter: Okay. So, what are some of the ways that children and youth actually experience cyberbullying? What is, you know, what does it look like for a child?

Ron Slaby: Well, for example, cyberbullying is similar in some ways to traditional bullying. As I said, it involves deliberate, repeated and power imbalanced hurtful behavior. For example, in its narrow form, therefore, cyberbullying is a lot like regular bullying. Someone more powerful than you repeatedly, deliberately calls you names or threatens you or spreads rumors about you. But in cyberbullying this time the bully can do it through email messages or

through instant messaging or through text messages or through video that have been posted and it becomes quickly a phenomenon with a new dimension.

For example, what if these messages are posted in front of the whole school to see and for that matter to join in by adding their own hurtful comments? Or what if these messages are combined with embarrassing and humiliating photo images? Or what if these hurtful names and images are posted without your knowing who did it or how to remove it? Or what if these messages remain posted day after day, night after night with no relief? These are new dimensions to the old phenomenon of bullying.

And then finally, what if these forms of cyberbullying are combined with traditional forms of bullying? What we see now is some evidence that there is a spillover from one to the other. Often those youngsters who are traditionally bullied in school may be more likely to retaliate by way of cyberbullying and cyberbullying others or vice versa. You might see that the - that those kids who are bullying in schools might come home and turn on their computer to find that they're being cyber bullied in retaliation for their traditional bullying.

So the roles of aggressor and victim and even bystander are redefined in the realm of cyberbullying.

Kim Netter:

So, as adults, it's very distressing to think that, you know, that the child in your care is being subjected to this. So, if what you're saying is this is, you know, traditional bullying taken one step further, what do we as adults or parents really need to understand about this type of bullying or bullying in general? What kinds of things should we keep in the back of mind when we're starting to think about how do we deal with the problem of cyberbullying?

Ron Slaby: Well, the first thing is it is a new - there are new dimensions and I think we need to learn about these new dimensions of cyberbullying in order to know how best to respond to them. Adults need to learn the technologies and the ways that those technologies can lead to bullying.

But, for example, one form of cyberbullying is impersonation. You can't very well impersonate somebody else when you're doing it directly but you can very easily impersonate someone else when you're doing it online.

Kim Netter: We heard a recent story about this, didn't we? It made the national airwave.

Ron Slaby: Exactly. There are several stories about this where one child pretends to be somebody else and is setting up the victim, the child who's being victimized to misread the situation and to blame someone who is not even involved.

And another form of cyberbullying to learn about is, you know, social exclusion. Social exclusion, of course, happens in regular traditional forms of bullying as well but it can happen in cyberbullying so that your name could be posted as somebody not to invite to parties or somebody not to be involved in the next event. And so suddenly lots of people hear about it and you're socially excluded and it's broadcasted to a large audience.

But while we think of these forms of cyberbullying and learn about them, I think it's very important to keep in mind the fundamental principles of bullying and to come back to those because, after all, this is a form of bullying.

And, for example, we know that bullying is not prewired, harmless or inevitable. In fact, bullying is learned, it's harmful and it's controllable. So, while we're considering bullying and cyberbullying, we need to consider that it spreads if it's left unchecked and that it can grow. So, and it involves

everyone that bullies victims and bystanders are involved in cyberbullying and that bullying can be effectively stopped or prevented.

And so we can apply these fundamental principles of bullying to the broader and newer concepts of cyberbullying.

Kim Netter: Thank you Ron. I'd like to bring on Scott Hirschfeld if I could right now. And I'd like Scott to take us a little bit further into how cyberbullying hurts kids. And I'd like, you know, to go into a deeper discussion.

First I'd like to introduce Scott and Scott is the Director of Curriculum for the Anti-Defamation League. He is - he has developed diversity, anti-bias in bullying prevention training and curricula resources. Previously, Scott served as a classroom teacher and staff developer for the New York City Public School as well as Director of Education for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network.

Some of the resources that he has developed include training program on cyberbullying for educators and administrators entitled, "Trickery, Trolling and Threats: Understand and Addressing Cyberbullying." He has also developed lessons plans for K-12 educators and an educational campaign to address bullying in school communities.

So, I'd like very much to welcome Scott Hirschfeld. Scott welcome.

Scott Hirschfeld: Thank you very much.

Kim Netter: And Ron gave us a really nice introduction of just talking about how cyberbullying has transitioned from what we may call traditional bullying. So I'm wondering, Scott, if you can take us a little deeper and talk to us about in

what ways cyberbullying is harmful? We don't always see it. It doesn't necessarily result in a black eye or a broken bone. So, if it's not physical and if it's not done in person, how exactly are kids experiencing the harm?

