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Cyberbullying: The digital world of awareness and emerging concerns

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M.A. Candidate: Christian Jean-Baptiste

M.A. ITP Thesis Paper Title: "Cyberbullying: The Digital World of Awareness and Emerging Concerns"

M.A. ITP Thesis Production Title: "The Imagined Personal Effect of Cyberbullying"

M.A. ITP Thesis Production Format: 10 photographic digital illustrations and 1 mp4 video

A Master of Arts Thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Department of Media Arts of the School of the Arts & Communication,
Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus,
in partial fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts with a concentration in: Computer Graphics

Date of ITP Oral Defense: April 28, 2021

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MA Graduate Program Coordinator:
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M.A. ITP Thesis Paper Abstract:

The digital world of social media that we have all become familiar with by now, has taken over social networking sites (SNS) by storm—such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc. We use these online platforms today as a medium to communicate digitally to people all over the world—from friends, to family, loved ones, or even just to meet new people. While that may seem like a vast majority of what the Internet looks like today, there's still that whole other realm of darkness that haunts people who have been victimized, threatened, intimidated, humiliated, and harassed. The Internet is a world, you think, where actions have no consequences, where guilt is cloaked by anonymity, where there are no fingerprints. These types of behaviors are the main source of online harassment for perpetrators stalking their victims online.

M.A. ITP Thesis Production Abstract:

This series of 10 photographic illustrations titled *The Imagined Personal Effect of Cyberbullying*, depict the emotional trauma and victimization that these victims endure. *Illustration 1* is a cyberbullying illustration intended to inform the perpetrators of cyberbullying that it is a wrongful act to harass/bully someone online. The background animation of the clouds moving represents despair and injustice of what happened to the late Audrie Pott. *Illustration 2* is a cyberharassment composite illustration (mixture) of images containing a man wearing an anonymous mask while typing on a laptop to bully and harass the victim involved online. *Illustration 3* is a digital painting illustration of a depressed young woman looking conflicted and distraught as she stares down at her phone after seeing disturbing images/information of her posted online. *Illustration 4* is a composite portrait illustration of a troubled black girl with negative feelings, surrounded by another propaganda to raise awareness to end cyberbullying. *Illustration 5* is a text composite portrait illustration of a sad girl feeling unhappy. She is also a victim of online bullying as she's being stalked throughout her social network accounts. She is looking conflicted as she is warped within the background text which explains how she is feeling. *Illustration 6* is another composite portrait illustration of a young Asian woman wearing a white shirt while she is pointing a gun to her head contemplating suicide inside of a dark room. Selective focus is on the gun that she is wielding. *Illustration 7* is a composite close-up portrait illustration of a woman who's fallen victim to depression and abuse from online harassment and cyberstalking. *Illustration 8* is an image to pencil filtered portrait illustration of a scared young woman talking to a therapist in hopes of seeking some advice on dealing with her personal issues of self-isolation and abandonment. *Illustration 9* is an illustration of an anonymous woman hacking and cyberbullying someone through her laptop. Conclusively, *Illustration 10* is a vector illustration of a sad, emotional Asian-Muslim woman crying as she's looking down at her phone after seeing some disparaging, racist remarks about her being posted online. By using different stylized art and graphic techniques, these illustrations portray a much more deeper meaning and understanding for these victims and their horrifying experiences.

Cyberbullying: The Digital World of Awareness and Emerging Concerns

Christian Bradley Jean-Baptiste

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It is my hope that this research provides some respite for those who have been victimized by cyberbullying and its devastating aftermath. Since social media sites allow for adults and young children to connect with new people all around the world, such interaction can be detrimental and dangerous when exchanging too much personal information online with unwanted parties. As such, this mandate can be severely detrimental by a cyberbully if victims online feel unsafe, harassed, or embarrassed as such that seeking help isn't enough, which could then lead those to the choice of tragically committing suicide as their only option to combat the

cyberbully. As educators, students, parents, and community leaders, we must share the responsibility of promoting awareness, continue to educate the importance of why cyberbullying, and bullying is general, is wrong, and advocate safe and respectful social online communication. It's the least we can do to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

ABSTRACT

The digital world of social media that we've all become familiar with by now, has taken over social networking sites (SNS) by storm—such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc. We use these online platforms today as a medium to communicate digitally to people all over the world—from friends, to family, loved ones, or even just to meet new people. While that may seem like a vast majority of what the Internet looks like today, there's still that whole other realm of darkness that haunts people who have been victimized, threatened, intimidated, humiliated, and harassed. The Internet is a world, you think, where actions have no consequences, where guilt is cloaked by anonymity, where there are no fingerprints (Rosewarne, 89). These types of behaviors are the main source of online harassment for perpetrators stalking their victims online. With our personal data being more exposed online depending on our search history or even by what is posted online, these same technologies that are built for us to communicate with each other allows for other people to listen in on our private conversations. As a result, our privacy is being exploited by governments for mass surveillance and by corporations to make mass profits, or in other words, *surveillance capitalism*. Surveillance capitalism describes a market driven process where the commodity for sale is your personal data, and the capture and production of this data relies on mass surveillance of the internet. This activity is often carried out by companies that provide us with free online services, such as search engines like Google and social media platforms such as Facebook (Holloway, 2019). In essence, the more access and control these companies have on our personal information, the more control and power these online perpetrators have on our privacy. If we are in control of our own privacy, we are in control of ourselves and actions. When our privacy is compromised, we lose that control we have on ourselves. Our privacy is important to us, so we must do what we can to regulate our

control on it. According to StopBullying.gov, a federal government website managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, cyberbullying is defined as bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior (stopbullying.gov). Cyberbullying victimization has also been associated with low self-confidence and self-esteem in teens, with name-calling and rumor-spreading being the most common forms of harassment (Anderson, 2018). With that being said, 59% of U.S. teens have been bullied or harassed online, and a similar share says it's a major problem for people their age. At the same time, teens think mostly teachers, social media companies and politicians are failing at addressing this issue (Anderson, 2018).

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Introduction: Insight into Cyberbullying

Online socialization has greatly shaped our society and the way we are able to connect to people from all over the world. The Internet and the social media platforms that we use on a day-to-day basis has continued to evolve how we communicate with everyone around us and have added unique conveniences to our lifestyles. From sharing family vacation photos to friends on Facebook, posting the latest picture of the last meal that you've had on Instagram, or even uploading a hilarious dance video on TikTok for everyone to see—those moments may seem enjoyable to one, but to another who can easily view or have access to them may use it for malicious intent to cause harm onto another person both physically and mentally.

In this day and age, while texting and digital messaging are a central way for teens and young adults to build and maintain relationships, this level of network may lead to possibly alarming and nonconsensual exchanges. Pew Research Center shared that one-quarter of teens say they have been sent explicit images they didn't ask for, while 7% say someone has shared explicit images of them without their consent. These experiences are particularly concerning to parents. 57% of parents of teens say they worry about their teen/s receiving or sending explicit images, including about one-quarter who say this worries them a lot, according to a separate Center survey of parents (Anderson, 2018). The fact that anyone can control what you post online—albeit in a state of anonymity, is extremely concerning and alarming, knowing that you can be harassed and exposed at any given time, without having any control over it. Furthermore, they explained that the vast majority of teens (90% in this case) believe online harassment is a problem that affects people their age, and 63% say this is a major problem (Anderson, 2018). But larger parts of youthful individuals think key groups, such as instructors, social media companies and lawmakers are coming up short at handling this issue.

