



Curriculum Connections

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Cyberbullying:

Understanding and Addressing Online Cruelty

In This Issue

This issue of *Curriculum Connections* provides educators with the tools to increase awareness about the problem of cyberbullying among their students. Each lesson introduces age appropriate information and skills that encourage youth to think critically about Internet communication, develop empathy for others, respond constructively to cyberbullying and online aggression and interact safely on the Internet. The resources in this edition of *Curriculum Connections* will be an important part of your school's broader efforts to foster an increased culture of e-safety and respect for differences among youth.

Research on Cyberbullying

According to Cox Communications and the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 95% of youth (teens ages 13–17) in the U.S. go online and 78% have cell phones and 80% use social networking sites. For the current generation of teens, gaming, video chatting, text messaging and social networking are a vital means of self-expression and a central part of their social lives.

Online communication and technology are neutral entities and can be used positively and negatively. However, there are some youth who are misusing Internet and cell phone technology to bully and harass others, and even to incite violence against them. According to a study by the Cyberbullying Research Center, approximately 24% of young people reported experiencing cyberbullying in their lifetimes. Another study by Cox Communications and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children indicates that about 1 in 10 teens have cyberbullied someone online or by text message. Of social media-using teens ages 12–17, 15% have been the target of online meanness and 88% have seen someone be mean or cruel on social network sites. For some of these youth, online cruelty may be a precursor to more destructive behavior, including involvement in hate groups and bias-related violence.

The impact of bullying has been well documented—studies have shown that difficulty making friends, loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, poor academic achievement, truancy and other risk factors are all associated with being bullied. Young people who engage in bullying also show vulnerability to these risk factors. In addition, the targets of cyberbullying may be subject to additional distress due to the pervasive and invasive nature of modern communication technology: cyberbullying messages can be circulated far and wide in an instant and are usually irrevocable; cyberbullying is ubiquitous—there is no refuge and victimization can be relentless; and cyberbullying is often anonymous and can rapidly swell as countless and unknown others join in on “the fun.”

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Correlation of Lessons to Common Core Standards

Content Area/Standard	Elementary School Lesson	Middle School Lesson	High School Lesson
Reading			
R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.		X	
R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	X		
R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.			X
Writing			
W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	X		
Listening and Speaking			
SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	X	X	X
SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.		X	X
SL.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.			X
SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	X	X	
Language			
L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.	X		
L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.		X	X

Elementary School Lesson

Building a Foundation for Safe and Kind Online Communication

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to encourage safe and kind Internet communication among young children, and to provide students with basic skills for responding productively to online bullying and social aggression. Students use literature, fictional scenarios and creative expression to explore the ways in which Internet communication can amplify hurtful words and to practice responses to hurtful online messages. Students also focus on ways that they can use the Internet to make others feel good and implement online kindness projects in class.

[NOTE: This lesson focuses only on the ways in which children communicate with peers online. It is not intended to be a comprehensive approach to Internet safety, which should address topics such as predatory behavior, privacy and the safeguarding of identity. For resources on these broader issues, consult the organizations listed in [Cyberbullying Resources](#).]

Objectives

- Students will increase their awareness about the damaging power of the Internet to spread hurtful words.
- Students will learn and practice strategies for responding safely and positively to online bullying and social aggression.
- Students will explore ways to use the Internet to promote kindness and self-esteem.

Age Range

Grades 2–5

Time

Approximately 2–3 hours or 3–4 class periods

Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [Emojis](#) (one for teacher use)
- [How to Handle Hurtful Messages Version 1 or 2](#) (Optional; one for each student)
- [Online Bullying and Social Aggression Scenarios](#) (Optional; one scenario for each small group)
- [How Would You Respond?](#) (Optional; one for each small group)
- Internet Safety Pledge (see [NetSmartz](#), for example) (one for each student)

Other Material:

- [Yettele's Feathers](#) by Joan Rothenberg (or another story from "[Feathers](#)" Stories: Resources for Educators)
- Chart paper and markers, paper, pencils, assorted art supplies for drawing pictures (optional)
- Computer and Internet connection (optional)

Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Obtain a copy of [Yettele's Feathers](#) or a similar story (see Part I #1).
- Copy the symbols from the handout, *Emoticons*, on to a large sheet of chart paper. Alternatively, copy the handout onto an overhead transparency or save it to a laptop and make arrangements to project the image on to a screen (see Part II #1).

Key Words

Bullying
E-mail
Emoticon
Gossip
Instant messaging
Internet
Journal
Remorse
Reputation
Text message
Threat

- (Optional) Copy the information from the handout, [How to Handle Hurtful Messages](#), onto a sheet of chart paper or distribute to each student (see Part II #4). There are two versions of this handout; version 1 has simplified and less text. Use the one that is most age appropriate for your students.
- (Optional) Cut [Online Bullying and Social Aggression Scenarios](#) into strips, one for each small group (see Part II #5).
- (Optional) Write the poem from *Feathers* by Heather Forest on a sheet of chart paper (see Part III #4).

Techniques and Skills

analyzing literature, brainstorming, case study, cooperative group work, forming opinions, identifying feelings, large and small group discussion, reading skills, social action, using the Internet, writing skills

Procedures

Part I: The Nature of Internet Communication (60 minutes)

1. Read aloud to students [Yettele's Feathers](#) by Joan Rothenberg, using the questions below to discuss the story.
 - Why did Yettele spend so much time “minding other people’s business”?
 - How did Yettele get the wrong idea when she saw Yussel Farfel help himself to the apple? What happened when Yettele spread her version of the story?
 - Have you ever jumped to conclusions about someone’s behavior without knowing the whole story? What happened as a result?
 - Was it enough for Yettele to say, “I didn’t mean to cause trouble” and “I’m very sorry and I take it all back”? Why is it difficult to “take back” harmful words once they have been spread?
 - Did you agree with Yettele when she said that her stories are “only words, not rocks and stones” and that they can cause “no more harm than a feather”? Do you think gossip and mean words are more like rocks or feathers? Why?
 - How did the Rabbi help Yettele to understand the effect of her stories on other people?
 - How did Yettele learn to turn her fondness for talking into something positive?
 - Can you think of ways that you might use your words to make other people feel good?

NOTE: If you are unable to find a copy of [Yettele's Feathers](#), read aloud or tell another version of the story using one of the sources listed in the handout, [“Feathers” Stories: Resources for Educators](#).

2. Point out that in Yettele’s time, information was communicated from person to person via word of mouth. Ask students how information is communicated in their world today. Suggest that technology is increasingly one of the main ways in which people today communicate. Conduct a brief “physical survey” to determine the extent to which students utilize Internet technology. Have students form a circle and ask them to step into the middle if they have ever sent or received an e-mail, and then to step back out. Repeat this process using the prompts below. (If there is space or other limitations, have students raise their hands from their seats in response to each prompt).
 - Step in if you’ve ever played games with other people online.
 - Step in if you’ve ever chatted or exchanged messages with friends online.
 - Step in if you’ve ever posted a blog.
 - Step in if you’ve ever visited a Web site that helps you to make new friends.
 - Step in if you have your own cell phone.
 - Step in if you’ve ever sent or received a text/picture/video message on your phone.
 - Step in if you use the Internet or send text messages at least once per week.
 - Step in if you use the Internet or send text messages every day.

NOTE: While some of the items in this survey may seem advanced for elementary-age children, the reality is that children as young as five and six are exposed to “grown-up” technologies through older siblings and marketing that seeks to market to the next generation of users. Sites such as [Club Penguin](#) and [Webkinz](#), for example, introduce young children to online games, virtual shopping, social networking and buddy lists. The survey above will help you to learn who among your students is already active and who remains inexperienced with regard to online communication and technology.