Scott Hirschfeld: Well, it's true that type of bullying doesn't usually result in physical harm but the emotional harm that it brings about can be equally or even more distressing than traditional school yard forms of bullying for a few reasons.

First, the perpetrators of online bullying can remain completely anonymous and invisible. For this, you can't see me effects and the assumption that they won't be caught or punished often emboldens the perpetrators and it increases the cruelty and the severity of the harassment. Also when the perpetrators are anonymous, the targets, you know, don't know - they can walk around feeling like any kid at school or anybody up the street is there - is the perpetrator - is the one who's against them and not knowing who it is. And anonymity can be really emotionally distressing.

In addition to this you can't see me effect, there's also an I can't see you effect because the targets of the bullying are invisible and the perpetrators don't physically see the impact of their actions on the person who they're bullying. They may not feel much empathy or have that guilty conscious that most of us have when we do something hurtful to someone else and that helps to regulate how we treat other people.

So the perpetrators often perceive the online meanness as harmless or a game, something that doesn't really hurt anyone and that can just escalate the harm that's done.

In addition to these factors, we also have to keep in mind with cyberbullying that the victimization is 24/7 and for some kids, there is no escape. So while the targets of traditional schoolyard bullying get a reprieve when they go

home at the end of the day, online harassment can be ongoing, it can occur at school as well as in the privacy of your own home and your own bedroom and it can also spread far and wide to schoolmates, peers and countless other people in an instance. So it adds a level of public humiliation to the pain that just goes with being bullied to begin with.

I wanted to share one quote from a young student that I thought really captures the despair that some young people feel who are relentlessly bullied. And this student wrote, "My friends don't want me around and I've invaded their privacy by (dbow) and found out that they hate me but feel sorry for me and bitch about me. Everything I say to them goes around my school.

They've taken over my (dbow) account more than once and sent messages around saying that I had a sex change when I went on holidays. They are the only people in my class that I hang around with and I don't want to lose them but I've become depressed and suicidal and I'm afraid that if I'm pushed over the edge then it will be too late."

Kim Netter: So Scott, I mean, as a parent, as an adult, as a caregiver, you know, how do you protect your child? Do you just simply turn the computer off, turn the TV off, turn off the phone and take the cell phones away from the kids? I mean, what do you do?

Scott Hirschfeld: Well, definitely, that's an over simplistic response and that response I think a lot of adults have an initial reaction that they just want to turn it off and take it away and really protect their children from all of these awful things that are out there.

And I think that that kind of response really underscores some of the generational differences in the relationships that we have through technology.

So it's difficult for many adults who didn't grow up with the Internet to appreciate the really central role that technology plays in the social and the expressive lives of young people.

For young folks, their on and offline lives are totally intertwined. So they're not like two separate things. So the activities and conversations that happen at school are continued at home through text messaging and instant messaging, email chat rooms, MySpace, space book, etc. And then what takes place online at night extends into the next school day and it's just all interconnected.

So for teens, asking them to turn off their computer or take away their cell phones, even if they're experiencing bullying, it feels like a punishment to them because they're being totally cut off from their social world.

Kim Netter: Okay.

Scott Hirschfeld: And, in any case, turning off the computer doesn't really bring much relief because they know that the cruel Web sites are being viewed and the taunting messages are circulating even when they're not looking they know that 100s or even 1000s of other kids are online looking at those so they're still in anguish even when they're not online.

The really - the Internet and all of the other technologies we're talking about with all of their risks and all of their benefits are just an integral part of modern life. Students need regular access to them. We can't realistically turn them off.

Kim Netter: So what are some practical strategies that adults and children can use to help prevent cyberbullying? We can't turn off the computers as you say, so what can we do?

Scott Hirschfeld: Right. Well there are lots of things that folks can do. To sort of frame it, I wanted to say that one of the problems that I see right now is that many young people see negative online behavior like cyberbullying, pornography and sexual predators as kind of the normal of inevitable part of life on the Internet. They've been conditioned to just accept these things as no big deal. That's just what you experience when you go online.

So, in a very - as a general approach, I think it's important for adults to help you begin to view their online world as part of the neighborhoods in which they live and work and to feel some sense of physical responsibility to keep it safe and positive. That's just sort of a general approach.