Media Depictions of Bullying and Cyberbullying

As documented in the film *Audrie & Daisy* (2016), 15-year-old Audrie Pott committed suicide by hanging herself on September 12, 2012. The week prior, she had been sexually assaulted at a party while—unconscious—photographed and cyberbullied by boys she thought were her friends. When she discovered that pictures of the assault had been posted online and shared among her classmates, she felt as though her reputation had been ruined. She could not see past the tragedy of the situation, and thus, ended her life. The film confirms the wide-ranging prevalence of such crimes as survivors—Daisy Coleman, Paige Parkhurst, and Delaney Henderson—seek to reconcile their experiences with that of Audrie's.

Sadly, internet anonymity and cyberbullying add fuel to an already raging fire of sexual assault and bullying (Jon Shenk & Bonnie Cohen, 2016). This documentary is intended to spread awareness of teenage sexual assaults and how technology can amplify their ramifications. However, one could argue that the cases involving these victims were unnerving and relied heavily on victim-blaming.

After listening to the stories of Audrie Pott, Daisy Coleman, Paige Parkhurst, and Delaney Henderson, it is very disheartening to learn about the kind of victimization they've endured, and what they had to go through in seeking help. One of the most upsetting factors referenced in the film is how young men solicited teenage girls to send naked photos of themselves. Pott's closest companion, Amanda Le, said that the middle school boys were "persistent" about getting them, and a couple of girls to do "full-nude" photographs. There were also screenshots of some of the online harassment these girls had to face. This begs the question: What's wrong with people in today's world that they would send a 15-year-old girl such disgusting messages?

Audrie & Daisy explores the manner in which victims of sexual harassment (mostly female) are disciplined by both the criminal justice system and society. They're often blamed for inciting *their own* sexual assault, presented as psychologically defective, and sometimes called liars. The film depicts an environment in which sexual harassment is common, and all too often its perpetrators avoid any legal or other disciplinary consequences (Harvey, 2016). In this scenario, the setting is just your seemingly ordinary American high school, as adolescents actually constitute the most at-risk age demographic for such crimes.

In the film *Audrie & Daisy*, the sheriff of Maryville, Missouri also acknowledges that there is "pressure in our society on young girls to be beautiful, to be liked, to be popular... It's not fair, but it's how our society works." These terms, coming from a sheriff, demonstrated how unprepared and even unable certain communities are to deal with such cases and their offenders. In addition, such is the case when sexual harassment is prevalent and perpetrators avoid any legal consequences, the families of these victims continue to deal with the burden of losing their child and not getting the proper justice that they deserve in return. As a result, they face unwanted scrutiny and negative attention from the media, face depression, or even suicide. In comparison, Daisy Coleman tragically committed suicide in August earlier this year, just eight years after she was raped at a party in Maryville, Missouri at age 14. Even her attacker, Matthew Barnett – the grandson of a former member of the Missouri House of Representatives – was never convicted (Eustachewich, 2020). Since then, seven years after supporters famously rallied outside the Nodaway County Courthouse in support of Daisy Coleman, a group of demonstrators gathered steps away from the courthouse doors again Oct. 30, protesting the election campaign of sheriff candidate Darren White (Wegley et. al, 2020). The protest was sparked by comments made by White in an interview – a response about what went through his mind when he heard news of

Coleman's suicide. He suggested Coleman may have killed herself, in part, to keep him from winning the upcoming election against Randy Strong, who ousted White in 2016 (Riddell, 2020).

To make matters worse, even more discouraging is the fact that on Sunday, December 6th, 2020, Daisy's mother, Melinda, after feeling vulnerable and defeated for not getting justice for her daughter, decided that enough was enough and took her own life in the process. In the *New York Post* article, Eustachewich (2020) reported that the case deeply divided the small city – with some people harassing Daisy and her family and sending them fleeing to Albany. The group's co-founder of SafeBAE (an organization dedicated to ending the sexual assault of middle school and high school students), Shael Norris told the *Sun* that the Coleman family “faced a lot of animosity” from the town even in the years after the attack. “If you don't have your community lifting you up and supporting you and helping you through hard times, that compounds everything,” she said. It just goes to show you that even the families of these victims have to suffer through a hard time of losing a child or loved one to the injustices of sexual harassment.

In comparison, the filmic drama *Cyberbully* (2011) follows Taylor Hillridge (Emily Osment), a teenage girl who falls victim to cyberbullying. Taylor is a pretty, but consciously awkward, 17-year-old high school student. When her mom gives her a computer for her birthday, Taylor is excited by the prospect of freedom and the independence of going online without her mother always looking over her shoulder. However, Taylor soon finds herself the victim of betrayal and bullying while visiting a social website, and afraid to face her peers at school, including her best friend (Kay Panabaker), she is pushed to a breaking point. Taylor's mom, Kris (Kelly Rowan), reels from the incident and takes on the school system and state legislation to help prevent others from going through the same harrowing ordeal as her daughter (Charles

Binamé, 2011). The film *Cyberbully*, helps us to understand the seriousness of how such traumatic effects of cyberbullying can overpower a victim's consciousness and well-being, also forcing that person to make that life-threatening decision of committing suicide rather than seeking for help. I'm well aware that for any victim of cyberbullying going through these internal and external issues of self-isolation and guilt, it is never an easy task when you're seeking help and want to be heard, only for the problem to exceed the expected outcome. One could only imagine the type of mental darkness and pressure that every victim goes through, especially when they feel like all hope is lost and such insurmountable odds are stacked against them. In an online post titled *9 Important Lessons From The Movie "Cyberbully,"* there are 9 lessons to be learned if not more after watching the film *Cyberbully*. Boyd et al. (2019) explains these lessons more in-depth:

1. What you say online is real.

At one point in the movie, Sammy says "it doesn't feel real" when you're posting things online. Your words can hurt people. Your words have actual effects on the lives of others. So think before you say something. You don't know what's going on in another person's life. You don't know what they're struggling with, and you have no idea what your words will do to them. So don't say anything you wouldn't want spoken about you. Your words are real (Boyd et al., 2019).

2. You're not alone.

Throughout the movie Taylor seemingly lost her two best friends, and her mom was practically punishing her for what was said. She felt like she had nobody. Everybody was spreading rumors and harassing her online. Even the one random stranger she clicked with ended up turning on her. But later, she realized she wasn't as alone as she thought she was. All she had to do was look ahead of her in History class and she would've seen somebody who tried to be her friend, who was going through the exact same thing that she was. No matter what you think, you are not alone. Somebody, somewhere, is going through the exact same thing that you are (Boyd et al., 2019).

3. Don't be afraid to reach out to other people.

In the movie, Cheyenne, Taylor's best friend, distanced herself because what was happening to Taylor was starting to affect her, as well. Scott also ended up distancing himself because of what was said about Taylor. But we shouldn't be distancing ourselves from people going through hard times—that's when they need us the most. If Taylor wouldn't have felt alone, she wouldn't have attempted to commit suicide. Even if you don't know somebody that well,

if you notice that they're going through a hard time, don't be afraid to reach out to them; you never know whose life you might save (Boyd et al., 2019).

4. Your friends aren't always who they say they are.

This is one of the hardest lessons that everybody must learn at some point in time. In this movie, Taylor found out that one of her closest friends had created a fake profile, originally with good intentions, but that profile ended up adding fuel to the fire as it spread another cruel rumor about Taylor. Sometimes, your friends aren't your friends at all. Sometimes, they try to help you, but end up making mistakes along the way that hurt you worse than ever. Either way, finding out your friend stabbed you in the back is not a fun thing to find out (Boyd et al., 2019).