3. Ask students to think about how communication via the Internet, e-mail, text messaging, etc. is like the “feathers in the wind” from the story about Yettele. Have students (either individually or in small groups) write a story, draw a picture or design a cartoon that illustrates their ideas. When students are done, post their work around the room and ask for a few volunteers to share what they have created. Emphasize that messages sent out over the Internet can spread instantaneously to many people and that it is often impossible to take them back once they are out there.

Part II: Responding to Hurtful Messages (45 minutes)

1. Introduce students to the *Emojis* prepared prior to the lesson. Describe to students how these symbols are used to convey feelings in electronic communications and make sure that students understand what each one means.
2. Remind students that in the book, Yettele’s words and stories were hurtful to many people. Ask students if they have ever experienced hurtful words or mean behavior while playing a game, using an app, or sending text messages and allow several students to share their experiences, making sure they do not reveal the names of others who may have been involved. After each anecdote, ask how the student responded and how the incident made the student feel. Invite them to indicate their feelings by sticking a small Post-it with their names next to the appropriate emoji introduced earlier.
3. Comment that when we are sad, scared or mad, we sometimes react to hurtful messages in ways that are not helpful. Tell students that they are going to spend some time in class practicing how to respond to some made-up messages so that they will be prepared to do the right thing if such incidents occur in real life.
4. Review with students the information in the handout, [How to Handle Hurtful Messages](#). Depending on the age and ability of your students, this can be done by distributing copies of the handout to each student, writing the information up on chart paper or reviewing the information verbally.

NOTE: There are two versions of this handout; version 1 has simplified and less text. Use the one that is most age appropriate for your students.

5. Have students practice responding to the situations in the handout, [Online Bullying and Social Aggression Scenarios](#). Depending on the age and ability of your students, choose one of the following options:
 - a. **Whole Class Discussion:** Read the first scenario aloud and ask students: *What is going on? How do you think the person feels? What do you suggest for a positive response?* Reinforce the strategies reviewed earlier and, if students suggest inappropriate responses, explain why they are not safe or constructive. Repeat this process for as many scenarios as time allows.
 - b. **Small Group Investigation:** Divide the class into groups of 3–4 students. Cut the handout into strips with one scenario on each, and provide each group with one strip. Instruct groups to read their scenario and discuss positive responses, drawing upon the strategies reviewed earlier. Have groups write or draw their response on the handout, *How Would You Respond?* When groups are done, reconvene the class and allow each group to share its work. Make sure to reinforce the strategies reviewed earlier and to discourage unsafe or inappropriate ideas that may surface.

Part III: Using the Internet for Positive Purposes (time will vary)

1. Reinforce with students that although some people use technology to hurt others, most people use it for positive purposes. Suggest that the Internet can be a wonderful tool for making people feel connected and cared for. Introduce students to one of the programs below and discuss how it might be implemented in their class or school using technology to enhance the effects:
 - a. **Random Acts of Kindness:** Inspires people to practice kindness and to “pass it on” to others; includes ideas for creating a class “[Kindness Site](#).”
 - b. **Pay It Forward Movement:** Seeks to change the world “one favor at a time”; features a [PIF in Schools](#) page with stories about how kids are “paying it forward” in their schools.
2. Ask students for ideas about ways that they might implement one of the programs above, using the technology to make people feel good. List their ideas on a sheet of chart paper and come up with a plan to execute one or more of the ideas. Some examples are:

- Send an e-mail, text or message to a far-away friend or relative letting them know that you are thinking of them.
 - Send an electronic message to someone who is sick or needs cheering up.
 - Create a Web site or Web posting to raise money, goods or awareness about a special charity or for people in need of help.
 - Create a blog that celebrates students' special talents and interests.
 - Create a class "Kindness Site" and share it with other students, parents, teachers, etc.
 - Create a class "Paying it Forward" newsletter and post/distribute it online.
3. Encourage students to be good "netizens" by always being safe, responsible in their online communications. Send home a Safety and Positive Behavior Pledge for families to go over and sign together (see [NetSmartz](#), for example).
 4. Conclude the lesson by posting and reading together the following poem from the story, *Feathers*, as an ongoing reminder to students:

Feathers

Words, like feathers fly
In the wind, in the wind.
Reaching far and wide,
In the wind, in the wind.
Careless words, tossed about,
Cannot again be swallowed up.
Tongues like swords can cut the
heart.
Words fly out.
The rumors start...

Cruel words like feathers fly.
Cruel words reach far and wide.
They leave the mouth a bitter rind.
May all your words,
my friends, be kind.

Reprinted with permission from Heather Forest, *Feathers* (Atlanta, GA: August House Publishers, Inc., 2005).

“Feathers” Stories: Resources for Educators

There are many versions of the “Feathers” story, which uses the imagery of feathers scattered by the wind as a metaphor for the dangers of gossip and the irretrievable nature of unkind words that have been dispersed in the community. The original story has been attributed to the Hasidic Rabbi, Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev, but can be found in the folklore of various faith traditions as well as in literature on peace education and conflict resolution. Below is one version of the story as well as additional sources that are all appropriate for young children.

The Chicken Story – A Tale of Regret

Once there was a foolish woman in a small village, who spread some gossip about another woman in the village. Before long the foolish woman began to feel remorse about what she had done, so she went to the wise man of the village to ask him what she could do to make things right. The wise man listened carefully to her story, thought for a moment, and then told her to go to the market and buy a chicken. On the way home from the market she was to pluck that chicken letting the feathers fall along the path. The next day she was to come back and see the wise man again.

The foolish woman did as the wise man suggested. She bought a chicken and plucked it on the way home. When she came to him the next day she told him that she had done what he asked her to do. The wise man said to her, “Now, I want you to go home today by the same road you took yesterday, and pick up every single feather you dropped along the path.” The woman was distraught, and protested that there was absolutely no way she could find and pick up all those feathers. The wind would have surely blown them everywhere!































The wise man quietly responded, “You are correct...and you see, just as you can never retrieve all those feathers, there is no way you can ever restore the reputation of the woman whom you harmed with your words.”

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Additional Sources of “Feathers” Stories

- [Feathers in the Wind](#) (video version), NetSmartz
- *Feathers: A Jewish Tale from Eastern Europe* (picture book version) by Heather Forest, August House Publishers, Inc., 2005, 32pp, ISBN: 0874837553
- *Feathers in the Wind and Other Jewish Tales* (audio version) by Susan Stone, 2001, ASIN: B00005M0U6
- *Spinning Tales, Weaving Hope: Stories, Storytelling, and Activities for Peace, Justice and the Environment*, Vol. 1 (short story version) by Ed Brody et al. (eds.), New Society Publishers, 2002, 296pp, ISBN: 0865714479
- *Wisdom Tales From Around the World* (short story version) by Heather Forest, August House Publishers, Inc., 1996, 156pp, ISBN: 0874834791
- *Yettele’s Feathers* (picture book version) by Joan Rothenberg, Hyperion Books for Children, 1995, 32pp, ISBN: 0786800976

Emojis

-   **Grinning Face**
-   **Smiling Face with Open Mouth and Smiling Eyes**
-   **Face with Tears of Joy**
-   **Angry Face**
-   **Confused Face**
-   **Crying Face**
-   **Kissing Face**
-   **Face Throwing a Kiss**
-   **Sleeping Face**
-   **Smirking Face**
-   **Dizzy Face**
-   **Face with Stuck-out Tongue**
-   **Face with Stuck-out Tongue and Winking Eye**
-   **Face Savoring Delicious Food**
-   **Face Screaming in Fear**


How to Handle Hurtful Messages

(Version 1)

These tips can help you to make good choices when faced with hurtful online messages.

1. Never talk to people you don't know online.

2. If you receive a hurtful, mean or bullying message:

- Do not answer, but save it .
- Sign off of the computer right away.
- Tell an adult about the message.