More specifically, I'll talk about a number of things that people can do. First of all it's critical at home and in school for children to be engaged in discussions and activities that promote empathy and values such as respect and kindness. Children should be taught anti-bullying strategies and learn the explicit guidelines for how to communicate and solve problems and conflicts constructively and positively.

Students need to learn about what the ethical standards are for Internet use; for instance, it's not okay to reveal private information about other people. Your free speech right - it's like to say, you know, it's free speech; I have a right to free speech. But those don't entitle you to damage the reputation of other people or to compromise the security of other people. So those kinds of ethical standards need to be taught to kids; they're not automatically understood.

Then there are really practical guidelines for Internet use that we can teach kids like never publicly posting or sending your personal information, keeping passwords and pins private, not IMing with strangers and on and on like that.

They need rules about when, where and how they're allowed to use the Internet and other electronic devices.

Kim Netter: So we can find a number of those resources I'm assuming on the Eyes on Bullying Web site, the www.eyesonbullying.org Web site?

Scott Hirschfeld: Absolutely, the Eyes on Bullying Web site and also on the Anti-Defamation League Web site at adl.org. I mention just a few strategies; certainly, I could go on for an hour because there are lots of very practical and specific things that adults can do to help prevent this problem.

Kim Netter: Well one other question I have for you before we start taking a couple of questions is in traditional bullying, so to speak, bystanders play a pretty important role in stopping the escalation and even stopping the instigation of bullying. So I guess the question is, is there such a thing as a bystander in cyberbullying and, if so, what role can they play?

Scott Hirschfeld: Well there's definitely a bystander in cyberbullying and they play a critical role online as well as offline. So the research shows that only about a quarter of kids are directly involved in online harassment, either as perpetrators or the targets of the aggression. But as many as 80% of students say that they observe online bullying or know that it's occurring.

So the vast majority of students are aware of the problem but are not getting involved often because they assume that they'll be targeted or ostracized if they speak up. So we definitely cannot stop the problem of cyberbullying without teaching bystanders how they can safely stand up against it.

One way to do it is to challenge some of the social norms that persist which - by which I mean the - like unspoken code that many teens feel that they have

to adhere to, such as, what happens online stays online. You know, like what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.

Kim Netter: And whatever you do, don't tell an adult.

Scott Hirschfeld: Yes. Many young people want to report cyberbullying that they witness. They're uncomfortable with but they assume they are the only ones who want to speak up and that if they do, their peers will be angry with them. If they knew that a lot of their friends and classmates felt the same way, they might feel empowered to do something.

So peer education programs where students are taught to lead discussions and trainings with their schoolmates on this issue to create public awareness campaigns in their schools, those are great ways to change student attitudes and to empower bystanders to take action when bullying occurs. If bullying can't flourish in an environment where the perpetrators know that they can't count on the silent anonymous simplicity of their peers and where the targets of cyberbullying know that they are going to receive support from their school mates. So, it's very critical - the role of bystanders.

Kim Netter: Thank you very much Scott. I'd like to take a couple questions now if I could. We have Tammy - I'm probably going to pronounce your name wrong Tammy, but Tammy Cabezola from Rutland, Vermont. Operator, could you bring Tammy on for her question.

Operator: Tammy, your line is open.

Tammy Cabezola: Hi there. You did a great job pronouncing my name too.

Kim Netter: Oh great, thank you. Tammy, what's your question.

Tammy Cabezola: Well, I didn't really necessarily have a direct question. I was just interested in this whole entire topic and, you know, the effects of Internet bullying on children in general, which any kind of bullying I realize isn't good but I didn't really have anything specific.

Kim Netter: Okay. Well great. Thank you for chiming in and just telling us again how important this particular topic is.

And Operator, could you bring on Carmen Castros-Rohes from San Francisco.

Carmen Castros-Rohes: That's me.

Kim Netter: All right, Carmen, you have a question.

Carmen Castros-Rohes: Well, I wanted to first of all thanks so much Anti-Defamation League for the program and the speakers and certainly you as facilitator.

Yes, I guess I too wanted to find out gender specific - is there something that is more - is affecting more the girls or the boys? And are there "strategies" helping the young men or women to handle this? Young women often are targets of malicious gossip regarding their sexuality, perhaps more than boys; I'm making an assumption here. So I just wanted to hear a little bit about that.

Kim Netter: You know, I'm really glad you asked that question Carmen because that segways right into our next speaker.

So, I'd really like to introduce right now Debra Pepler who is going to be talking about gender role related types of bullying. So that was - I don't know

if we orchestrated that well enough but thank you very much. You did a really nice segway for us.