5. It's always better to tell the truth, even if it hurts.

At one point in the movie, Sammy decides that it's best to tell Taylor the truth about her being behind the fake profile. While it was painful for Sammy to say and for Taylor to hear, the truth needed to come out. Sammy decided she wanted to take responsibility for what she had done. Besides that, telling the truth opens up the opportunity for forgiveness. Nobody can forgive you if they don't know what you've done to them (Boyd et al., 2019).

6. Sometimes you need to just walk away.

One of Taylor's biggest problems throughout the movie is that she just could not walk away from her laptop. Even after her suicide attempt, the first thing she wanted to do when she woke up was to see what everybody was saying about her online. It's easy to sit there and watch your world seemingly fall apart; but what's best is to walk away, take a break from the negativity, and try to enjoy life — *real* life (Boyd et al., 2019).

7. Don't be a bystander.

One of Taylor's biggest problems throughout the movie is that she just could not walk away from her laptop. Even after her suicide attempt, the first thing she wanted to do when she woke up was to see what everybody was saying about her online. It's easy to sit there and watch your world [seemingly] fall apart; but what's best is to walk away, take a break from the negativity, and try to enjoy life — *real* life (Boyd et al., 2019).

8. Not everybody believes the rumors.

One of the most powerful parts of the movie was at the end when Taylor decided to stand up to her tormentors. Not only did everybody come out of the woodworks to stand by her and tell the bullies that they were doing terrible things, but everybody in the school started texting their friends to say "it's safe to go back online" and "Taylor just told Lindsay off." In fact, everybody was in awe that Taylor had the guts to stand up to the school's bully. And Taylor had no idea that this was going on. All along she believed she was alone, when in reality, nobody believed what Lindsay had been saying (Boyd et al., 2019).

9. Speak out about what's important to you.

At the end of the movie, Taylor and her mother ended up doing something insanely important with her story — she pushed for a law to get passed against cyber bullying. At first, nobody was listening to them. But they kept pushing and bringing more attention to the issue, and

finally, they were heard. If there's something that's important to you, do not give up. Keep pushing and eventually, you will be heard. This movie was really intense — not because it's dramatic and emotional; but because it's real life. These things happen every single day, and it has real effects on people. There was another report of a young teenager who decided to take her own life because of senseless acts of cyber bullying. Help stop cyber bullying and help save a life (Boyd et al., 2019).

Similarly, the 2011 documentary *Bully* observes peer-to-peer bullying and harassment in schools across America while following the lives of five teenagers in Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Georgia. The film jumps from each teen and describes their lives in parts. The film starts off by telling the story of Tyler Long and how he died. Tyler's father speaks to us about his son's certain social issues and how he knew early on that Tyler may be a subject of bullying. Mr. Long mentions that kids took his clothes when he showered, forcing him to leave naked. They shoved him into lockers and demoralized him vocally as well. This is what was said to have led Tyler to his action of suicide on October 17th, 2009 at the age of 17. The mother found him hanging in his closet with a note on the bed and then proceeded to call the family. Ja'Meya, 14, winds up in reform school after pulling a gun on the youths who tormented her for years. Cameras record the abuse suffered by 14-year-old Alex as he's beaten and teased on the bus. Star athlete Kelby, 16, is ostracized and worse after she comes out as lesbian. Ty Smalley is a younger child who was bullied relentlessly until he committed suicide at age 11. The school officials claim that bullying wasn't a factor, even though his friend could state otherwise (Hirsch, 2011). The filmmakers follow the children's daily lives to show what they go through and how their parents and the administration take a handle on the situations at hand. They interview the children as well as getting their input on their lives. They even speak to the parents about how they feel as time goes on. Each child has their own unique story and each has their own way of grasping the situation. They find ways to cope with their problems, go through denial, and approval processes with their

peers. Along the way, there are a few children mentioned who do not go into detail with their stories but emphasize the impact of bullying in each of their locations. Tyler, Alex, Kelby, Ja'Meya, and Ty all play an important role in this film as we follow them in their daily lives. (Smith, IMDb.com). The anonymity associated with cyberbullying, followed by the relationship between the offender and victim online, are closely intertwined with the effects of traditional bullying, affecting both the offender's actions of harassment, and the victim experiencing symptoms through the act of being bullied. And while the film focuses on the unique struggles of five families in four states, the rise of a revolution is also about, and part of it. It records a change in understanding of the kind that happens when lonely, marginalized people learn that they are not alone and begin the difficult job of altering unbearable circumstances that are generally considered natural (Scott, 2012).

One of the most painful implications of bullying is the sense of aloneness. In certain cases, it is also a cause of it, since it is almost always socially isolated children (e.g. the new boy, the obese kid, the gay kid, the odd kid) who are marked as being mistreated. Such is the case of these children who are victims of bullying, it is truly disheartening to see these victims constantly being tormented, constantly being harassed, and constantly being ignored by adults or even authority figures when trying to defend for themselves by seeking for help. Throughout the film, it seemed strange how the perpetrators who were committing the acts of bullying didn't seem to be concerned at all about the presence of a camera when the film was being shot. It could even be argued that the adults, who frequently mishandled altercations at the school, once they're made aware of them didn't seem to understand the consequences of their participation. For example, the school administrator, rather than acknowledge the bullying that had occurred and hold the bully responsible, pulled the boys aside and told them to shake hands to settle their

dispute. Furthermore, she demands the victim to be friendly with his tormentor, then dismisses the bully so that she can show the victim how refusing to shake hands is just as hurtful as what the bully was doing. It is rather perplexing and discouraging to see how someone such as the school administrator, especially in an authoritative role, blatantly disregards the victim's well-being just to solve the issue over a friendly handshake and forces the victim to come to terms of such agreement. In essence, it demoralizes the awareness of such harsh treatment that these victims go through and lessens the importance of seeking help when needed.

Types of Cyberbullying

Just as bullying is manifested differently through various levels of verbal abuse and acts of physical violence, cyberbullying is also manifested differently. We can understand these manifestations through the following means of action: ***Exclusion*** is the act of leaving someone out deliberately. Exclusion can occur both in-person as well as online, targeting and bullying a victim. For example, your child might be excluded/uninvited to groups or parties while they see other friends being included or left out of message threads or conversations that involve mutual friends ("The 10 Types of Cyberbullying").

Harassment is another type of cyberbullying that involves the constant sending of malicious, abusive, or threatening messages to an individual or group online. This can be done to the victims in public or private (McCullum, 2020).

Outing, another form of cyberbullying, also known as doxing, refers to the act of openly revealing sensitive or personal information about someone without their consent with the purpose of embarrassing or humiliating them. This can range from the spreading of personal photos or documents of public figures to sharing an individual's saved personal messages in an online private group. The key to this type of abuse is the lack of consent from the victim and the level of embarrassment.

Trickery, like outing, involves revealing private information about another person. When someone engages in this type of cyberbullying, the person befriends a person in order to gain his or her trust with the specific intention of sharing that person's embarrassing information online (McCullum, 2020).

Cyberstalking occurs when someone uses technology to repeatedly harass, intimidate and threaten someone. Cyberstalkers may keep tabs on their victims and make attempts to meet them in-person. Many cases of cyberstalking involve adults grooming teenagers to have sexual relationships with them. It is a criminal offense and can result in a restraining order, probation, and even jail time for the perpetrator.