3. If you receive a hurtful message from a friend or classmate:

- Think before answering. Sometimes it is better to share your feelings face-to-face.



- If you answer online or with a text message, be careful with your words. Remember that you can't take them back.
- Keep the message private. Never pass around messages that might hurt others.

How to Handle Hurtful Messages

(Version 2)

Online bullying and unfriendly messages can make us feel sad, angry, ashamed, and confused about how to respond. The following tips will help you to make positive choices when faced with online bullying and other hurtful messages.

1. Never respond to messages from people you don't know online.
2. If you receive a mean, bullying or threatening message from anyone:
 - Do not respond, but save it 📁 or print it 🖨️. If it is a text message, show an adult.
 - After you save the message, sign off of the Web site, game or messaging area right away.
 - Then tell a trusted adult (such as a parent or teacher) about the message.
 - An adult can help you to block the addresses of people who are not friends and who are sending hurtful messages.
 - A trusted adult will also report online bullying to others if needed, such as the school principal, the aggressor's parents or the police.
3. If you receive an angry or hurtful message from a friend or classmate:



- Think carefully before responding. Decide if it would be better to respond face-to-face rather than use technology.
- If you answer online or through text message, be careful with your words. Remember that you can't take them back.
- If you decide to respond online or through text message, take a few minutes to think about and organize your message before sending. Remember that your message can't be taken back once sent, and that it can be saved or forwarded to others. Don't write anything that you may be sorry for later.
- Remember that the person reading the message can't see or hear you. Use emojis or signs like :- (for sad or :- / for confused to make your emotions clear.
- Don't write words in all capitals (it's like shouting) or use your words in ways that carry anger.
- Keep the message private and don't forward to others. If you need advice from a friend about how to handle a tough situation, talk in person. Never pass around messages that might hurt or embarrass others.

Online Bullying and Social Aggression Scenarios

1. You find out that some kids in your class are sending around a text message that includes some embarrassing photos of you and nasty comments about your family about being from Mexico and speaking English with an accent. It also includes your e-mail address and encourages visitors to send mean messages to you. How do you respond?
2. You have been receiving hurtful emails for the past few weeks from an address you don't recognize. At first they just include insults about being fat, so you ignore them. But now they are coming more often and include threats that make you feel unsafe. How do you respond?
3. Your parents agree to hold your birthday party at your favorite laser tag place, but because of the expense you are only allowed to invite five friends. One of your classmates is angry that he is not included and sends a text message about you to another friend, who sends it to someone else and it starts spreading around the school until you get it. How do you respond?
4. A group of girls have created a private message board, where they talk about what they're going to wear to school and make social plans for the weekends. You try to join, but are rejected. When you ask a friend to ask why you have been excluded, she replies that some of the girls think you're weird because of the thick glasses you wear. How do you respond?
5. You are texting one evening with a friend, who asks you what you think of a classmate. At first you don't reply, but she keeps asking, writing things like, "Isn't she stuck up?" You finally write back that you agree and then get an angry message from the classmate, who looked at your friend's phone and saw the texts. How do you respond?

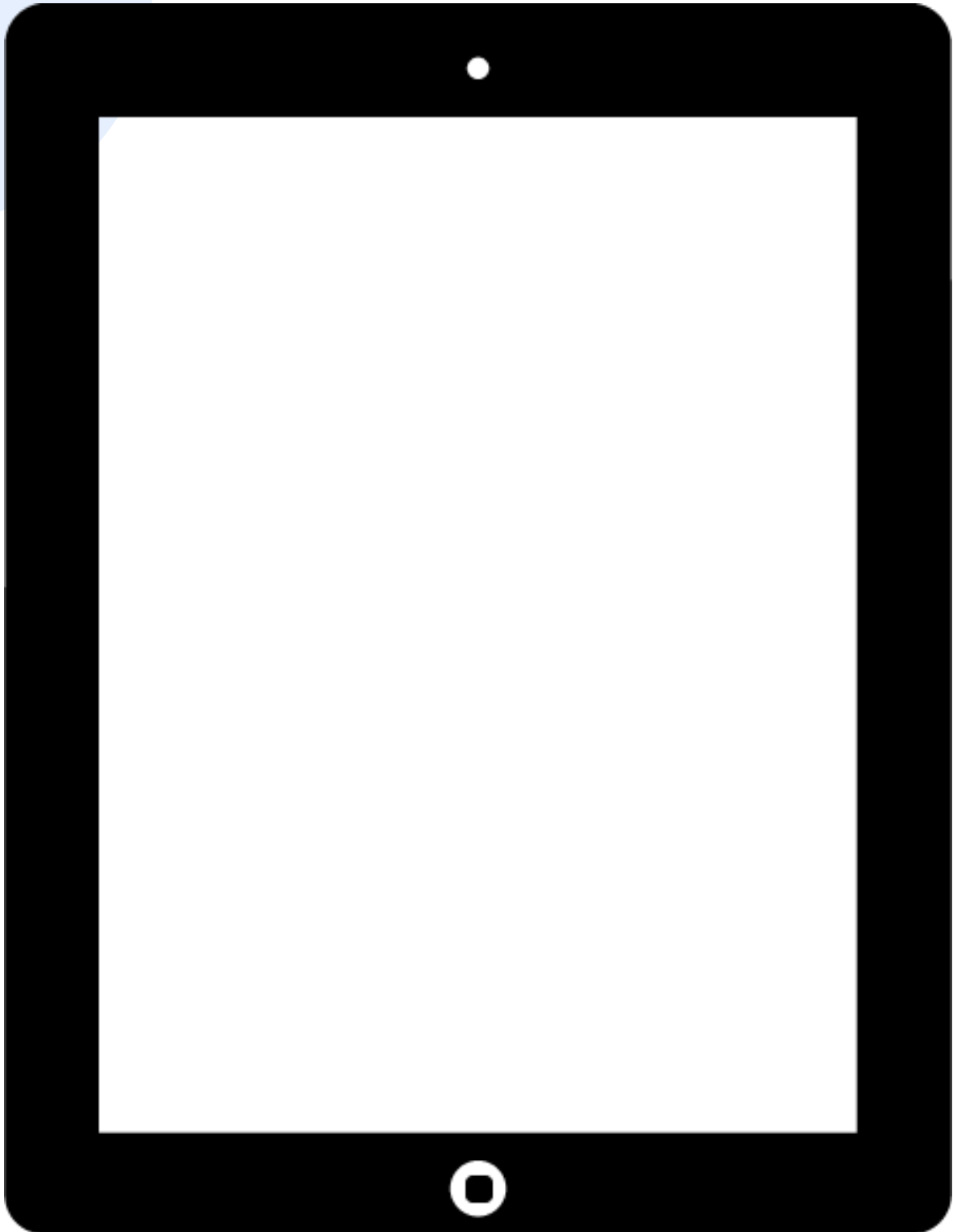
6. You get a message from an unknown user with an embarrassing photo of you. You can tell that the picture was taken during recess when you were trying out some silly dance moves, but it has been changed to make you look ridiculous. A classmate tells you the name of an older student who he says took the picture with a cell phone. How do you respond?

7. After telling your friend a personal secret in a text message and making her swear not to tell anyone, you find out that she took a screen shot of it and sent it to someone else. How do you respond?

8. You get an angry direct message through a gaming site from a friend who accuses you of spreading rumors about him. You deny it and he forwards messages from your account, saying that he is poor, dirty and wears the same clothes every day. You know that you never sent the messages and figure that someone must have stolen your password and pretended to be you. How do you respond?

9. You have a disagreement with a teammate at practice, and the coach ends up benching your teammate for the next game. That night you receive furious texts from the teammate, calling you names and telling you that you've ruined everything. At first you don't reply, but the texts keep coming and get more and more angry. How do you respond?

How Would You Respond?