So, I would like to introduce Dr. Deb Pepler. She's a distinguished Research Professor of Psychology at York University in Toronto. Dr. Pepler is a co-lead - is co-leading a national network called PREVNet, Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network. To prevent bullying throughout Canada, she's working with 42 national non-governmental organizations and 45 Canadian research partners to prevent safe - excuse me - to promote safe and healthy relationships for all children and youth. And you can find more information about that program at <http://prevnet.ca>.

And before I bring Deb on, I just wanted to remind everyone if you do have a question, if you'd like to participate in the conversation, please press star 1 on your touchpad and we'd welcome you to the conversation.

So Deb, could you start talking to us about the gender roles and how boys and girls may differ in the type and amount of cyberbullying they face and whether they experience it in different ways.

Debra Pepler: I'd be glad to and thanks for the opportunity. Cyberbullying as we've heard is a form - generally, a form of indirect aggression. It's done not face-to-face but over many aspects of the Internet. And so this form of social bullying we would call it - or indirect bullying is a type of bullying that girls often use to a somewhat greater extent than boys.

And it's an effective form of bullying in excluding someone or disparaging someone or showing a social group that somebody's not suitable to a member. And the difficulty of it as we've already heard from Ron and Scott is that it's

difficult for the person being victimized to understand who's seeing it, who's doing it and it creates a situation in which their social status is very unstable.

This might have a more devastating impact on girls than boys although I hesitate to say that because boys and girls are equally affected by all forms of victimization; it's detrimental to both boys and girls. But girls' social goals largely revolve around having close friendships, being a member of a group whereas boys' social goals often revolve around status and dominance. So when a girl's social relationships are damaged it's detrimental to her in ways that we can't imagine.

The other thing that I think we ought to be aware of as parents and other adults involved in the lives of young children is that as young people move through late childhood, early adolescence and into adolescence, they are developing sexually, their sexual orientation, their sexual identity are being organized and established and this is an area of vulnerability.

And when we're thinking about bullying and understand that it's dynamic of power, you quickly come to understand that targeting a person's vulnerability and, in this case, their sexuality or the sexual orientation or their sexual development is a very effective way of destabilizing them.

So girls are often the victims of cyberbullying that relates to sexual comments, graphic sexual depictions; their face can be put on the body of someone else and truly devastating sexual harassment over the Internet. It comes more from boys than from girls. From other girls but girls are certainly capable of this as well.

The other groups that we should be concerned about with respect to sexual harassment are young men and women who are - tend to be or are questioning

or moving to homosexuality. And homophobia is a very strong element in aspects of cyberbullying.

And in our research when we look at homophobia and sexual harassment of sexual minority youth, we find that it has really devastating consequences to them. So...

Kim Netter: So, Deb, what you're saying is that it's not just girls bullying girls but it's boys bullying girls as well?

Debra Pepler: Yes and boys bullying boys and girls bullying boys. It's something that crosses over those gender lines. Then especially in adolescents as they've moved from generally same sex activities in early and middle elementary school to more mixed sex groups. So, it's very mixed in that respect.

Kim Netter: So, I guess, well, it's a two-part question and it's - if you could address the first part and maybe Scott or Ron you could kind of chime in as well. But I guess the question is, as a parent or as a caregiver, you know, how are you going to intervene? Is it going to be different for girls and boys with respect to cyberbullying?

And then, of course, the question that I have for Scott and Ron is just, in general, how would you go about intervening?

But Deb, I'm kind of curious whether you see that there's a difference between how you address it with boys and girls. Does that make sense, the question?

Debra Pepler: Yes it does. It's a complicated question and I guess I might answer it with the notion that both boys and girls need support of parents who are close to them

with whom they feel they can communicate because for all forms of bullying and for healthy development, in general, that's what they need.

I think for parents of girls I would be working hard on helping a girl understand what feels comfortable for her and what doesn't and to be sure that she has the scripts and the language to be assertive when something doesn't feel comfortable.

I think with boys, it's very important to help them understand what sexual harassment is, how, you know, the whole issue of respect as they move into relationships that are cross gendered, not to do things that are disrespectful.

For both boys and girls, I think it's important to educate them as Ron and Scott have both said in terms of just generally what's acceptable, what's not acceptable, giving them a moral compass in this virtual world where they don't have any maps.

So, helping them make that leap to understanding that what they put on the Internet and what they say on the Internet is very similar to what they would say or do in person. It has the same impact; it needs to be as respectful. And so it's really a question of keeping the lines of communication open so that your child can speak to you if this is going on. You know, helping your child develop strength and, particularly, develop a moral compass. Advocate for them, connect with them. That type of thing.

