

Lesson 4: Cyberbullying Impacts and Consequences

Suggested time: 40-60 minutes

Preparation

Resources and materials

- Counselor Resource Letters to Teachers, Students and Parents
- Teacher Resource 1: "Bullying, Depression, and Suicidal Ideation" or
- Teacher Online Resource 1: "Bullying, Depression, and Suicidal Ideation"
<http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/319/7206/348>
- Student Activities 1, 2, 3, 4
- Writing Essentials – Introduction to Lesson 4 (under development)
- Writing Essentials – Lesson Plan: (under development)
- Writing Essentials – Lesson 3, SA1 (under development)

Lesson Goals

Students will demonstrate their understanding of these key points:

- The impact of cyberbullying on behavior.
- How the act of bullying affects people other than the victim.
- Apologizing can't undo the damage of bullying online.

EALRs and GLEs addressed:

You may find the following requirements and expectations useful in relating this curriculum to your overall educational goals.

EALRS and GLEs		
Reading	1.3.1	Understands and applies new vocabulary
	1.3.2	Understands and applies content vocabulary critical to the meaning of text.
	1.4.2	Applies fluency to enhance comprehension
		Applies comprehension monitoring strategies to understand informational and

Reading	2.1.6	task-oriented text
	2.4.6	Analyzes ideas and concepts in multiple texts
	3.1	Read to learn new information
Writing	3.1.1	Analyzes ideas, selects a manageable topic and elaborates using specific, relevant details and examples
	3.2	Uses appropriate style
	3.3	Uses complete sentences in writing
Communication	1.1.2	Applies a variety of listening and observation skills/strategies to interpret information
	2.2.1	Uses communication skills that demonstrate respect
	2.2.2	Applies skills and strategies to contribute responsibly in a group setting
	3.1.1	Applies skills to plan and organize effective oral communication and presentation
	3.3.1	Uses communication skills and strategies to effectively present ideas and one's self in a variety of situations
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Educational Technology	1.2	Use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others
	1.3	Research, manage and evaluate information and solve problems using digital tools and resources
	2.1	Practice safe, legal and ethical behavior in the use of information and technology
	2.2	Understand technology systems and use hardware and networks to support learning
	2.3	Use productivity tools and common applications effectively and constructively
	2.4	Transfer current knowledge to new and emerging technologies

Vocabulary

General Terms

- **depression:** Feeling sad.
- **exposure:** Disclosure of a secret or sensitive material.

- **impact:** The effect that an action or situation has on someone.
- **life skills:** Abilities we develop that we can use in many situations, such as how to solve problems.
- **suicidal:** Someone who thinks about taking his or her own life.

Technical Terms

- **crawl:** On the Internet, crawl refers to programs that can be set to search through hundreds of thousands of sites for selected data or images.
- **information permanence:** On the Internet, this refers to the fact that information placed online is likely to stay online forever.
- **search engine:** A software program that lets you look for information on the Web.

Teacher Background

Cyberbullying has an impact on many people and consequences that can be far-reaching. It:

- Directly affects the emotional well-being of children.
- Has an impact on the ability of all students to learn.
- Makes it difficult for a school to create a safe place for learning .

Targets of cyberbullying may:

- Experience depression.
- Have suicidal thoughts.
- Stay away from school for fear of confronting the cyberbully in person.

There is also a growing trend involving young people using online bullying to hurt parents and teachers in which the cyberbully uses the Internet to damage their reputations in serious ways. The ability to instantly send out information combined with a student's poor impulse control is a volatile mix.

It's important to understand that when cyberbullies place malicious information or images online, that information or those images may stay there forever and come back to haunt the target later in life in various ways. This is referred to as information permanence, and it can have these consequences:

- Comments, actions, or images once posted publicly may well stay online even if the victim gets the Web site to delete the material, or a bully apologizes.
- There is no way to ensure that a retraction is posted along with the offensive action or word in every place the information may have been shared.
- A target can't know who else has downloaded or shared content or what search engine (such as **Google** or **Yahoo!**) crawled (automatically browsed the Web) and stored the offending information.

- A target can't know who else sees these comments and judges them based on the malicious content.

Because of this exposure, the target may face future consequences in addition to the immediate harm. The information may mean that someone chooses not to befriend them; it may cost them a job; be a factor that causes a college to deny them a scholarship; and so on.

The impact of bullying on the bully is also significant. He or she may be disliked by teachers, find it hard to make or keep friends, face a future where possible conviction of crimes is more likely, and find that he has difficulty succeeding in careers and relationships.

Teacher Resource 1 [Bullying, Depression, and Suicidal Ideation in Finnish adolescents: school survey](#)

<http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/319/7206/348>) presents the full abstract of this study which may give helpful background information pertaining to the effects of bullying on the bully and bystanders.



Writing Essentials for Lesson 4 (under development)



Just a reminder to email the **Lesson 4 Letter to Parents** (MS Cyberbullying-Lesson 3 CRT.doc), and the **Lesson 4 Letter to Students** (MS Cyberbullying-Lesson 3 CRS.doc). These letters serve as an introduction to the topics covered in this lesson as well as giving strategies and encouragement.

It's also a good time for you to read the **Lesson 4 Letter to Teachers** (MS Cyberbullying-Lesson 3 CRT.doc) to get ready for this lesson.