Middle School Lesson

Dealing with the Social Pressures that Promote Online Cruelty

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to increase awareness among middle school students about the problem of cyberbullying and provide them with strategies to deal effectively with the social pressure that encourages them to participate in online cruelty. After hearing the true story of a target of cyberbullying, students explore the nature and extent of the problem in their own lives. Through a public service announcement and case studies, students consider why cruelty is so common in an online forum and use this insight to build empathy, explore personal motivations and devise positive alternatives for online communication.

[NOTE: This lesson focuses only on the ways in which children communicate with peers online. It is not intended to be a comprehensive approach to Internet safety, which should address topics such as predatory behavior, privacy and the safeguarding of identity. For resources on these broader issues, consult the organizations listed in [Cyberbullying Resources](#).]

Objectives

- Students will increase their awareness of the problem of cyberbullying.
- Students will consider what motivates young people to participate in online cruelty.
- Students will increase their empathy for others.
- Students will develop strategies for resisting peer pressure and communicating in positive ways online.

Key Words

Brainstorming
Case study
Cooperative group work
Critical thinking
Forming opinions
Large and small group
Discussion
Media literacy

Age Range

Grades 5–9

Time

Approximately 90 minutes or two class periods

Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [Welcome to the Web Site that Makes Fun of Dave](#) (one for teacher use)
- [Understanding and Addressing Online Cruelty](#) (one for teacher reference)
- [Cyberbullying Scenarios](#) (one scenario for each small group)
- [Internet Safety Strategies for Youth](#) (one for each student)

Other Material:

- [Talent Show](#) and [Kitchen](#) public service announcements (video clips)
- Chart paper, markers and other colorful writing implements
- Laptop/LCD projector, screen, Internet access

Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Prepare laptop/LCD projector for viewing of cyberbullying PSAs (see Part I #3).
- Write the following at the top of a sheet of chart paper: “If you wouldn’t say it in person, why say it online?” (see Part I #4).

- Cut the [Cyberbullying Scenarios](#) into strips, one for each small group (see Part II #1).
- Write the following in the center of a sheet of chart paper: “Class Code of Ethics for Internet Communication” (see Part II #4).

Techniques and Skills

brainstorming, case study, cooperative group work, critical thinking, forming opinions, large and small group discussion, media literacy

Procedures

Part I: Exploring the Nature and Extent of Cyberbullying (35–45 minutes)

1. Tell students that you are going to share an incident that happened to a real teenager named David in the recent past. Ask them to close their eyes as they listen, and to imagine that they are a student at David’s school. Read aloud from the handout, [Welcome to the Web Site that Makes Fun of Dave](#), then discuss the following:
 - How did it make you feel to hear about this incident?
 - What do you think motivated the students who created the Web site?
 - What about those who added comments or e-mails and those who chose not to tell anyone about what was taking place?
 - What would you have done if you received a link to the Web site or a message inviting you to visit and join in?
2. Ask students to consider if cyberbullying, or online cruelty, is a common occurrence in their lives. Direct them to form a human continuum, standing to one side of the room if they feel it is extremely common, the other side if it is rare, or somewhere in-between that reflects their experience. Ask for volunteers at different points in the continuum to explain why they chose their position. Solicit specific examples from them, making sure that they respect the confidentiality of others and avoid stories that will offend or embarrass their peers. Have students return to their seats.
3. Play one or both of the following public service announcements, which were created by the [National Crime Prevention Council](#) for its cyberbullying prevention campaign.
 - [Talent Show](#) (video clip, 50 seconds)
 - [Kitchen](#) (video clip, 50 seconds)
4. Post a sheet of chart paper with the following question at the top, which appears at the end of each PSA: “If you wouldn’t say it in person, why say it online?” Challenge students to articulate why cruelty is so common in an online environment and list their responses. (Consult the reference sheet, [Understanding and Addressing Online Cruelty](#), and add some of these examples to the chart if students don’t address them.)

Part II: Identifying Strategies for Positive Online Communication (45 minutes)

1. Divide the class into small groups of 3–4 students. Assign each group one of the situations from [Cyberbullying Scenarios](#) or provide other scenarios that relate to your students’ particular experience. Instruct each group to do the following, allowing about 15 minutes to complete the tasks:
 - a. Identify the reasons or motivations for the cyberbullying, drawing from the chart created in step #4 above.
 - b. Discuss the impact of the cyberbullying on all of the students involved and the potential consequences of the negative behavior.
 - c. Discuss alternatives to the negative behavior described, and rewrite the scenario to incorporate more positive conduct. (For example, the scenario describing a student who participated in cyberbullying to fit in with the popular crowd might be rewritten to depict the same student reporting the cyberbullying and looking for friendship in other circles.)
2. Reconvene the class and have each group share its work. Reinforce positive strategies for dealing with the pressures that induce young people to participate in cyberbullying, drawing from the reference sheet, [Understanding and Addressing Online Cruelty](#), where appropriate.

3. Conclude the lesson by suggesting that the most important way to deal with the impulse to participate in online cruelty is to reflect on the kind of person we want to be and the personal values that guide our behavior toward others. Ask students to think of one statement that reflects their values regarding conduct toward others online. Share one or more of the following examples if necessary and allow a few minutes for students to silently reflect and come up with their statements.

Examples:

- Always use respectful language.
 - Protect your own and others' safety.
 - Value all people and never put down others.
 - Respect privacy and avoid gossip/rumors.
 - Include others in online communities.
 - A person with feelings is on the other end of every click.
4. While students are thinking, post a sheet of chart paper and write the following in the center: "Class Code of Ethics for Electronic and Online Communication." As students are ready, invite them to write their statements "graffiti style" on the chart paper (have a variety of markers, paint pens, etc. on hand). Ask for some volunteers to read their statements aloud. Hang the chart in a visible area as an ongoing reminder of the expectations set forth during this lesson.
 5. Distribute the handout, [Internet Safety Strategies for Youth](#), and review the information with students to reinforce safe and responsible Internet use. Send the handout home for students to share and discuss with family members.

Understanding and Addressing Online Cruelty

REASONS ¹ for online social aggression	STRATEGIES for reducing online social aggression
1. I can't see you (invisibility lessens empathy).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visualize the person on the receiving end of the message and imagine how they will feel. • Balance time spend online with activities that involve face-to-face interaction.
2. You don't know me (anonymity emboldens people to say things they normally wouldn't).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture yourself saying this to someone in person. Could you? How would it feel?
3. See you later (communication that does not involve immediate, real-time feedback may reduce inhibitions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about the response your message may provoke at a later time from the recipient, other peers and adults.
4. It's just a game (the Internet may seem like a world separate and apart, with different rules and norms).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the real-life outcomes and consequences that your actions could have. • Never engage in fantasy play without others' consent and willing participation.
5. It's not me (responsibility for cruel behavior may be placed on an online persona or identity rather than on oneself).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask yourself if the person on the receiving end will experience your comments as part of a fantasy or role-play.
6. Look at me (personal attacks are an easy way to attract notice; negative attention may be better than no attention).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on how you really want others to view you. • Consider behaviors that will lead to positive attention and friendships.
7. Don't mess with me (retaliation online is less threatening than standing up to a foe in person).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether revenge will actually solve your problems or make you feel better. • Talk to a trusted adult about proactive solutions.
8. I'm one of you (participating in online cruelty may seem like a way to gain social acceptance; standing up to it may seem like it will bring ostracism).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask yourself if you really want friends who are cruel to others. • Talk to an adult about ways to avoid online hostility and support those who are targeted.
9. You're not like me (the Internet may be a vehicle for expressing hate or prejudice that is socially unacceptable at school).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine how it would feel if you were targeted for being different. • Seek help from a teacher or counselor who can help you to deal with negative feelings.