Kim Netter: Great. Thank you, Deb. It is important I think because of the way boys and girls perhaps experience the cyberbullying in different ways. And I guess I'm curious, in general, you know, perhaps Scott, you want to take this first. You know, what, you know, when you do find that your child is being cyber

bullied, what kinds of ways can you intervene - intervene, excuse me - to stop the process of bullying?

Scott Hirschfeld: Well first of all I echo Deb's sentiments. I think that those are all really important things to bear in mind. Just a few very practical and more procedural kinds of things that students - that kids and parents should be aware of.

One is that kids should know to never respond to hostile messages. Sometimes kids think that they could either get the harasser to reveal their identity or they could convince them to stop or that kind of a thing. And they should really just never respond to the hostile messages but they should save them as evidence in case things escalate and a record of the harassment is needed later.

And they should immediately report any incidents to a parent or guardian or another trusted adult, like a teacher or a counselor. Sometimes students don't report incidents because they're embarrassed, they feel they'll be blamed for it in some way, they're afraid that their Internet privileges will be taken away. There's a host of reasons why they don't report it.

So it really is important for adults to let them know before problems happen that they're not going to get in trouble and that it's critical that they tell someone and that they get some help if the incident involves a threat of violence, stalking, hate activity or something that could be considered a crime, then it has to be reported to law enforcement as well.

Also, it's a good idea to report to the email service or the Internet Service Provider, the Web site or the telephone company or whichever or whoever's involved in this particular incident so that they can help to track and identify

the offenders, terminate their service, if appropriate, and also work with law enforcement.

So, those are some procedural things. And also I wanted to mention adults working with kids to block offending email addresses and cell phone numbers or , if necessary, change phone numbers, screen names and email addresses. All those are very practical ways that people can get, you know, involved and take action right away.

But the most important thing that I want to impress upon folks is that once they've directly addressed the incident and make sure that it stops, that the target needs to know that the bullying wasn't his or her fault and no one blames them or holds them responsible. And make sure that they have the ongoing social and emotional support that they need so that they don't continue to feel isolated or targeted and so that they can feel safe and confident both on and offline. So that's really paramount.

Kim Netter: Great. Thank you so much Scott and Deb. And operator, we have a question from Jenny McCormack from New York. And I was wondering Jenny if you'd like to go ahead and let us know what your question is?

Jenny McCormack: Well my - I have a comment about cyberbullying is not just for children these days and I would like to see if something that is addressed toward the workspace to help the children who are in transition to like from high school to a workplace?

Kim Netter: Good question. Ron or Scott? Scott, would you like to take this - that question?

Scott Hirschfeld: Can - would you just clarify it. I wasn't - I didn't hear it...

Kim Netter: Sure.

Scott Hirschfeld: ...hear it completely.

Jenny McCormack: I concerned that cyberbullying is not just for children. And I was wondering if there's anything in place to help the children who are in transition from like high school to start from the workplace. When they start working?

Kim Netter: So the question is, how do you prepare a child who is graduating from high school, going into the workplace and may not be - and may not understand what might be happening in the workplace with respect to cyberbullying? Is that somewhat of your question Jenny?

Jenny McCormack: Yes.

Kim Netter: Okay.

Scott Hirschfeld: Yes, I would say in an ideal world, there would be, you know, education for students, you know, starting at a young age all the way up in the home and in the schools so that by the time students went to college and then to the workplace, they understood the basics of, you know, positive Internet communication and they understood how to respond when they're targeted by that kind of an incident.

I think the research really shows that cyberbullying doesn't seem to be an issue beyond the teenage years. It think it's probably falling off by the time students get to be college age and certainly adult age.

So, I certainly am not - haven't - I don't know of many programs that are in place to help people of that age group and I'm not sure that it's a major problem for that demographic.

Jenny McCormack: Okay.

Kim Netter: Thank you very much Jenny. It's a good question with respect to, you know, how do you prepare a child for any sort of transition.

We have a couple of other callers. Kim Neemeyer, would you like to go ahead? If I pronounced your name correctly.

Kim Neemeyer: Yes.

Kim Netter: Okay. Please go ahead.

Kim Neemeyer: You said to start the education at a young age. How early do you feel is appropriate to teach about cyberbullying in terms of a public school aspect?

Kim Netter: Okay. Scott, you want to take that one too? Or Deb?