Fraping occurs when a bully uses your child's social networking accounts to post inappropriate content under their name. It can be harmless when friends write funny posts on each other's profiles but this has potential to be incredibly harmful. For example, a bully might post racial/homophobic slurs through someone else's profile in order to ruin their reputation.

Masquerading occurs when a bully creates a fake online identity and profile for the sole purpose of cyberbullying someone. This could involve creating a fake email account, a fake social media profile, and selecting a new identity and photos to fool the victim. In these cases, the bully tends to be someone the victim knows quite well.

Dissing occurs when a bully intentionally spreads cruel information about their targeted victim through sending out public posts or private messages to either ruin their victim's reputation or relationships with other people. In these situations, the bully tends to have a personal relationship with the victim, either as an acquaintance or as a friend ("The 10 Types of Cyberbullying").

Trolling is insulting an individual online to provoke them in order to get a response. Usually these attacks are personal and seek to instigate anger in the victim, making them lash out and behave badly. Trolling may not always take the form of cyberbullying, but it can be used as a tool to cyberbully when done with malicious and harmful intent (Johansen, 2020).

Flaming is another type of cyberbullying that occurs when a bully posts about or sends direct insults and profanity to their targeted victim. Flaming is similar to trolling but will usually be a more direct attack on a victim to incite them to engage in online fights ("The 10 Types of Cyberbullying").

Sock puppets or Catfishing: A "sockpuppet" is a form of deception that uses a fake social media account, thus gaining their victim's trust by pretending to be someone they're not. When their victim divulges private information, the puppeteer shares that personal information with others who may bully the victim. Catfishing similarly involves setting up a fake online profile, but with the purpose of luring its victim into a deceptive online romance.

And lastly, **encouraging self-harm** is another form in which some cyberbullies threaten to hurt their victims or convince them to hurt themselves. It can be the worst type of cyberbullying because it can lead its victims take their lives by suicide (Johansen, 2020). It is imperative to understand these types of cyberbullying as these techniques and methods used by the perpetrator influence symptoms of depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and isolation to the victim being harassed.

Strategies of Cyberbullying

These forms of cyberbullying can be detrimental to the victim's mental as well as physical state. Understanding these tactics can be the major factor in taking action to saving a victim's life. Some of the most common cyberbullying tactic include: posting comments or rumors about someone online that are mean, hurtful, or embarrassing, threatening to hurt someone or telling them to kill themselves, posting a mean or hurtful picture or video, pretending to be someone else online in order to solicit or post personal or false information about someone else, posting mean or hateful names, comments, or content about any race, religion, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics online, creating a mean or hurtful webpage about someone, or even doxing ("Cyberbullying Tactics").

In addition, even models dependent on genuine encounters can give a more profound comprehension of the strategies ordinarily utilized. Because cyberbullying can happen in different ways, along with other risk factors, bullying can increase the risk for suicide-related behaviors. Furthermore, cyberbullying can be relentless, increasing the likelihood of anxiety and depression. Some states have chosen to prosecute young people who bully for criminal harassment, including encouraging someone to die by suicide. Some forms of cyberbullying are forms of harassment that cross the line into criminal activity, and some tactics occur in dating relationships and can turn into interpersonal violence ("Viral Tactics: Examples"). Other examples of cyberbullying tactics include stories of victims being abused through such tactics involved are:

Encouraging self-harm or suicide: A young boy with a physical disability and scars on his face was harassed on social media via text by other students. They called him derogatory names, told him he'd be better off dead. They wrote "why don't you die?" on his school locker and encouraged him to take his own life ("Viral Tactics: Examples").

Nude photo-sharing: A teenage girl sent a nude photo of herself to her boyfriend while they were dating. After they broke up, he shared the photo with other children, who then called her hurtful, derogatory names via text and social media (“Viral Tactics: Examples”).

Lies and false accusations: A group of students got into trouble at school for being drunk and accused a girl who knew nothing about it of reporting them to school officials. They began texting her day and night, and posted hateful, derogatory messages on social media. Other students saw their messages and joined in harassing the girl. She was bullied constantly via text, and in person at school. She eventually shut down her social media accounts and changed her phone number. Still, the bullying at school continued (“Viral Tactics: Examples”).

Bullied for being economically challenged: Students posted mean, negative comments on another classmates’ social media account, commenting on his clothes and sneakers, which were not the more expensive name brands most of them were wearing. They ridiculed him, calling him “poor” and continued the bullying in school. The boy missed many days of school trying to avoid the harassment and embarrassment (“Viral Tactics: Examples”).

False identity profile, aka “Sockpuppet”: A girl’s classmate created a fake social media account in a boy’s name and began an online relationship with her. Though she had not met him in person, the girl divulged personal information about herself and her family to this “boy.” The classmate who created the fake account then shared the personal information with other children, who used it to bully, shame, and harass the girl (“Viral Tactics: Examples”).

Bullied for being gay: A teenage boy who was openly gay began receiving death threats via phone, text, and social media for being gay. Students created an anti-gay social media group and harassed him, posting hateful messages about him (“Viral Tactics: Examples”).

Jealousy bullying: A teenage girl was harassed by other girls in her class for dating a very popular boy. The girls sent her hateful messages via text and social media and wrote derogatory messages on her school locker (“Viral Tactics: Examples”).

Doxing Over Online Gaming: A teenage boy posted comments on a public gaming forum, expressing his dislike of certain game features and tactics. Another user disagreed with him in the forum, then searched for the boy’s information online and posted his address, email address, and social media links in another comment. The boy then received multiple emails and messages from strangers threatening to come to his home and assault him, and to block him from games (“Viral Tactics: Examples”).

The stories above are examples of the many potential cyberbullying techniques. In fact, cyberbullying can be addressed positively with the right approaches to mitigate the harm and the negative consequences that could result. Cyberbullying can have long lasting effects on mental health if not handled. Cyberbullying and bullying may have a detrimental effect on the lives of those involved.

Cyberbullying Prevention

There are many ways a child can be involved in cyberbullying. A child can be bullied, harassing others, or witnessing bullying. Parents, teachers, and other adults may not know all of the interactive media and devices a child uses. The more digital platforms a child uses, the more chances it has to expose itself to possible cyberbullying. This is why it is crucial to understand the possible warning signs of a child being cyberbullied or is cyberbullying others. Many of the warning signs that cyberbullying is occurring happen around a child's use of their device. Some of the warning signs that a child may be involved in cyberbullying are:

- Noticeable increases or decreases in device use, including texting.
- A child has emotional responses (laughter, anger, upset) to what is happening on their device.
- A child hides their screen or device when others are near and avoids discussion about what they are doing on their device.
- Social media accounts are shut down or new ones appear.
- A child starts to avoid social situations, even those that were enjoyed in the past.
- A child becomes withdrawn or depressed or loses interest in people and activities (“Warning Signs a Child is Being Cyberbullied or is Cyberbullying Others”).