¹ Reasons 2–4 are from John Suler, "The Online Disinhibition Effect," *CyberPsychology and Behavior* 7(2004): 321–326; reasons 1, 5 and 6 are from Nancy Willard, *Educator's Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats*, (Center for Safe and Responsible Use of the Internet, 2007), www.accem.org/pdf/cbcteducator.pdf (accessed November 2012).

Welcome to the Web Site that Makes Fun of Dave²

After being teased, taunted and punched for years, some peers set up an abusive Web site about David that made his life unbearable. The site—titled “Welcome to the Web site that makes fun of Dave”—was active for months before David found out about it; none of his friends or classmates bothered to warn him about it.

The students who created the Web site included pages of hateful comments directed at David and his family. Soon other students at school joined in, posting rude remarks that embarrassed David and smeared his reputation. Some students used a link to David’s e-mail address to send messages like this one: “You’re gay, don’t ever talk again, no one likes you, you’re immature and dirty, go wash your face.”

The abuse went on for seven long months before the Web host agreed to take down the site. By that time David felt so defeated that he decided to leave school and complete his studies at home.

“Rather than just some people, say 30 in a cafeteria,” commented David, “hearing them all yell insults at you, it’s up there for 6 billion people to see. Anyone with a computer can see it. And you can’t get away from it. It doesn’t go away when you come home from school. It made me feel even more trapped.”

² This is a real story and something similar can happen on social media sites.

Cyberbullying Scenarios

1. You are sitting around with a group of friends at a Friday night sleepover when Emily asks, “Who don’t we like? Who can we mess with?” Someone suggests Sarah, a girl with a physical disability that causes her to walk with a limp. For some time, Sarah has been trying to become part of your group, but has been excluded because some girls think she is “weird.” Emily sets up a fictitious account on a social media site and sends Sarah a direct message that says, “Nice moves in gym class yesterday. Walk much?” You laugh along with the other girls and participate in more mean messages.
2. You have an account on a gaming site, where you like to play with your online friends. One day your parents discover an e-mail from the site administrator indicating that the account will be terminated due to the posting of the following message: *“I hate Hitler because he didn’t finish the job—he should have killed all the Jews.”* At first you swear that you had nothing to do with the message, but later admit that you were encouraged to post it by another student, who has been calling you mean names and threatening to hurt you. You tell your parents that you figured it wouldn’t hurt anyone to post the message and it might get the person who bullied you to finally leave you alone.
3. You are furious with your best friend after hearing that he is flirting with a girl he knows you have liked since the sixth grade. You find an old photo of your friend from before he transferred to your school and before he lost fifty pounds. You text the picture to the girl with a message saying, “Just thought you should know what your boyfriend really looks like.”
4. A group of anonymous students have created a social media site about one of their classmates named Larry. Although Larry does not identify as gay, the page includes postings about Larry being gay that include made-up stories, jokes and cartoons involving Larry and other students at the school. It includes a place where visitors can post comments and an email link for people to send their messages directly to Larry. You receive an e-mail with a link to the site. Though you don’t post any new comments to the site, you forward the e-mail with the link to your friends.
5. You have a disagreement with one of your teammates at a game and the coach ends up benching you for the remainder of the game. Afterwards, you are so steamed that you send an angry text to your teammate, blaming her for everything. She texts back, trying to explain her side of things, but this angers you further and you end up sending a series of nasty text messages, calling her mean names and even threatening to “put her in her place” if she messes with you at the next game.
6. Hanif is one of only a few Muslim students at your school. On a day when the morning news includes the report of a terrorist attack on a subway in another country, a group surrounds Hanif after school, calling him a “terrorist” and questioning his loyalty to the U.S. You are part of a group of onlookers, who watch as the group starts pushing and slapping Hanif. At the suggestion of your friend, you video the attack on your cell phone and later spread it around the school from an unofficial school Twitter account.
7. After rehearsal for the school play, Jill remains in the auditorium by herself to practice dance moves, forgetting that the video camera is still on. The next day you and a friend discover the video of Jill, which contains some silly and embarrassing footage. As a gag, you decide to create a fake social media account for Jill that contains some of the footage, and you invite the whole school to be her “friend.” The video of Jill dancing becomes a school-wide joke, and people start to add visual and sound effects that make Jill look even funnier. Before long, the video begins to spread and Jill receives hundreds of harassing messages.

High School Lesson

Cyberbullying and Online Cruelty: Challenging Social Norms

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to increase awareness and empathy among students with regard to cyberbullying and online social cruelty. Through visual media and discussion, students are encouraged to reevaluate their own online behavior and to explore their collective civic responsibility to make the Internet a safe “neighborhood.” Students are challenged to analyze how social norms contribute to negative online behavior, and to design a campaign to reshape these norms in their school community.

[NOTE: This lesson focuses only on the ways in which students communicate with peers online. It is not intended to be a comprehensive approach to Internet safety, which should address topics such as predatory behavior, pornography, privacy and the safeguarding of identity. For resources on these broader issues, consult the organizations listed in [Cyberbullying Resources](#).]

Objectives

- Students will increase their awareness about the problem of cyberbullying and develop greater empathy for the targets of online social cruelty
- Students will explore their civic responsibility to make the Internet a safe space
- Students will investigate how social norms around online behavior influence them
- Students will work to change the social norms in their school community

Age Range

Grades 9–12

Time

Approximately two hours or three class periods (Note: If time is limited, implement only Part II of the lesson, which can be completed in 45 minutes)

Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [Online Behavior: What Do We Think?](#) (one for each student)
- [If the Internet was a Neighborhood, Challenging Social Norms at Rutgers University](#) and [Challenging Social Norms at University of Missouri-Columbia](#) (create overhead transparencies of these images or save them on a laptop so they can be projected on to a large screen)
- [Social Norms Theory: Background for Educators](#) (for teacher reference only)
- [Internet Safety Strategies for Youth](#) (one for each student)

Other Material:

- Large sheets of newsprint or construction paper, assorted art supplies (markers, crayons, etc.)
- Laptop/LCD projector or overhead projector, screen, Internet access

Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.

Key Words

Bystander
Civic
Cyberbullying
Denigration
Exclusion
Flaming
Harassment
Impersonation
Misperception
Outing
Social networking sites
Social norm

- Prepare a laptop/LCD Projector for viewing of cartoon (see Part II #1), film (see Part II #3) and poster (see Part III #4).

Techniques and Skills

analyzing visual art, brainstorming, collecting and analyzing data, cooperative group work, forming opinions, large and small group discussion, media literacy, social action

Procedures

Part I: Pre-Lesson Survey (10 minutes)

1. A day before the lesson, have students fill out the survey, [Online Behavior: What Do We Think?](#) Explain that they should answer each question twice, once based on what they believe and once based on what they think the majority of their peers believe. Emphasize that the survey is anonymous (no names should be written on top) and encourage them to answer honestly.
2. Collect the surveys and tally student responses by calculating both the average numerical response for each item and the number of students who chose 4 (agree) or 5 (strongly agree) for each item. Save the original surveys as they will be used in class during the lesson.

Part II: Building Awareness and Empathy about Cyberbullying (45 minutes)

1. Project the cartoon, [If the Internet was a Neighborhood](#), on to a large screen. Discuss the image using the following questions:
 - What do you observe?
 - In what ways does this cartoon reflect your online experience?
 - Is there anything missing from this picture? (*Mention cyberbullying and online social cruelty if students do not bring it up.*)
 - Would you want to live in a real-life version of this neighborhood?
 - Why do people put up with such environments online?

NOTE: During this discussion, begin to explore with students the notion of a collective civic responsibility to make the Internet a safe “neighborhood.” Challenge the assumption that negative behavior online is something that “we just have to put up with” or “can’t do anything about.”