Scott Hirschfeld: Sure. Yes, I can address it. I don't think that there's too young an age. I think these days these students are - the Internet and other technologies are becoming part of kids' lives from a very early age. I know my nieces and nephews are playing computer games and doing things on the Internet from the time they're in kindergarten, certainly in first grade.

And there are now sites that are out there for young kids like Club Penguin and Webkinz that are introducing them to social networking and virtual shopping and all of those strategies that they're going to be really faced with when they become teenagers.

So, I think because they're being exposed to all this at very young ages, we need to start the conversation really early about how to stay safe online, what's appropriate, what's not, what to do if you get an upsetting message. I don't think there's - I think from kindergarten, from the early grades, those conversations should stop in age appropriate ways.

Kim Netter: So what you're saying Scott is it's just like teaching a child those simple rules of not talking to strangers and making sure you know your address so you can get home; at the same time you're telling them also to be careful about the interaction that they have on the Internet?

Scott Hirschfeld: And at young ages, I wouldn't - I certainly wouldn't scare kids by sharing with them, you know, all of the negative things that could happen to them on the Internet but it's a time to teach them, you know, about how the Internet can be used as a tool to make other people feel good so they can learn about how they can reach out to their grandparents with a special note or use the Internet to help send support to a friend who is sick or in the hospital or, you know, any number of ways to really underscore the kind and positive ways that we can use the Internet and that that's what these technologies are really there for.

And as kids get older and experience more, then there's time to get into talking more directly about harassment and bullying and what to do when you are in those situations.

Kim Netter: Right. So what you're doing is just setting the stage for positive social norms in the beginning. You know, what's appropriate behavior in the very beginning and you can build on that foundation.

Tammy Cabezola, welcome back. Do you have a question for any of our presenters?

Tammy Cabezola: I was just wondering what laws have been passed around cyberbullying and what the legal ramifications of it are? Does it vary from state to state or how does that look at the moment?

Kim Netter: Scott, once again, would you like to take that question? That's a good question Tammy.

Scott Hirschfeld: If folks aren't getting sick of hearing my voice. Yes, it's a very good question. Well, with all of the negative publicity that cyberbullying has had in the media lately, a lot of the states have really moved to pass legislations that addresses cyberbullying in online forms of harassment.

So, about ten states that I'm aware of right now have legislation or have legislation pending that would, you know, basically, get schools to mandate that schools include policies about electronic bullying and harassment in their policies.

So there is a lot going on at the legislative level - at the state level, there is no national policy or law on cyberbullying. And then, of course, at the district in school level, schools are - more and more schools are updating their Internet and cell phone use policies and their anti-discrimination and harassment policies and just their general disciplinary policies to reflect this new reality.

We don't have too much time to get into it in the context of this call but there are a lot of legal challenges that come up around regulating cyberbullying. They mostly have to do with some privacy rights and free speech rights.

And the biggest problem that legislators and school administrators are facing is that for the - most of the time, with the exception of texting and cell phones kinds of communication - for the most part, cyberbullying is being initiated off campus, in people's homes, not using school equipment. But then the cyberbullying, of course, sort of bleeds onto the school campus because students come to school feeling intimidated and the climate of safety is compromised on the campus.

And so there's a lot of legal grey area about when schools can intervene and do something, discipline students when the cyberbullying is - has originated off campus. And there are times when schools can step in and do something but other times where courts have said that the schools have overstepped the free speech rights of students and have slapped schools with lots of fines.

So, it's a very difficult terrain for administrators to initiate right now.

Kim Netter: So, and moving from administrators to parents, if parents want to get smart about this, is there a place that they can go to, to get more information and become smarter about how they can protect their kids, via, you know, via the legislative or the - Ron, you want to chime in there.

Ron Slaby: Yes. I think it's a good resource is a Web site called Bully Police. If you go to www.bullypolice.org I believe it is or perhaps .com, you'll see state by state laws about bullying. And as I recall looking at it the last time, there are 36 states that have laws now, specifically pertaining to bullying in general. And several of those as Scott was saying are now adding in or have components of it that apply to cyberbullying.

So (Terry), you know, as a parent, I think it's good to be well informed about what the laws are in your state and they may be different from other states. Or

you may even be interested in working with your legislators to create laws that extend from regular bullying or traditional bullying to cyberbullying or to create legislation around bullying - around cyberbullying at all.

So, bullypolice.com or [.org](http://bullypolice.org) is the place to go.

Kim Netter: Thank you Ron.

Tammy Cabezola: Thank you.