Other cyberbullying warning signs include but are not limited to:

- **Depression:** A huge warning sign that your child may be the victim of cyberbullying or bullying is if they become withdrawn or seem depressed and sad. Are they losing interest in people or activities they used to enjoy? Are they sleeping in when they usually don't?
- **Avoidance of social situations:** Does your child or teen seem to be avoiding social situations or friends whom they enjoyed spending time within the past? Are they spending an inordinate amount of time alone? This could be a signal that something greater, such as cyberbullying, is going on.
- **Changed frequency of device use:** Frequency change of social media device usage could signal that someone is a target of cyberbullying — or are doing the bullying. Pay attention to any changes in your child's online behavior could help you detect trouble.
- **Secrecy:** Does your child hide their devices whenever you're around or dodge questions about their online activity? They could be hiding the possibility that they are being bullied

online. This is an important opportunity for you to intervene, help them sort out their emotions, and put a stop to the harmful behavior.

- **Heightened emotions:** Another warning sign of cyberbullying is if your child seems to get upset or angry when they're online. Crying is a warning sign. While laughing isn't a bad thing, it might be if they're the ones doing or witnessing the cyberbullying.
- **Suspicious social media account activity:** Has your child suddenly cancelled their social media accounts? Or do they seem to have multiple accounts? These could be warning signs that something isn't right.
- **Suspicious photos:** Have you seen images of your child on their cell phone or others' social media accounts that are demeaning and inappropriate? Or have you found images of someone else on one of your child's devices that you know the other person wouldn't want shared?
- **Hurtful comments:** Are there mean comments harassing or embarrassing your child on their social media accounts or in their text messages? Keeping up with their online activity is important, especially so you can spot cyberbullying behavior — such as hurtful comments — before they are deleted. Even if deleted, those comments may inflict emotional damage on your child (Johansen, 2020).

When you find these warning signs that a child may be engaged in cyberbullying, take action to examine the digital actions of that child. Cyberbullying is a form of *bullying*, and adults should adopt the same approach to handling it: helping the child being bullied, handling a participant's bullying actions and showing children that cyberbullying is being taken seriously. Since cyberbullying occurs online, various strategies are required to react to it. If you think that a child is being cyberbullied, there are several things you can do (“What to Do When Cyberbullying Happens”):

- **Notice** – Recognize if there has been a change in mood or behavior and explore what the cause might be. Try to determine if these changes happen around a child's use of their digital devices (“What to Do When Cyberbullying Happens”).
- **Talk** – Ask questions to learn what is happening, how it started, and who is involved (“What to Do When Cyberbullying Happens”).
- **Document** – Keep a record of what is happening and where. Take screenshots of harmful posts or content if possible. Most laws and policies note that bullying is a repeated behavior, so records help to document it (“What to Do When Cyberbullying Happens”).
- **Report** – Most social media platforms and schools have clear policies and reporting processes. If a classmate is cyberbullying, report it the school. You can also contact app or social media platforms to report offensive content and have it removed. If a child has

received physical threats, or if a potential crime or illegal behavior is occurring, report it to the police (“What to Do When Cyberbullying Happens”).

- **Support** – Peers, mentors, and trusted adults can sometimes intervene publicly to positively influence a situation where negative or hurtful content posts about a child. Public Intervention can include posting positive comments about the person targeted with bullying to try to shift the conversation in a positive direction. It can also help to reach out to the child who is bullying and the target of the bullying to express your concern. If possible, try to determine if more professional support is needed for those involved, such as speaking with a guidance counselor or mental health professional (“What to Do When Cyberbullying Happens”).

Furthermore, since the results of cyberbullying can be so serious — for the harasser just as the person in question — it’s basic for educators, guardians, and even other students, to cooperate to forestall cyberbullying. The following are a few strategies that can help.

Teachers

- Let students know that it’s OK for them to report any online abuse that happens to them.
- Participate in training on cyberbullying prevention to better understand it and learn strategies for addressing it.
- Teach students about what cyberbullying behaviors are and why they’re wrong.
- Create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance in the classroom.
- Incorporate the internet and social media into lesson plans to teach students how to be respectful to others online.
- Work closely with parents so they understand cyberbullying.
- Implement anti-cyberbullying policies in the classroom (McCullum, 2020).

Parents

- Monitor children’s online activities.
- Take away children’s mobile devices if they are caught mistreating people online.
- Teach children how to use technology responsibly.
- Find out whom children are speaking to, and making friends with, online.
- Understand the signs of someone who is a bullying victim.
- Learn the technology that children use to get a perspective of their online world (McCullum, 2020).

Students

- Think before making posting online and avoid making posts that can have a negative effect on your reputation.
- Learn what cyberbullying is and what behaviors are involved in cyberbullying.
- Avoid putting inappropriate photos online because they can be the fuel that cyberbullies use.
- Delete messages from known bullies and from unknown people without opening them.
- Treat everything and everyone with respect (McCullum, 2020).

Cyberbullying Through Social Networking Sites (SNS)

To reiterate, cyberbullying can occur through SMS, text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. This thesis focuses on cyberbullying that occurs through social media on SNS and the overall aspects of what cyberbullying is and how we can prevent it. It is critical to research cyberbullying that happens explicitly in SNS for various reasons. SNS use is widespread in teens, young adults, and older adults as well. According to the Pew Research Center's Internet & Technology Project, Duggan and Smith (2013) reported that some 73% of online adults now use a social networking site of some kind. Facebook is the dominant social networking platform in the number of users, but a striking number of users are now diversifying onto other platforms. Some 42% of online adults now use multiple social networking sites. In addition, Instagram users are nearly as likely as Facebook users to check in to the site on a daily basis. Meanwhile, Madden et al. (2013) reported that fully 95% of all teens ages 12-17 are now online and 80% of those online teens are users of social media sites. Within the same project, Madden et al. (2013) reported that 88% of social media-using teens have witnessed other people be mean or cruel on social network sites. Additionally, Duggan and Smith (2013) revealed that 73% of grown-ups (over 18 years of age) have in any event one SNS account. More in particular, members matured 18-29 years revealed

the most noteworthy SNS use contrasted with more established age groups for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. SNS additionally gives off an impression of being utilized with high recurrence. For instance, Facebook and Instagram show off particularly excessive tiers of consumer engagement. A majority of users on these web sites check in to them on a daily basis. Duggan and Smith (2013) reported that 63% of Facebook users visit the site at least once a day, with 40% doing so multiple times throughout the day. Instagram and Twitter have a significantly smaller number of users than Facebook does, but users of these sites also tend to visit them frequently. Some 57% of Instagram users visit the site at least once a day (with 35% doing so multiple times per day), and 46% of Twitter users are daily visitors (with 29% visiting multiple times per day). Gahagan et al. (2016) explains that it may be that SNS that promote or allow for more anonymity also have higher rates of cyberbullying reports. In essence, if SNS use is broad inside all age gatherings and assumes a focal job in the everyday existences of clients, it is significant that more is comprehended about what happens inside these organized networks. All the more explicitly, it is critical to examine any dangers that SNS clients are powerless against while accessing their SNS accounts, such as cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying Through Social Media & Gaming

Digital media and apps allow kids to connect and express their imagination, engage with peers and share their feelings. However, they can also be an avenue through which cyberbullying takes place. There are several kinds of free applications and forums available that give users the opportunity to anonymously search for people and share or post information about them.