2. Tell students that while this cartoon highlights a number of negative Internet behaviors, this lesson’s focus will be on the issue of cyberbullying because it seems to be a growing trend among young people. Use the following questions to learn what students know about cyberbullying and what their experiences have been with this problem.
 - What is cyberbullying? (*Cyberbullying is willful and repeated harm inflicted through electronic media.*³)
 - Where does it happen most often? (*Common vehicles include social networking sites, other Web sites, chat rooms, e-mail, instant messaging, text/picture/video messages, gaming sites, blogs and message boards.*)
 - What experiences have you had with cyberbullying?
 - How do you/other youth respond when it happens? How about adults?
3. Show [Let’s Fight It Together](#), a seven-minute film produced in the United Kingdom by [Childnet](#) for the Department for Children, Schools and Families to help sensitize young people to the pain and hurt which can be caused by cyberbullying. After the viewing, elicit student reactions and discuss the following questions:
 - Why do you think Kim targeted Joe for harassment?
 - Why do you think Joe endured the cyberbullying without seeking help?
 - Why do you think Rob and the other bystanders joined in or allowed the cyberbullying to go on without interrupting it?

³ Definition adapted from Justin Patchin and Sameer Hinduja, “Cyberbullying Fact Sheet: What You Need to Know about Online Aggression,” http://www.cyberbullying.us/cyberbullying_fact_sheet.pdf (accessed November 2012).

- Have you experienced or witnessed instances of cyberbullying like this one? If so, how did you respond? After watching this film, would you respond differently in the future?

Part III (60–90 minutes)

1. Suggest that one reason many young people put up with online bullying and cruelty has to do with something called social norms. Explain to students what this means and how it relates to cyberbullying by paraphrasing from the reading, [Social Norms Theory: Background for Educators](#).
2. Tell students that the survey they filled out, [Online Behavior: What Do We Think?](#), is meant to demonstrate how social norms work. Randomly redistribute the surveys filled out earlier, one to each student. Ask students to stand if the survey they received indicates that the individual (who filled it out) agrees (4) or strongly agrees (5) with the first statement. Have everyone look around before sitting down. Next ask people to stand if the survey in their hand indicates that the typical peer agrees (4) or strongly agrees (5) with the statement. Have everyone look around again before sitting down. Repeat this process for the remaining three statements. Summarize the results of this survey by posting or verbally sharing the tally you compiled in step #2 above, then discuss the following questions:⁴
 - a. What did you observe during this exercise? (*Most often, individuals believe that their own online behavior and attitudes are different from their peer's behavior and attitudes.*)
 - b. How do you think that this misperception affects people's behavior? (*Students are more likely to take part in negative online behavior and less likely to stand up to it.*)
 - c. Now that you have more accurate information about your peers' attitudes, how might this affect your behavior? (*Students will feel more comfortable resisting cyberbullying and other forms of online social cruelty, and acting as an ally to those who have been targeted.*)
3. Ask students for concrete examples of how the four social norms listed on the survey play out in their day to day lives. Elicit stories that demonstrate, for example, how assumptions about the meaning of free speech have led students to say cruel things online; or how the unwritten code, "what happens online stays online," has prevented students from reporting cyberbullying that they witnessed even though they knew it was wrong.
4. Ask students if they think that it is possible to change the social norms in a community. Inform them that social scientists have come up with ways to re-educate students about social norms to address campus problems such as binge drinking, sexism and homophobia. Display the [Challenging Social Norms at Rutgers University](#) and [University of Missouri-Columbia](#) posters and explain that these were part of campaigns designed to correct misperceptions of, and to reduce, student alcohol and other drug use. Tell students that these posters were distributed through campus media, presentations, and mailings to first year students, members of Greek organizations, athletes and other groups most likely to engage in excessive drinking.
5. Tell students that they are going to engage in an experiment to see if they can reshape the norms in their community around negative online behavior. Divide students into four groups and assign each group one of the following online social norms from the survey:
 - a. I have a free speech right to say whatever I want online.
 - b. On the Internet it is okay to reveal personal secrets for others to see.
 - c. What happens online should stay online.
 - d. What happens online is mostly a game, so no one can really get hurt.
 - e. If I text a private picture or something personal to someone, it is not okay for them to send it to anyone else.
6. Instruct each group to come up with a message for re-educating their peers about the norm they were assigned, to create a poster illustrating the message and to identify some strategies for disseminating their message.
7. Reconvene the class and have each group share its work. Ask students to come up with a name for the overall campaign and to create a plan for launching it in the school.

⁴ This process, survey and social norms adapted with permission from Tanya Smolinsky, "What Do We Really Think?", original unpublished work.

8. Distribute the handout, [*Internet Safety Strategies for Youth*](#), and review the information with students to reinforce safe and responsible Internet use. Send the handout home for students to share and discuss with family members.

Online Behavior: What Do You Think?

For each of the statements below, circle the numbers that most closely correspond with both your own belief and the belief you feel is typically held by members of your peer group.

1=strongly disagree; **2**=disagree; **3**=unsure; **4**=agree; **5**=strongly agree

1. I have a free speech right to say whatever I want online.
 - a. Your response 1 2 3 4 5
 - b. Your peers' typical response 1 2 3 4 5

2. On the Internet it is okay to reveal personal secrets for others to see.
 - a. Your response 1 2 3 4 5
 - b. Your peers' typical response 1 2 3 4 5

3. What happens online should stay online.
 - a. Your response 1 2 3 4 5
 - b. Your peers' typical response 1 2 3 4 5

4. What happens online is mostly a game, so no one can really get hurt.
 - a. Your response 1 2 3 4 5
 - b. Your peers' typical response 1 2 3 4 5

5. If I text a private picture or something personal to someone, it is not okay for them to send it to anyone else.
 - a. Your response 1 2 3 4 5
 - b. Your peers' typical response 1 2 3 4 5

The norms on this survey are adapted from Nancy Willard, "An Educator's Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats" (Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use), www.accem.org/pdf/cbcteducator.pdf (accessed November 2012); and the survey itself was adapted from "What Do We Really Think?", original unpublished work by Tanya Smolinsky. All material used with permission.

If the Internet was a Neighborhood



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Social Norms Theory: Background for Educators

Social norms are people's beliefs about the attitudes and behaviors that are normal, acceptable, or even expected in a particular social context. In many situations, people's perceptions of these norms will greatly influence their behavior. When people misperceive the norms of their peer group—that is when they inaccurately think an attitude or behavior is more (or less) common than is actually the case—they may choose to engage in behaviors that are in sync with those false norms.¹ *Pluralistic Ignorance* is the term that is used in academia to discuss social norms theory and refers to the incorrect belief that one's private attitudes, judgments or behavior are different from others.

Social norms theory has been most commonly applied to the problem of excessive alcohol consumption on college campuses. Many studies have shown that college students overestimate how much their peers drink. Prevention experts have argued that this misperception of the norm drives greater alcohol consumption. A growing body of evidence suggests that providing information to students about accurate drinking norms is associated with decreased drinking on campus.²

With regard to cyberbullying, many youth may falsely believe that online rumors, teasing and cruelty are approved of by their peers and that it would invite ostracism to refuse to participate in or to take a stand against such behavior. This misperception may cause young people to avoid acting as an ally to the targets of cyberbullying and to even engage in negative behaviors with which they privately feel uncomfortable. Over time, online social aggression may become normalized for youth, and they may become desensitized to its damaging effects on others. However, interventions that correct students' misperceptions by demonstrating that most young people don't find online cruelty to be "cool" could provide students with the awareness and confidence needed to avoid cyberbullying behavior and to speak out against it.

¹ Alan D. Berkowitz, "Social Norms Approach" (Boston, MA: Education Development Center's Higher Education Center), www.ou.edu/judicial/pae/pdf/iv/b/IVBiiSocialNormingTheory.pdf; www.alanberkowitz.com/articles/social_norms_short.pdf (original and published versions, accessed December 4, 2013).