Kim Netter: I'd like to switch tracks right now and introduce Dr. Kim Storey. Kim's going to talk us through the Eyes on Bullying program and how it's been developed with respect to preventing and intervening with cyberbullying. So first I'd like to introduce Kim. She's an educator, designer and producer who specialize in creating innovative educational media for children parents and educators. She served as the director of educational research at WGBH Educational Foundation in Boston and there she developed and produced a variety of nationally broadcasted television programs and research materials for children and families.

Kim, along with Ron Slaby, is the co-developer of the Eyes on Bullying program. So Kim, welcome to the program and just wanted to if you would give us a bit on the Eyes on Bullying program and how we as caregivers and parents can use this toolkit to help us stop and prevent various types of bullying in elementary, middle school years and especially as it relates to cyberbullying.

Kim Storey: Thanks Kim. The Eyes on Bullying program consists not only of these teleseminars but also of the Web site and the toolkit, which you can find on the Web site.

The toolkit was designed around the concept that to prevent bullying, we must see it differently. Bullying can be difficult to see if we don't know what to look for. It can be difficult to stop if we don't think we can, if we don't know how, or if we're not prepared.

The toolkit provides activities to help prepare adults and children with successful strategies and skills to prevent and stop bullying, including cyberbullying. In the toolkit, you'll find a page specifically devoted to cyberbullying that summarizes some of the points we've discussed today. Also, on the page you'll find a variety of resources that can help you further understand cyberbullying as well as the prevention and legal ramifications.

Kim Netter: So, how do we create a cyberbullying free environment? How does that happen?

Kim Storey: Well, one way is that you can start with some of the activities in the toolkit. For example, there's an activity called Story Swap in which children and adults are asked to share their own stories about initiating, experiencing or witnessing bullying. Talking about these experiences and how they make you feel let's children know that bullying affects everyone and they're not alone. Sharing stories about cyberbullying initiates important communication among adults and children and provides an opportunity to talk about the importance of reporting all bullying, including cyberbullying and discussing what can be done to stop and prevent it.

Kim Netter: So how do we know that the program's working? I'm sorry. Did I get ahead of myself there?

Kim Storey: If you have time, I just wanted to say a few more things about the cyberbullying free environment.

Kim Netter: Sure.

Kim Storey: Because I feel it's really important and we've done in our toolkit I'm thinking about how to create bullying free environments. In a bullying free environment, everyone understands that bullying is unacceptable, harmful and preventable and also children feel safe and included.

To create this environment, parents and caregivers need to work with children to develop rules, responsibilities and a code of conduct with clearly stated consequences for behaviors.

To create a cyberbullying free environment, we need to help children translate these responsibilities and rules of conduct to the cyberspace environment and community. To do this will involve a lot of education, preparation, supervision, communication and teamwork.

Today we've discussed a lot about the education that adults need to understand these new technologies both the benefits and the risks so that we can help our children conduct themselves more appropriately online and respond to online behaviors that may be hurtful.

We also need to be aware to prepare ourselves. One way to do that is looking for warning signs. The same kinds of warning signs children may exhibit in traditional bullying may also be there for cyberbullying. For example, changes in mood, loss of friends or not wanting to an after school program. If you see these behaviors linked to a child, receiving a text message for example or having just been on line, you might be suspicious that cyberbullying could be happening.

Supervision is key to cyberbullying because one thing to be aware of is that although many adults, many parents and caregivers think they know what their kids are doing on line, when you ask the children, many children say, “My parents, my teachers, my childcare provider doesn’t know what I’m doing online.”

So, it’s important to start communication with your child to discuss what’s happening online, to make sure that they know beforehand what the risks of going online might be and when they should be able to report what’s wrong and come to an adult for help.

So, establishing communication with your child over cyberbullying issues and Internet communications is very important.

Lastly, teamwork; everybody needs to be involved in ensuring that children understand bullying is unacceptable and should take responsibility for stopping it.

Unless we provide education and prepare children, parents and caregivers to watch for warning signs, to intervene effectively and unless we supervise children’s technology use, the amount, the content and the communication, we need to also communicate regularly with children about bullying and cyberbullying issues - unless this happens, bullying and cyberbullying will continue to increase and will have a devastating effects that we’ve heard about on children and youth.

Kim Netter: Kim, thank you so very much.

I do have another question for you. But before we go there, I just want to remind folks that if you do have any question for Ron Slaby or Scott -

Hirschfeld - sorry, Deb Pepler or Kim Storey, please press star 1 on your touchpad and we'll be happy to take your question.