Adolescents may not be aware of the risks associated with their devices. There are several ways in which cyberbullying can be concealed in applications and websites, such as emails, texts, videos, and web calls that vanish on the device's call or text message logs. Additionally, many

apps make it easy for users to connect, view, or engage in adult or harmful content. Settings regarding privacy and location can make them more vulnerable to stalking, cyberbullying, access to adult content, or other hazards. Some current well-known web-based social networking sites and applications include: **Askfm**: A social networking site that allows users to ask other people questions, often anonymously. **Calculator%**: A “vault” or secret app that appears harmless, but hides photos, videos, files, and browser history. **Chatroulette**: There are over 20 different chat roulette sites that allow users to instantly connect via webcam and video chat. Sites typically pair the users randomly and instantly. **Discord**: A voice-over-IP (VOIP) app that allows users to video chat with others, private message, and join, create, or participate in public and private chat rooms. This app is often used by players to chat with each other while playing videogames. **Facebook and Facebook Live**: The most commonly used social media site that is accessible on many different media platforms. **Instagram**: A photo and video sharing and networking site that connects users through other social networking sites (e.g., Facebook). **Kik**: Messaging app that allows users of all ages to contact others anonymously. **Line**: A messaging app that allows users to make free phone calls, leave voice messages, and text. Users can delete texts or chats from recipient’s phone using a timer. **LiveMe**: A tool to broadcast live-streaming videos and watch other users’ videos. **MeetMe**: A dating app that connects users to others based on geographic proximity. **Omegle**: An app that pairs users with strangers in anonymous one-on-one chat sessions. **Reddit**: A site that stores social news, rates and evaluates web content, and discussion threads. **Sarahah**: An anonymous messaging app that allows users to send anonymous messages to people they may know. **Snapchat**: A photo messaging app that allows for sharing pictures and short videos that are intended to be erased shortly after delivery. **Telegram**: Messaging app that allows users to share photos, videos, and files; make calls, and delete texts or chats from

recipient's phone using a timer. **TikTok**: An app that allows users to create and share their own videos where they lip-synch, sing, dance, or just talk. **Tumblr**: A social networking site that allows posting of short blogs and media. **Twitter**: A microblogging site that allows users to send, read, and reply to "tweets" or short messages. **Vine**: An app that allows the posting of short 6-second looping videos. **WeChat**: An app that allows user to chat with friends, and to search for people nearby and around the globe. **WhatsApp**: A private messaging app that allows users to text, send photos, videos, and location information to their contacts. **Whisper**: An anonymous social media site that allows users to post and share photo and video messages. **YouTube**: A video sharing platform that allows users to post and share videos. And lastly, **YUBO (formerly YELLOW)**: An app referred to as the "Tinder for teens" that allows users to swipe right or left to accept or reject the profiles of other users ("Social Media and Gaming"). These social-networking sites and applications are some of the many examples of when cyberbullying occurs in which users are mostly active online and are most vulnerable to cyberstalking and attacks.

Meanwhile, online media has numerous advantages that must be offset with the dangers it presents. Dangers to know about include: Screening for harmful content on websites and apps varies widely, content posted can be incorrect, harmful, or hurtful (e.g., why are you so dumb?) Can be used to share harmful or adult content, privacy controls over who can view or access posted material vary across apps, and many users are not aware of how to use them effectively, apps that allow for real-time user videos "live streaming" can be used to show bullying, violence, suicide, and harmful acts as they are happening, some apps that include location information can be used to get personal information, such as someone's age, current location, or where someone lives, and apps that support telephone calls do not show up on a call log, so parents may not know who their children are talking to. Playing videogames is a mainstream

activity, with 90 percent of adolescents gaming on the web. Numerous computer games – regardless of whether they are on a PC, game console, cellphone, or tablet – is heavily associated with the online gaming community when it comes to gamers socializing and networking either with friends they know in person and new people they have met only online. While gaming may have positive benefits, such as making new friends, socializing and learning how to strategize and solve problems, it is also another place where cyberbullying occurs.

The obscurity of players and the utilization of avatars permit users to create alter-egos, which is part of the fun of gaming. Be that as it may, it likewise permits users to disturb, menace, and once in a while pick on different players, sending or posting negative or frightful messages, and utilizing the game as an apparatus of provocation. On the off chance that somebody isn't performing admirably, other children may revile or offer antagonistic comments that transform into harassing, or they may reject the individual from playing together. Since players are anonymous, they can't really be considered responsible for their conduct, and their badgering can make a few players leave games. Some anonymous users utilize the game as a way to harass outsiders or to steal their personal information, similar to usernames and passwords. There are things adults can do to prevent cyberbullying of children who are gaming such as: play the game or observe when the gaming happens to understand how it works and what a child is exposed to in the game, check in periodically with your child about who is online, playing the game with them, teach your children about safe online behavior, including not clicking on links from strangers, not sharing personal information, not participating in bullying behavior of other players, and what to do if they observe or experience bullying, and establish rules about how much time a child can spend playing video games (“Social Media and Gaming”).

Social Media Safety Tips

While the web can be an extraordinary asset to assist students with getting ready for tests and doing research for tasks, just as keeping in contact with their companions, it's significant for them to be protected when utilizing innovation — particularly web-based media sites. The following are some suggestions to assist teens with remaining safe when utilizing web-based media: never give other people password information, don't post address, telephone number or school location online, use strong privacy settings, so only friends and family can see posts, be careful when clicking on links, and don't click links from unknown people, don't accept friend requests from strangers, use strong passwords and change them regularly, don't respond to abusive posts, never open attachments from unknown people, set up security questions on social media sites, and don't allow programs to track location (McCullum, 2020).

Digital Awareness for Parents

Furthermore, the computerized world is continually developing with new online media stages, applications, and gadgets, and children and teenagers are frequently the first to utilize them. Some negative things that may happen incorporate cyberbullying, sexting, posting scornful messages or content and partaking in negative gathering discussions. On the off chance that your kid posts unsafe or negative substance on the web, it may not just harm other children; it can influence their online notoriety, which can have negative ramifications for their work or school confirmation. While you may not be able to monitor all of your child's activities, there are things you can do to prevent cyberbullying and protect your child from harmful digital behavior: monitor a teen's social media sites, apps, and browsing history, if you have concerns that cyberbullying may be occurring, review or reset your child's phone location and privacy settings, follow or friend your teen on social media sites or have another trusted adult do so, stay up-to-

date on the latest apps, social media platforms, and digital slang used by children and teens, know your child's usernames and passwords for email and social media, establish rules about appropriate digital behavior, content, and apps ("Digital Awareness for Parents"). In addition, parents who need to shield their kids from cyberbullying, hurtful, computerized conduct, and presentation to an adult substance can utilize parental control and observing programming to assist them with setting up frameworks that are less intrusive to their kids. There are free programming alternatives and applications accessible to assist parents with limiting substance or view their children's online activities, including web-based media, without taking a gander at their kid's gadget consistently. A large portion of the free programming alternatives give a few features for free yet charge for more insight. A parent ought to think about a kid's age, gadget use, and advanced conduct while choosing programming – what is appropriate to limit for a ten-year-old may not be valuable for an adolescent.

Establishing Rules & Regulations

In essence, it is imperative that discussions are being made between parents and children regarding appropriate digital behavior and content when online. By facilitating transparent, truthful conversations, parents build trust with their children. These dialogs provide an opportunity to express principles and expectations about the acceptable digital actions of your family, including accessing or sharing information, and software that they can and cannot use. To counter any possible risk of cyberbullying and damage, check regularly with your kids about their digital experiences. Be clear that your goal is to look after their well-being, and you want an open dialogue. Listen to their concerns, and feel free to share your point of view ("Establishing Rules"). To minimize the risk of cyberbullying or harm from digital behavior, parents can: set clear expectations about digital behavior and online reputation, educate about the harmful effects

of cyberbullying, posting hateful speech or comments, sexting, and sharing naked photos of themselves or others (including potential legal issues), be clear about what content can be viewed or shared, identify which apps are appropriate for your child's use and which are not, establish rules about the amount of time that a child can spend online or on their devices, and model positive, respectful digital behavior on your own devices and accounts.

