Understanding the Dynamics of Cyber Bullying
Technology and our Youth
WHAT IS PEATC?

PEATC is Virginia’s Parent Training and Information Center. We are the “go to place” for Virginia families of children with special education needs.
PEATC PROVIDES….

- Individual phone consultations
- Workshops throughout Virginia
- Webinars/On Demand Training
- Factsheets
- Blog
- Resources

To assist parents in securing educational plans for their children leading toward adult lives that include

- meaningful employment
- friendships
- community participation
History of Parent Centers

1975
Education of ALL Handicapped Children Act became Federal Law

1978
Five Parent Training and Information Centers (PTI) were funded and PEATC was one of the first!

1991
Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRC)

www.peatc.org
Parent Centers are also supported by a Technical Assistance Project

*Funded by the USDOE, OSEP*
WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

As a result of this interactive workshop participants will:

➢ Enter the world of technology to define cyber Bullying
➢ Explore motivations, categories, warning signs and forms online cyber bullying can take
➢ Learn text terminology
➢ Explore our teens secret world of social media
➢ Explore cyber bullying among students with intellectual and developmental disabilities
➢ Explore cyber responsibility for schools, parents and youth
➢ Learn tips & strategies to protect your family
➢ Become familiar with cyber bullying and the law

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ENTERING THE WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY

To understand cyber bullying it is important to understand how technology has infused itself into every area of our lives.

While technology brings tremendous opportunities to connect if used in positive ways it also brings tremendous threats if used negatively.

Internet use rose from two million youth in 1995 to seventy-seven million in 2005.

www.criminaljuice.state.ny.us/missing/i_safety/i_intro.htm
CYBER, CYBER, CYBER…
WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

➢ Cyber is defined with words that include computers and information
➢ Cyber space speaks of a virtual reality
➢ Cyber kids are defined as youth who take information in and put information out using technology-based communication

This journey will help you understand how technology sets the stage for cyber bullying, and how cyber balance is the key to protecting youth and exposing the hidden traps within this technology-based world
WHAT IS A VIRTUAL REALITY?

Virtual reality is defined as the computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional image or environment that can be interacted with in a seemingly real or physical way by a person using special electronic equipment, such as a helmet or a screen.
DEFINITION OF CYBER BULLYING

Involving “the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others”.

✓ Email
✓ Cell Phones
✓ Text Messages
✓ Instant Messages
✓ Computers
✓ Tablets
✓ Social Media Sites
✓ Chat
✓ Defamatory Persona Web Sites
✓ Online Personal Polling Web Sites

“Cyber Bully” involves intimidation through a virtual setting.
Cyber bullying is simply schoolyard bullying that has transformed into a more powerful toxic form of bullying with the induction of technology.
THE DIFFERENCE

Traditional Schoolyard Bully

➢ Visually you can see
➢ More direct
➢ Poor relationship with teachers & peers
➢ Fear of retribution
➢ Opportunities for adult intervention
➢ One to five people may be involved

Cyber Bully

➢ Anonymous
➢ Under the radar if not reported
➢ Good relationships with teachers
➢ Fear of loss of privileges
➢ Less opportunity for adult intervention
➢ Can involve hundreds of people

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CYBERBULLYING: THE NUMBERS

➢ 34% of the students report experiencing cyberbullying during their lifetime (Center for Disease Control – 2016)
➢ 90% of teens who report being cyberbullied have also been bullied offline
➢ 58% have not told their parents or another adult about their experiences online
➢ 95% have witnessed cruel behavior on social media and say they have seen others ignore the mean behavior
➢ 41% of those cyberbullied are girls, they tend to favor social media (snapchat, twitter), and bullying consists of rumors and saying mean things
➢ 28% of those cyberbullied are boys, they tend to favor gaming consoles and male cyberbullies often use hurtful photos and videos
➢ 26% of victims are chosen due to their race or religion
➢ 40% of children with autism and 60% of children with Asperger’s Syndrome are cyberbullied.
➢ 55.2% of LGBT students experienced cyberbullying

CYBERBULLYING: THE EFFECTS

- 83% of victims felt that the bullying hurt their self esteem
- 64% a significant decrease in academics
- 30% have turned to self-harming behaviors
- 30% have suicidal thoughts
- 10% have attempted to take their own lives due to bullying
Understanding the categories and motivations of cyber bullies will help us recognize the tactics used to engage in this type of activity.