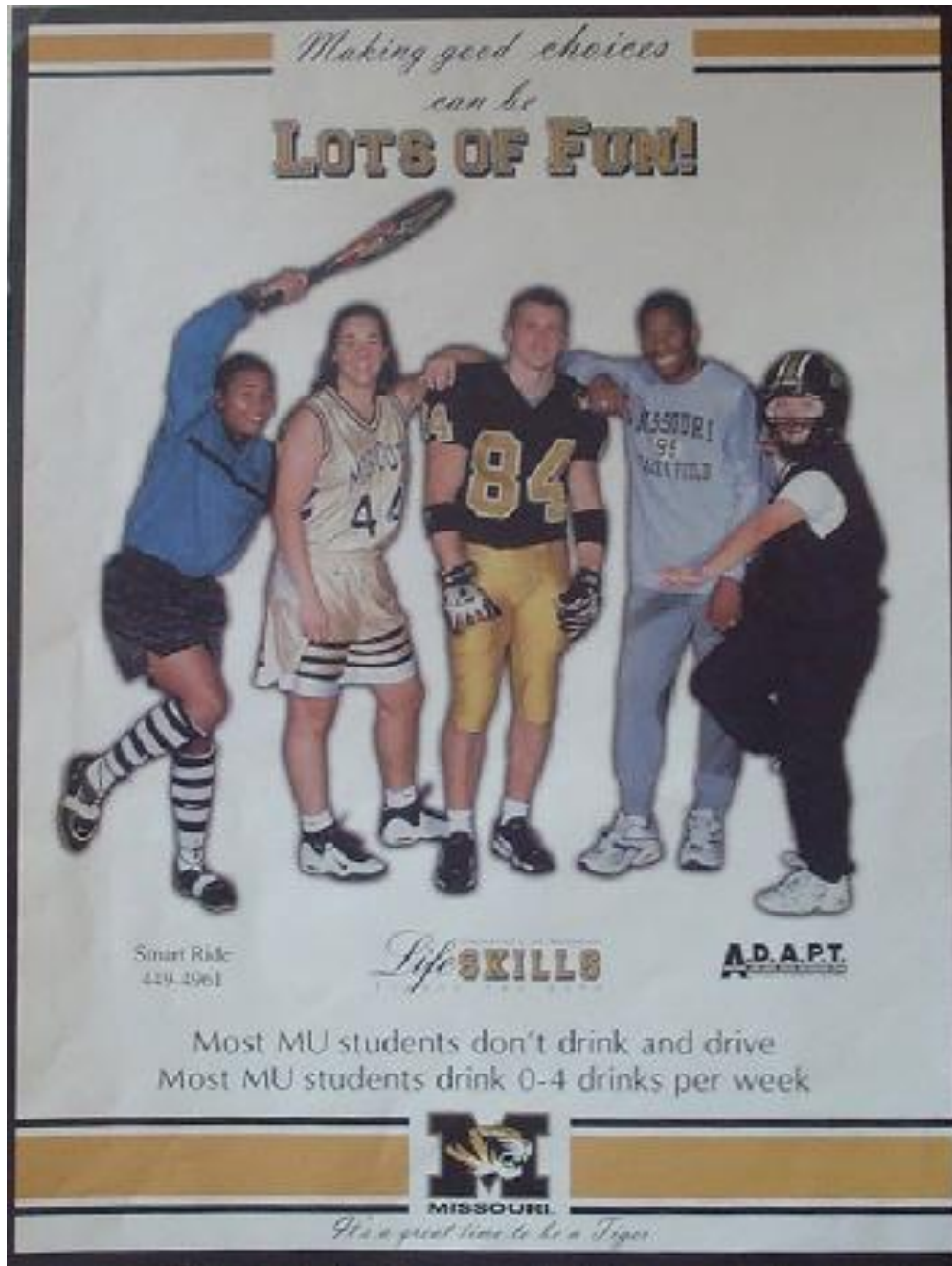
² Ibid.

Challenging Social Norms at Rutgers University



**Yes, 2/3 of Rutgers Students Stop at 3 or Fewer Drinks.
Almost 1 in 5 Don't Drink at All.
*We got the stats from you!***

Challenging Social Norms at University of Missouri-Columbia



Cyberbullying Resources

Print and Online Publications

- Hinduja, Sameer and Justin Patchin. *Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard: Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008.
- Kowalski, R.M., S.P. Limber, and P.W. Agatston. *Cyber Bullying: Bullying in the Digital Age*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, John & Sons, 2008.
- Media Smarts. *Classroom Resources to Counter Cyber Bullying*. <http://mediasmarts.ca/lessonplan/classroom-resources-counter-cyberbullying-portal-page>.
- National School Board Association and Cybersmart. *K-12 Digital Literacy & Citizenship Curriculum*. San Francisco: Common Sense Media, 2010. www.common sense media.org/educators/curriculum.
- OnGuard Online. *Net Cetera: Chatting With Kids About Being Online*. www.onguardonline.gov/pdf/tec04.pdf.
- Shariff, Shaheen. *Confronting Cyber-Bullying: What Schools Need to Know to Control Misconduct and Avoid Legal Consequences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Willard, Nancy. "CyberbullyNOT: Stopping Online Social Aggression." *Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats: Responding to the Challenge of Online Social Aggression, Threats, and Distress*. Champaign, IL: Research Press, 2007. www.embracecivility.org/wp-content/uploadsnew/2012/10/appL.pdf.
- Willard, Nancy. "Educator's Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats." Eugene: Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use, 2007. www.accem.org/pdf/cbcteducator.pdf.
- Willard, Nancy. "Parent Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats." *Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats: Responding to the Challenge of Online Social Aggression, Threats, and Distress*. Champaign, IL: Research Press, 2007. www.embracecivility.org/wp-content/uploadsnew/2012/10/appK.pdf.

Children's Books

- Allman, Toney. *Mean Behind the Screen: What You Need to Know About Cyberbullying*. Mankato, MN: Compass Point Books, 2009.
- Casper, Matt and Ted Dorsey. *Abash and the Cyber-Bully*. Hong Kong: Evergrow, 2008.
- Friedman, Lauri S. 2010. *Cyberbullying*. Introducing Issues with Opposing Viewpoints series. Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press.
- Jacobs, Thomas A. *Teen Cyberbullying Investigated*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2010.
- Jakubiak David J. *A Smart Kid's Guide to Online Bullying*. New York: PowerKids Press, 2009.
- Leavitt, Jacalyn and Sally Linford. *Faux Paw Meets the First Lady: Keeping Children Safe Online*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2006.
- Maceachern, Robyn. *Cyberbullying: Deal with It and Ctrl Alt Delete It*. Halifax, NS: Lorimer, James & Company, 2009.

Videos and DVD Resources

- Clicking with Caution*. 42:35 min. New York: Reel Works Teen Filmmaking, 2010.
Created in partnership with the New York City Department of Education, the Mayor's Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator and Microsoft, this four-part Internet safety video—created by youth for youth—raises awareness of Internet risks and teaches preventive measures. Featuring introductions by "Gossip Girl" star Jessica Szohr, the DVD contains two narrative pieces and two documentaries that explore online sexual predators, cyberbullying, maintaining anonymity and online gaming; <http://a002-vod.nyc.gov/html/search.php?qr=clicking+with+caution>.

Cyberbullying – Cruel Intentions. Howell, MI: ABC News, 2006.

Diane Sawyer reports on how cell phones, digital cameras and personal Web sites combine in new ways that seems to encourage and amplify the meanness of teenage behavior; www.abcnewsstore.com. (For clips and description, see Gray, Keturah (September 12, 2006). "How Mean Can Teens Be?," <http://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/story?id=2421562&page=1>).