Not to mention, having discussions about cyberbullying and digital activity with children isn't a one-time thing – it's an ongoing discussion. Before children dive into the world of email, social media, online gaming, and chat rooms, start learning about those problems. Help them focus on actual and future cases of cyberbullying and include ongoing opportunities to learn ways of responding. This will help the transition from passive bystanders to allies acting as effective role models for others. The free Knowbullying app for parents, teachers and educators from SAMHSA offers discussion starters, tips and other resources to help avoid bullying. For a child witnessing cyberbullying, these are steps that parents can encourage them to do and not do, such as: **Do not participate.** Encourage children not to “like,” share, or comment on information that has been posted about someone, and do not forward a hurtful text to others. Not participating may limit the potential damage of the messages – to others and to themselves. **Do not retaliate or respond negatively.** If a child feels that they must respond, encourage a calm, clear, and constructive response. Angry and aggressive reactions can make a bad situation worse. Encourage children (and adults!) to step away from the device so they do not resort to blaming, shaming, or retaliation. This provides time to get calm and centered so they can create a response that makes it clear that others' digital behaviors are hurtful and unacceptable. **Respond privately to the person who created the hurtful message.** If they feel safe doing so, it may be helpful to follow up with the person who created or shared the hurtful message privately, either online, in a

phone call, or in person. Doing so can make it clear they do not support the negative actions. It also provides an opportunity to authentically share concerns about the behavior and what might be behind it. And lastly, **follow up with the person who was targeted**. By reaching out, a child can send a powerful message that they care about the person and they do not support the negative behaviors. If needed, this connection can also provide an opportunity to assist the person in finding help related to the cyberbullying situation (“Establishing Rules”). By taking these steps and actions into consideration, it goes a long way of helping and saving the victims of cyberbullying, raising awareness of the perpetrators involved, and making a difference for those who are willing to stand up for what is right.

Tips for Teachers Dealing with Cyberbullying

Moreover, a child might be engaged with cyberbullying in a few different ways. A child can be tormented, harassing others, or witness bullying. Teachers and other adults may not know about all the web-based media stages and applications that a child is utilizing. The more computerized stages that a child utilizes, the more chances there are for being exposed to potential cyberbullying. Many of the warning signs that cyberbullying is happening mostly occur around a child’s utilization of their device or computer. Since children/teens invest a great deal of energy and time on their devices, there could be less significant increases or decreases in use. It’s critical to focus on when a child shows abrupt changes in advanced and social conduct (“Tips for Teachers”).

Furthermore, as educators, it is their duty to teach the students how to use digital media in a respectful and healthy manner. This involves helping children learn how to understand, react and prevent cyberbullying. Given the pressures on teachers to achieve school, district, and state goals, finding out where these lessons fit into the school day can be a challenge. Fortunately,

when technology becomes part of every aspect of our lives, including teaching and learning by educators, more schools and districts allow teachers the time and resources to develop these skills. Here are several ways to tackle the prevention of cyberbullying in classroom:

Promote a positive and safe classroom culture. Whether or not you have technology in the classroom, setting norms of respectful communication sends a message to your students about what is and isn't acceptable. Find ways to demonstrate that your classroom is a safe, emotionally caring environment. Provide resources in the classroom to help students identify, respond to, and avoid cyberbullying. This could be tips on how to respond to cyberbullying (for elementary school or middle and high school) or the phone number for the Crisis Text Line.

Embrace teachable “dig cit” moments. Step up when you encounter a teachable moment related to cyberbullying or respectful online communication. Encourage students to pay attention to “red flag moments” – when something happens on digital media that makes them feel uncomfortable, worried, sad, or anxious. Explain to students the three ways they can and should respond if they witness cyberbullying: support the target of the bullying (be an ally); try to stop the cyberbullying (be an upstander); and/or tell a trusted adult (report it). It may not be part of your lesson plan, and it may set you off track for a bit, but every time you reinforce anti-cyberbullying messages, you're doing the critical work of cyberbullying prevention. And as hard as it may be to admit, ignoring these teachable moments also sends a message your students will remember. **Incorporate lessons on cyberbullying into your existing curriculum.** Find connections to the content you're already teaching and make time to address cyberbullying directly. From setting norms of online communication to using historical examples of propaganda and hate speech to discussing a bullying situation in a novel you're reading, the possible connections to cyberbullying can be made with a little planning. And finally, **advocate**

for a school- or district-wide digital citizenship program. The most effective cyberbullying prevention strategy has to involve the whole community. A fully integrated digital citizenship program gives teachers the time and resources to tackle these topics head-on, provides kids with consistent and frequent opportunities to build their skills, and supports families as they reinforce the messages at home (Wilkey, 2020). Additionally, teachers, school administrators, colleges, community, and faith-based workers are in unique positions to use their expertise and responsibilities to build inclusive environments with healthy social norms. They are often in positions where they may note changes in the actions of children in group environments, such as when a group or grouping of children is centered on another child, or other signs that there may be cyberbullying. Here are some similar methods you can perform to fix or discourage cyberbullying inside the school or other community environments: if you think a child is being cyberbullied, speak to them privately to ask about it. They may also have proof on their digital devices. If you believe a child is being cyberbullied, speak to an adult about it. Serve as a facilitator between the child, guardian, and the school if necessary. To understand children's digital behavior and how it relates to cyberbullying, increase your digital awareness. Develop activities that encourage self-reflection, asking children to identify and express what they think and feel, and to consider the thoughts and feelings of others. Help children develop emotional intelligence so that they can learn self-awareness and self-regulation skills and learn how to have empathy for others. Role model, reinforce, and reward positive behavior towards others, and encourage peer involvement in prevention strategies ("Tips for Teachers"). Using the necessary steps provided for teachers and their students can further emphasize the importance of cyberbullying prevention and ensure a healthy and safe learning environment both inside and outside of the classroom.

Report Cyberbullying

Nonetheless, when cyberbullying occurs, it is essential to record and report the conduct so it very well may be tended to. Here are some steps that should be taken immediately in the event of when cyberbullying occurs: don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages, keep evidence of cyberbullying. Record the dates, times, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers and block the person who is cyberbullying ("Report Cyberbullying"). Additionally, cyberbullying is also in excess of the terms of service provided by social media platforms and Internet service providers. Here are methods that you can apply to report cyberbullying to online service providers: review their terms and conditions or rights and responsibilities sections. These describe content that is or is not appropriate. Visit social media safety centers to learn how to block users and change settings to control who can contact you. Report cyberbullying to the social media site so they can act against users abusing the terms of service. It is imperative that children report cyberbullying to a parent or an adult they trust. Reaching out to someone for help when a child is being cyberbullied goes a long way to saving them from further harm or even deadlier consequences . Often times children don't report cyberbullying because they're afraid of their parents taking away their phone or computer. Parents will be much more accepting of bullying reports from their child and not take away their electronic devices as a result. It is crucial for children to understand that bullying is wrong, and that an adult can handle it. Furthermore, even students who are victims of cyberbullying may feel so overpowered that they don't have the slightest idea of what can be done. The following are a few similar stages they can take to deal with these circumstances and get the assistance they need (McCullum et al., 2020).