These terms will help parents and administrators see the severity of a threat.
POTENTIAL MOTIVATIONS BASED ON RESEARCH

➢ Desire for revenge for themselves or others
➢ Lack of recognition of the harm in their behaviors
➢ Perception that it is a fun activity
➢ A means of asserting power or channeling aggressive energy
➢ Obtaining satisfaction, rewards or prestige
➢ Enactment of aggressive fantasies
➢ Boredom
➢ Attention
➢ Appearance of being cool or tough
➢ Jealously
➢ Pleasure in inflicting pain

(Hinduja and Patchin 2009)
CYBER BULLY TYPES

➢ Flaming
➢ Harassment
➢ Cyber stalking
➢ Denigration
➢ Impersonating
➢ Outing
➢ Trickery
➢ Exclusion
It is important that adults in the world of youth are alert to the signs of cyber bullying. This is especially important in light of the fact that most educators, counselors, and parents are not as technologically sophisticated as their kids or students.
# Potential Warning Signs of Cyber Bullying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type/Source</th>
<th>Potential Signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Cyber Bullied**            | • Displays frustration or anger after computer use  
• Avoids discussion about computer use  
• Displays anxiety over instant messages or e-mails  
• Change in mood or disposition  
• Stops using the computer                                                                 |
| **Cyber Bully**              | • Avoids discussions about computer use  
• Unusual agitation when unable to use the computer  
• Computer use is excessive  
• Use of multiple accounts that may not be their own  
• Closes programs or does not allow you to view the screen                                                                 |
| **Cyber Bully Victimization**| • Emotional upset – depression, sadness, anxiety, anger, or fear, especially if there is nothing readily apparent that could be causing this upset, or if your child seems especially upset after using the internet  
• Avoidance of friends, school, or other activities  
• Decline in grades  
• Subtle comments that reflect emotional distress or disturbed online or in–person relationships                                                                 |

Source: [www.loveourchildrenusa.org/parent_cyberbullying.php](http://www.loveourchildrenusa.org/parent_cyberbullying.php), © All rights reserved. Love Our Children USA™
### FORMS ONLINE CYBER BULLYING CAN TAKE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entitlement bullies</strong></td>
<td>“Put–downers” who think they are superior and have the right to harass and demean others, especially those they think are different or inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victims of entitlement bullies</strong></td>
<td>Kids who get picked on because bullies think they are different or inferior</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Retaliators</strong></td>
<td>“Get–backers” who have been bullied by others and are using the internet to retaliate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victims of retaliators</strong></td>
<td>Most often, kids who have been bullying, but are now receiving the cruelty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bystanders who are part of the problem</strong></td>
<td>Those who encourage and support the bully or watch the bullying from the sidelines but do nothing to intervene or help the victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bystanders who are part of the solution</strong></td>
<td>Those who seek to stop the bullying, protest it, provide support to the victim, or tell an adult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let’s test your knowledge with an interactive activity
With the rise of technology, researchers have shown a keen interest in the topic of cyber bullying. Unfortunately, interest has not extended to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
CYBER RESPONSIBILITY

Addressing cyber bullying in schools – It is a Team Responsibility. Schools and parents must work cooperatively!

✓ Identifying
✓ Acknowledgment that it is occurring
✓ Ownership of responsibility
✓ Communication
✓ Respect
✓ Resolving
SCHOOL’S RESPONSIBILITY

➢ Add cyber bullying to your current in-house policies concerning schoolyard bullying.
➢ Add cyber bullying to your acceptable use policies regarding the proper usage of school computers.
➢ It is important to remember that, even if the cyber bullying appears to have been initiated off school property, its roots could be school based or vice versa.

*Taking action is the key.*
PARENT’S RESPONSIBILITY

➢ Introduce your children to Internet safety at home.
➢ Keep current with the rapidly developing technology field.
➢ Educate yourself to computer use and terminology.
➢ Have an open relationship with your child in which communication and trusted is fostered.
➢ Communicate the responsibilities and dangers that go along with the privilege of using the computer.
➢ Communicate the consequences if misuse occurs.
➢ Monitor your children’s computer use regularly.

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Youth need to be aware that the use of the computer, as well as other forms of technology such as a cell phone, is a privilege and not a right.

Youth need to understand that using technology comes with responsibilities.

Youth must be taught how to use the computer responsibly.

Youth must be aware that there are consequences when they misuse the computer.