Kim, how do we know - I'll ask my question again now - how do we know if we are creating a cyber bullying free environment? How do we know that it's working?

Kim Storey: I'd like to say that one way to know this would be that you would hear adults and children having more conversation about what's happening online. You'll see the computer perhaps placed, not in the privacy of a child's room or in a cubby hole in the classroom, but rather in the middle of a family room, in the kitchen, in the open space where adults are observing and being involved in what the children are doing.

You'll find that adults will be more involved in what kids are actually doing online and willing, if something goes wrong to come to an adult to talk and to ask for help. I also hope that you would see children becoming more effective bystanders, both with regular bullying as well as online bullying, realizing that they have a responsibility and a power to be able to stop bullying that is occurring.

Kim Netter: Kim, thank you so much.

We do have another question from another Kim. This is Kim Sambrano from Fresno, California. Kim, please go ahead.

Kim Sambrano: All right, I actually have two questions. The first one is how can you get the schools to get involved like as far as maybe having assemblies for the kids to teach the children? And the second one is how can a parent or, you know, anyone get involved to maybe be like a spokesperson to go and teach the kids?

Kim Netter: She has a really good question. Ron, do you want to take the first one?

Ron Slaby: Yes. How can you get schools involved? That is a - an important issue and I think it's coming slowly to the schools and they see that they have a responsibility certainly for the computers that they use in the schools but also to begin to teach youngsters about how - what's the proper and respectful use of the communication technologies are not only in the schools but also at home.

It's an area that is, you know really a new area and it's being worked out right now and to what - where the responsibilities lie. I think we've put our emphasis on parents and caregivers because they're the first line of education and the first line of protection against problems of cyberbullying but I think what we're going to be seeing more and more is that the schools are going to take this on, such as the types of curriculum that Scott has created, the kinds of books that are coming out now about cyberbullying; these will all be helpful as teaching devices that can be used not only in after school programs and youth programs but also in school themselves.

Kim Netter: Great. Thank you, Ron. And as for how you can be - start becoming a spokesperson to prevent cyberbullying - was that your other question Kim?

Kim Sambrano: Cyberbullying and bullying alone. I did your first seminar too. Just to be more, you know, active in that way maybe - I know there's been a lot of instances in the schools that my children go to where the schools just don't really - they don't do much as far as the cyberbullying and the bullying.

Kim Netter: So the question is how can you get more involved and be a bigger voice?

Kim Sambrano: Yes.

Kim Netter: And I think that's a great question and I'm afraid that we're running out of time so I'm wondering whether we can get back to you individually and perhaps Scott or Deb have some good ideas on how to get your voice heard in the community and in the schools. Would that be okay?

Kim Sambrano: That'd be fine.

Kim Netter: Thank you very much.

Kim Sambrano: Thank you.

Kim Netter: Could you just tell the Operator, you know, Operator could you get Kim's contact information. We don't need to broadcast that online though - over the line. Thank you, Operator.

Operator: Yes Madam.

Kim Netter: So this has been a teleseminar entitled "Eyes on Bullying...the Growing Problem of Cyberbullying."

And I'd very much like to thank our guests today, Dr. Ron Slaby, Scott Hirschfeld, Dr. Debra Pepler and Dr. Kim Storey. Really appreciate your insights; you gave just such tremendous information and really appreciate it.

This has been the second of three teleseminars prepared by the Eyes on Bullying program at Education Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts. And it was funded by the IBM Global Work Life Fund.

If you have friends and associates who missed this teleseminar on cyberbullying or the previous teleseminar on young children, they can listen to and download the audio track and transcripts on our Web site at www.eyesonbullying.org.

The recording of the first teleseminar is already available and the recording of today's event will be posted within the next week.

If you would like to receive a certificate confirming that you have registered for and listened to this teleseminar, simply write a note to us at our email address: eyesonbullying@edc.org.

Similarly, if you did have a question that we didn't get to, please use that same email address and we'll do our best to answer your question. So again that email address is: eyesonbullying@edc.org.

The third and final teleseminar in this series will focus on Stopping Bullying in Camp and Youth Programs. It is to be held Tuesday, June 3, from 2 pm to 3 pm Eastern time. And that particular teleseminar will help you prepare children and staff to become active agents of bullying prevention in day camps, overnight camps and youth programs.

You can sign up for this next teleseminar at www.eyesonbullying.org.

And I want to thank you all - thank you listeners so very much for participating in this particular teleseminar and I hope you have a wonderful afternoon. Thank you very much.

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