Ignore the bully. Oftentimes, cyberbullies will stop their behavior if their victim just ignores them. Bullies thrive on getting reactions, so students should keep in mind that trying to retaliate with similar behaviors in order to make bullies stop will not work. In fact, responding will most likely escalate the situation and make it worse.

Tell a trusted adult. Students should remember that they don't have to suffer through cyberbullying in silence. When they experience it, they should let an adult or someone know what's going on so they can get help and emotional support. In addition, telling someone at the school, like a teacher, coach or counselor, can go a long way toward making the abuse stop.

Block the bully. "The student should immediately block the bully on the platform and any other social media sites with which they are able to contact the victim. Every social media site has a method to block other users. Chances are your kids know how, even if the parents don't," Arsenault says. "This prevents the cyberbully from sending any more messages, pictures or videos to the child. In most cases, blocking someone prevents them from being able to locate your profile on the service altogether."

Change email address or phone number. Another way that students can cut off a cyberbully is by changing his or her email address and phone number. This way, the person has no way to get in contact to continue the behavior.

Collect evidence. "Some social media platforms use temporary posts, such as Snapchat, and virtually all platforms allow users to delete their own images and messages, sometimes even those sent privately. Taking a screenshot of the offending post is a record that can be used to substantiate a complaint, even if the bully later deletes the posts in question," Arsenault says.

Contact the authorities if necessary. In some cases, such as with photos that are considered child pornography, the evidence of cyberbullying is not legal to have, so documenting it will get

the student, or his or her parents, into legal trouble. When this happens, the authorities should be contacted right away in order to document the instances of cyberbullying and take legal action against the person committing it. Also, victims of cyberbullying can contact the police if threats of violence have been made.

Report to the website. If someone is being bullied through a website or social media platform, that person should contact the site and let the administrators know what's going on. Since bullying behaviors are against the terms of service, getting the person kicked off the site can make the bully stop harassing the victim.

Create a safety plan. "We always encourage our adolescents to create a safety plan if they are in an unhealthy relationship; this includes bullying and cyberbullying. Part of that plan might be changing your passwords, blocking the people who are bullying you and reporting any negative or offensive posts," Ponce says.

Get additional support. "There are a lot of local organizations that are here to help and can provide valuable resources to an adolescent who has experienced any type of bullying," says Ponce. "If a student is feeling distressed or anxious, or having feelings of sadness or depression about the situation, they shouldn't be afraid to seek professional help to start healing and navigate the process. The school counselor is also another valuable resource. Finding friends, family and outside support services is essential in helping an adolescent through this."

Avoid self-blame. Students may think they are at fault when they're the victims of cyberbullying, especially if the bullies are people they've had friendships or romantic relationships with. It's important for them to remember that they are not responsible for how other people are treating them, and they should not feel guilty about it.

How to Deal with “Haters” Online

Subsequently, victims of cyberbullying, or bullying in general, have to deal with the constant harassment and negative behavior of people online who are referred to as “haters.” “**Hater**” is a name used to allude to individuals who utilize pessimistic and basic remarks and conduct to bring someone else down by making them look or feel terrible. These destructive and adverse remarks can be conveyed face to face, on the web, or in messages and applications. Frequently, the remarks and conduct are rehashed after some time. Haters are regularly mysterious (particularly on the web) yet they can likewise be colleagues, companions, or individuals who were once viewed as companions. Contemptuous, basic conduct is another type of harassing or cyberbullying. Like bullying, hater conduct is something that an individual does – it isn’t what their identity is, and it very well may be changed. Frequently, haters single out individuals whom they see as being not quite the same as themselves. Being the focal point of adverse and basic remarks can be upsetting and trigger sentiments of outrage, harmed, and turmoil, and cause the individual being scrutinized to scrutinize their self-esteem and conduct. In the event that the negative remarks are posted on the web, it can likewise make somebody reluctant to utilize their social media accounts or feel embarrassed about what’s going on there. Numerous kids and adolescents would prefer not to be a piece of negative conduct like ridiculing, reprimanding, harassing, and cyberbullying. Managing haters isn’t that unique in relation to managing tormenting and cyberbullying. Adolescents who feel overpowered by all the dramatization via social media will frequently unfriend or unfollow individuals online to withdraw (“How to Deal with “Haters””). For victims of cyberbullying/bullying who have to deal with the constant negativity of behavior and harassment, or even people in general who want to utilize these social networking sites to communicate with others peacefully, is a difficult

task to overcome when a majority of those individuals who have nothing better to do with their lives would rather sit at a keyboard all day and write mean and hurtful remarks to one another, without the fear of consequence, albeit in the state of anonymity. Therefore, there are specific methods and guidelines to abide by when dealing with those “haters” per the following:

Ignore it. Walk away. Don’t react or respond to negative comments. If someone threatens you, report it to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult!

Block online haters. If someone is making negative or hateful comments on your posts or account, or is cyberbullying, block them. If they’re threatening you, tell your parents, report it to the platform, and take screenshots.

Be kind and respectful, even to haters. It shows that you’re in control of your emotions and that you aren’t letting negativity bring you down.

Stick with supporters. Having a friend nearby if you think you might encounter a hater not only makes it less likely that an incident might happen, but also means you’ll have positive reinforcements just in case.

Remind yourself that comments from a hater are a reflection of them and aren’t really about you. People who feel good about themselves don’t need to put others down.

Understand criticism can be a sign of pain. People sometimes lash out because they have other life struggles. Negative comments may have nothing to do with you.

Acknowledge your feelings. Talk to a trusted adult or friend and get some encouragement and support.

Keep being you. Keep moving forward, pursuing your interests, and being who you are.

In addition, below are some useful links to these social networking sites to report harmful or abusive behavior when dealing with cyberbullying (“How to Deal with “Haters””):

- [How to report things on Facebook](#)
- [How to report a post on Instagram](#)
- [How to report abusive behavior on Twitter](#)
- [How to report offensive content on Tumblr](#)
- [How to report abuse on Snapchat](#)

Conclusion

This research offers a theoretical approach to cyberbullying victimization that occurs through social media on social networking sites (SNS) and the overall aspects of what cyberbullying is and how it can be prevented. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, email, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can access, interact, or share content. The world of cyberbullying on the Internet is a dark place where actions have no consequences, where guilt is disguised by anonymity, where fingerprints are untraceable. The computerized world is continually developing with new online media stages, applications, and gadgets, and children and teenagers are frequently the first to utilize them. Digital media and apps allow kids to connect and express their imagination, engage with peers and share their feelings. However, they can also be an avenue through which cyberbullying takes place. As a result, it is imperative that discussions are being made between parents and children regarding appropriate digital behavior and content when online. With many of these social networking sites serving as the main outlet of communication for children and young teens across all of social media involved, it not only enables them to the world of interaction and artistic creativity with new people, it exposes them to the potential endangerment of their well-being and safety as far as delicate information being exchanged. In essence, when such information is being exchanged between people of differing views and opinions that don't always agree with what you post online, that can lead to a form of harassment, negative behavior, abuse, stalking, which is also known as cyberbullying. Needless to say, having discussions about cyberbullying and digital activity with children isn't a one-time thing – it's an ongoing discussion. If you or someone you know is a victim of cyberbullying or any form of online harassment, let someone know. Speak up and don't be afraid to ask for help – saving one's life can help save many lives.

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