Kitchen. 50 sec. Arlington, VA: National Crime Prevention Council, 2006.

This public service announcement is part of the "Cyberbullying: Don't Write It. Don't Forward It" cyberbullying prevention campaign. It appeals to students to avoid saying anything online that they wouldn't say in person; http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/cyberbullying/Kitchen_Final%20Viral%20Video.wmv.

Let's Fight it Together. 7 min. London: Childnet International, 2007.

This film, available via the Internet, was produced in the United Kingdom to help sensitize young people to the pain and hurt which can be caused by cyberbullying; www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/fullFilm.aspx, www.childnet-int.org.

Sexting in America: When Privates Go Public. 40 min. MTV, 2009.

This film explores the dangers of sexting and the repercussions for the people who electronically send and receive sexually explicit photos/videos. It depicts the stories of a girl who is harassed after her boyfriend shares explicit photos of her; and a boy who is charged with transmitting child pornography after forwarding nude photos of his girlfriend; www.mtv.com/videos/news/483801/sexting-in-america-when-privates-go-public-part-1.jhtml.

Sticks & Stones. 43 min. Montvale, NJ: Chase Wilson, 2009.

Funded by the office of the Bergen County Prosecutor with money seized from criminals, this film stars actual high school students from NJ. It tells the story of a teen who is driven to suicide after a compromising picture he thought was private is sent out for everyone to see. The film is accompanied by a comprehensive Teacher's Guide; www.chasewilson.com/sticksandstones.

Talent Show. 50 sec. Arlington, VA: National Crime Prevention Council, 2006.

This public service announcement is part of the "Cyberbullying: Don't Write It. Don't Forward It" cyberbullying prevention campaign. It appeals to students to avoid saying anything online that they wouldn't say in person; http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/cyberbullying/Talent%20Show_Final%20Viral%20Video.wmv.

Online Resources: Websites on Cyberbullying and Online Safety

Anti-Defamation League

www.adl.org/education-outreach/bullying-cyberbullying

Provides curriculum, information on in-school workshops, tips for responding to cyberbullying and a model bullying/cyberbullying prevention law.

Embrace Civility in the Digital Age

www.embracecivility.org

Provides effective strategies to assist young people in developing the skills to behave in a safe, responsible and legal manner when using the Internet.

Common Sense Media

www.common Sense Media.org

Provides trustworthy information and tools, as well as an independent forum, so that kids and families can have a choice and a voice about the media they consume.

Cyberbullying.us

www.cyberbullying.us

Explores the causes and consequences of online harassment; includes fact sheets and resource lists.

Cybersmart!

www.cybersmart.org

Provides online professional development and free curricular resources on cyber safety, Internet ethics, creativity and critical thinking.

iKeepSafe

www.ikeepsafe.org

The Internet Keep Safe Coalition is a partnership of government, public health, education, law enforcement and industry professionals that provide information and tools for the safe and healthy use of technology and the Internet.

i-SAFE

www.isafe.org

A non-profit foundation that incorporates classroom curriculum with community outreach to empower students, teachers, parents, and law enforcement to make the Internet a safer place.

National Crime Prevention Council's Cyberbullying Pages

www.ncpc.org/topics/by-audience/parents/bullying/cyberbullying; www.ncpc.org/topics/cyberbullying

Dedicated to keeping children, families and communities safe from crime, NCPC offers research, information, tips and public service announcements on cyberbullying.

NetSmartz

www.netsmartz.org

Run by The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, this site offers information and resources on Internet Safety for educators, parents/guardians, teens, younger children and law enforcement.

OnGuard Online

www.onguardonline.gov

Provides practical tips from the federal government and the technology industry to help guard against Internet fraud, secure computers and protect personal information.

Stop Bullying

www.stopbullying.gov

Provides information from various government agencies on what bullying is, what cyberbullying is, who is at risk, and how you can prevent and respond to bullying.

A Thin Line

www.athinline.org

MTV's campaign to empower youth to respond to and stop the spread of digital abuse; includes a Digital Bill of Rights, informational and video resources and ways to take action.

Wired Safety

www.wiredsafety.org

Dedicated to protecting all Internet users from cybercrime and abuse, and teaching responsible Internet use. It operates several programs and Web sites, including Stopcyberbullying.org, Wiredcops.org, Teenangels.org, and Tweenangels.com.

Internet Safety Strategies for Youth



✓ Understand Online Behavior

Be aware that many Internet and cell phone service providers have rules about behavior. If you break them, your account—and every account in your home—could be canceled. If you break the law, you may also be reported to the police.

While online...

✓ Be Respectful of Others

Consider whether your actions contribute to creating a positive online community. Don't write mean things to others, belittle people or spread rumors/gossip and never say things that might make others feel unsafe or uncomfortable, even if you mean it as a "joke." Never share private information, messages, photos or videos about others because this is a breach of trust.

✓ Maintain Privacy

Don't share personal or private information online—like your full name, school name, home address, phone number and personal photos—with strangers or people you don't trust.

✓ Safeguard Security Information

Keep passwords and PINs to yourself—don't even tell your best friend—but never hide this information from your parents/guardians. They'll trust you more if you're open with them, and if a serious problem occurs, they made need this information to help you.

✓ Keep Electronics In View at All Times

Don't leave cell phones or other electronics out of sight. There are numerous applications and techniques someone can use to hack into or steal your devices.

✓ Don't Confide in Strangers

Communicating online is easier for people to lie about their identity. Someone you meet online may not be the best person to talk to if you are having problems.

✓ Never Meet a Stranger without Parental Approval

Don't arrange to meet people you met online without a parent's/guardian's permission.

Before going online...

✓ Set Rules

Make some rules with your parents/guardians before you go online, like the time of day and length of time you can be online, and sites you are allowed to visit. Don't bend the rules or visit other Web sites without their permission.

✓ Limit Electronic Use

Try to limit your cell phone and Internet use to a reasonable amount of time, and make sure you are keeping a healthy balance between online and in-person activities.

✓ Be an Upstanding e-Citizen

Keep in mind that no electronic message is completely private, including texts and e-mail. Your school and adult family members may be watching your online activity, and the police can recover all messages—even if you deleted them. If you are using the Internet to embarrass, threaten, harass or hurt others, chances are you will be caught.

Internet Safety Strategies for Youth

Be Cautious of Messages from Strangers

Don't open messages or attachments from people you don't know. In many instances it may be best to just delete them.

Be an Ally

Support people who are targets of mean behavior and bullying by reaching out to the target and telling the aggressor to stop. Report what is happening. Many online companies have anonymous reporting procedures or you can tell a trusted adult in your life.

Be a Positive Role Model

Model positive online behavior by writing kind posts and messages and applauding positive content that affirms people and communicates respect.

If you experience online bullying...

Don't Respond

Don't respond to bullying or inappropriate messages, but save them as evidence.

Communicate Problems with Trusted Adult

Talk about problems you experience online with an adult that you trust, like a family member, teacher or school counselor.

Report Behavior/Incidents

Always report online bullying, hate messages, inappropriate sexual activity and physical threats (including possible suicide attempts) to an adult family member, school authorities or the police.

Stop and Reject Communication

Block the cell phone numbers and electronic communication (e.g., social media, texts) of people who are sending unwanted messages; change your phone numbers, e-mail addresses, screen names and other online information if necessary.

File Complaints for Continuing Problems

For serious or continuing problems, file complaints with e-mail services, Internet Service Providers, Web sites, cell phone companies, etc. They can find the offenders, cancel their service and report them to the police if necessary.

Ask for Assistance in Reporting

If you don't feel comfortable reporting problems yourself, ask a friend or adult to do it for you. Keeping the people close to you aware of what's going on will make you feel safe and supported.

Log Off!

When in doubt about what to do, log off the electronic device and ask for help from a trusted adult.