Lesson: Cyberbullying Impacts and Consequences

Topic 1: The impact of cyberbullying on the target

Activity 1: Exploring the impact of cyberbullying on the target

Student Activity 1 (Lesson 4 SA1.doc): How Cyberbullying Can Affect Behavior

Hand out Student Activity 1, and read this story aloud to the class, as they read along silently. Ask that as they hear the story, they visualize how Caroline's behavior changes as a result of being cyberbullied. Instruct them to take notes on her changed behavior. After reading the story, ask students to share their thoughts on how this bullying has had an impact on Caroline's life.

Trouble sleeping, jumpy, cries easily, feels bad about her weight, tired, afraid to use computer and cell phone, extremely upset.

Activity 2: Reviewing data on the impact of bullying

Student Activity 2 (Lesson 4 SA2.doc): Studies on the Impact of Bullying

Hand out Student Activity 2. Ask students to work together in small groups to read the handout. Then ask each group to pick one statistic or fact they felt was particularly significant, and discuss briefly within their group why they felt so. Debrief, asking each group to share their observations on the statistic they felt significant and why.

Journal Activity

Either as a homework assignment or in-class activity, ask students to write a paragraph about how they would feel if they were cyberbullied and how being cyberbullied might change their lives.



If you want to break this lesson up into a shorter module now might be a good time to take a break!

Topic 2: The impact of cyberbullying on people other than the target

Activity 3: How bullying affects the bully

Student Activity 3 (Lesson 4 SA3.doc): How Cyberbullying Affects the Bully

Set the stage with your students and discuss briefly their responses to the second question:

We've talked about the impact of bullying on the target, but what about the bully?

Do you think people who make a habit of bullying are generally successful people in their lives?

Hand out Student Activity 3, and have students read the first item, as you post it on the overhead.

- **Because bullying gets bullies what they want at the moment, they frequently don't learn the life skills their peers master, such as the ability to compromise, negotiate and work together to create a mutually supportive environment.**

Ask students why getting what you want by using violence and/or intimidation makes you poorly equipped to succeed in school, jobs, and relationships. List their answers/ideas on the overhead and have students take notes from their discussion on the back of SA3.

You don't know how to get along with people, you are unpopular, you will have problems doing group projects in school, you are less likely to learn other ways to solve problems, less likely to get promotions, more likely to get fired from jobs for bullying others, etc.

Have students return to their small groups to again choose from the remaining points in SA3 (#2-6) which of the five is most significant or surprising to them, and record their group's reasons why. Debrief, asking each group to share their observations on the point they felt significant/surprising and why.

Activity 4: How bullying affects bystanders

Tell students that cyberbullying does not just affect targets and cyberbullies. It also has an impact on the majority of students who are often **bystanders**.

Post this statement to students on the overhead:

- **Cyberbullying creates a climate of fear and disrespect in schools and has a negative impact on student learning (from Banks, 1997, National Education Association, 2003)**

Experiencing how a bystander feels: Ask for 2 volunteers from the class. Have one play the bully, and one play the bystander. Use a chair or another inanimate object as the target (you do not want to victimize a student in the enactment). Ask the bully to start picking on the target verbally, and ask the bystander to note how it makes him or her feel. Have the bystander describe his or her feelings. Then ask the class to provide a list of words that suggest how they would feel if they lived in a school where cyberbullying goes on all the time.

Frightened, sad, tense, nervous, angry, frustrated, worried they may be the next target, etc.

Assignment: Journal Activity

Have students write a paragraph in their journals about how their school would be affected by cyberbullying behavior, focusing specifically on how bystanders are impacted.



If you want to break this lesson up into a shorter module now might be a good time to take a break!

Topic 3: Saying you're sorry doesn't undo the damage of bullying

Activity 5: The permanence of Internet information

Student Activity 4 (Lesson 4 SA4.doc): How Permanent Internet Information Can Be

Hand out SA4 and select a volunteer to read the following statement aloud:

The Internet is a huge network of servers and a single piece of information can be stored on multiple servers. Information placed online stays on those servers until somebody removes it, but just removing it from one server does not remove it from other servers. Any content you post online may remain forever on your Web site, or be a link on another person's Web site, and if someone copies that information they may send it to individuals or post it on other sites that you have no knowledge of. That piece of information may appear in many, many places without you ever knowing about it, and it may appear in places where you can't ask a service to take it down or a person to ignore it.

Have students, as a whole class, discuss what this statement means in their own words. Take time, in the discussion, to make sure your students understand this concept, as this is a critical piece of knowledge that many students have never thought of before.

Then, have students discuss as a whole class, or in small groups the following situation:

Try to imagine that a cyberbully snaps an unflattering picture of a friend of yours on the playfield and posts it on a MySpace page. Where could such a picture end up?

In a video on a social networking site, attached to an e-mail sent to people, sent via cell phone to friends, posted on a pornography site, posted on a phony blog that pretends to be the target's site, etc.

Make the point that even if a cyberbully is sorry for what he/she did and apologizes to the target, if the bullying content posted on the Internet has been copied and forwarded, the damage might not be able to be undone. Cyberbullying can leave a scar on a target as permanent as physical scars from a beating.

Assignment: Journal Activity

As the final activity, have students complete the Journal Assignment in SA4 in class or as homework.



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