Youth must be aware that dangers could occur while using the computer.
TIPS & STRATEGIES TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY

➢ Place computers where they are visible to all which allows for easy monitoring
➢ Establish times when the computer will be used
➢ Advise your child to alert you when the following occurs:
  ❑ Continues popups on the screen
  ❑ Pictures or words appear that you know you are not allowed in your home
  ❑ If someone sends an insulting message
  ❑ If someone uses their cell phone in the wrong way
  ❑ If someone asks for their password – even if it is your best friend

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TEACH YOUR CHILD TO - STOP, SAVE AND SHARE WHEN CYBER BULLYING OCCURS

• **STOP** what they are doing; do not react. Youth are impulsive and often don’t think about the consequences.
• **SAVE** what you are working on; do not delete it.
• **SHARE** the information with an adult they can trust and who can guide them in making a safe decision on how to handle the situation when it occurs.
Looking at traditional programs currently in our schools today; “Zero Tolerance,” “3 Strikes and You’re Out,” “Anger Management,” “Skill Building,” “Self-Esteem Building” and “Mediation” aren’t effective in dealing with cyber bullying according to the following study:

(Fleming et al., 2002; Fuentes, 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 1999, 2003)


Talk To Your Schools About What Their Bullying Policy Is
Find Out If It Includes Cyberbullying
The PEAS Program (Psychological, Educational, and Social Response) was established to meet the needs of all parties affected by cyber bullying.

The two main components of this program involve assessment and therapeutic response.
PEATC INITIATIVES

Can help schools with bullying and cyber bullying training and prevention:
➢ If Your Child a Target of Bullying?
➢ Bullying Prevention for Administrators and Teachers
➢ Understanding the Dynamics of Cyber Bullying Technology and our Youth

Youth initiatives
➢ The Youth Leadership Group (for all children)
➢ The CORE program (for at risk children)
➢ Youth Bullying Prevention & Empowerment Program (for all children)
ASSESSMENTS ARE VITAL

In order to understand the triggers and impact of the event, evaluate all those involved, determine motivations and risk factors, and decide upon appropriate interventions, a comprehensive assessment must be done that involves members of the school staff.

Therapeutic responses must involve both prevention and intervention efforts.
PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSE

The primary goal of the psychological response is to:

• Follow up on the assessment of the cyber bully
• Provide therapeutic intervention to help address the issues of the cyber bully, including appropriate need satisfaction, working through emotional conflicts, and development of positive thought and behavioral patterns
• Offer mediation separately for the cyber bully and the victim
• Prevent future events through development of healthy, adaptive skills in a multitude of areas

• Fundamental principles of behavior change indicate that punishment only dissolves a behavior, but does not teach the recipient how to respond.
• The perpetrators who are often first victims are left without assistance in identifying why they bullying and given a chance to correct the behavior.
• Primarily focus has been placed on discipline rather than therapeutic measures with regard to addressing the cyber bullying.
A successful program should involve structured approaches to planning and evaluation. It is imperative that current practices are assessed and new approaches are considered.

An assessment of cyber bullying issues in your school and an evaluation of the implemented therapeutic response programs should be completed.
Cyber bullying is serious and must be taken seriously.
It is important to address when schools must respond to cyber bullying. Two possible groups for liability exist – negligence and civil rights “hostile environment.”
SCHOOL’S LIABILITY

Under a negligence cause of action, the following elements must be considered.

➢ Does the school have a duty to exercise precautions against student cyber bullying through the district Internet system, and through use of cell phones on campus, that is threatening student safety and well being? **Clearly, they do.**
➢ Was it foreseeable that students would use the Internet or cell phones to cyber bully others while at school?
➢ Is there an actual injury?
SCHOOL OFFICIALS’ LIABILITY

School officials can be held liable under civil rights laws if they are deliberately indifferent to harassment of which they have actual knowledge, that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it can be said to deprive the victims of access to the educational opportunities provided by the school.
PARENTAL LIABILITY

Parents of minors who engage in intentional tort (wrongdoings) face the potential of personal financial liability. There are two bases under which parents might be held financially liable.

➢ Parents can be sued if their child has engaged in an intentional tort and the parent knew or should have known and was negligent in preventing the harm.

➢ Failure to prevent the continuation of cyber bullying after receiving notice by the school that their child is engaging in cyber bullying increases the potential for liability.
CRIMINAL VIOLATIONS

Some cyber bullying situations meet the standards of a criminal violation. Most states have reviewed their criminal statues to ensure that the crimes that involve speech have been updated to incorporate electronic speech. Possible crime actions include:

- Making threats of violence to people on their property
- Engaging in coercion
- Making obscene or harassing telephone calls (includes texting)
- Harassment or stalking, hate crimes
- Asking for, creating, or sending sexually explicit images of teens
- Taking a photo of someone in a place where privacy is expected (like a locker room or bathroom)
SUMMARY

➢ We defined Cyber bullying
➢ We distinguished between a traditional school yard bully a Cyberbully
➢ We explored potential motivations, categories, forms online bullying can take and cyber bullying types
➢ Cyberbullying among students with intellectual and developmental disabilities
➢ Explored cyber responsibilities of schools, parents and youth
➢ We looked at Cyberbullying and the law
➢ We provided tips and strategies to protect your children
“What if the kid you bullied at school, grew up, and turned out to be the only surgeon who could save your life?”

— Lynette Mather