

A Case Study of Sylvan Learning's Approach to Cyber Bullying

by

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Abstract

Sylvan Learning is a private tutoring institution that provides students with a personalized style of learning. They assess each of their student's particular educational needs by conducting questionnaires, and then apply the appropriate teaching styles. The results of the questionnaires suggest that many of the students are victims of both traditional face-to-face school yard bullying, and cyber bullying. As a result, the effect bullying has on students education is a major concern for this agency. This paper provides an examination of the current empirical literature on the topic of traditional face-to-face bullying, and cyber bullying. In addition, an overview of the current school policies for district 36 that deal with both face-to-face bullying, and cyber bullying are highlighted, as well as how Sylvan Learning can implement techniques to combat bullying in order to create safer, healthier learning environments.

Keywords: cyber bullying; Sylvan Learning; traditional face-to-face bullying; District 36 anti-bullying policies; parents/guardians; schools

To Simran, Jas, Kiran, Neetu, and My Parents

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

The concept of bullying is not new, research on this concept dates back to the early 1970s with the work of Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus (Brank, Hoetger & Hazen, 2012). At that time, however, the primary focus of research was on overt bullying (Brank et al., 2012). Today the focus has shifted.

Society has progressed a great deal since the 1970s, it has made quite a few technological advancements, and moreover, individuals have begun to rely far more heavily on technology. Due to this societal progression, the definition of bullying underwent a metamorphosis. It is now coming to the attention of criminologists that research in the area of youth cyber bullying is crucial. Unlike traditional bullying cyber bullying is not just limited to the bully and the victim, or to school grounds; it has an infinite audience, it occurs 24/7, and it generally happens from the comforts and confines of one's home desktop or laptop (Beran & Li, 2005; Livingstone, 2006; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Shariff, 2008).

Although the issue of cyber bullying has been gaining wide spread media coverage, many individuals are still not familiar with the term (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2012). For anyone who has experienced, or knows of cyber bullying, the ramifications similar to those of traditional bullying, can last a lifetime (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2012). Although certain features of cyber bullying are common with traditional bullying, it is a unique phenomenon that has become increasingly popular in academic circles. In the field of academia cyber bullying is also referred to as, online social cruelty, or electronic bullying (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2012). It is a method of bullying that has been made possible as a result of technological advancements made over the past 15-20 years.

The two most notable advancements are cell phones, and the Internet. The development of the Internet, and cellphones has changed the lives of many of the parents of adolescents. It is important to note that adolescents' lives have not been drastically impacted by these technological advancements, because for them the Internet has always existed, it has always been a part of their lives,

it is all they have ever known. The fact that parents of many adolescents did not grow up with cellular phones, and...computers... [accounts for] the gap between parents and children in understanding both the uses and risks of the Internet (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2012, p. 2).

Which is why cyber bullying presents unique challenges for educators, parents, and other adults who interact with children.

According to research connected by Kowalski, Limber & Agatston (2012) many parents view the Internet as a helpful tool to aid their children with homework, and cell phones as a means of calling home in cases of emergency. Adolescents, on the other hand, view them as necessary tools for their social lives. For most parents this technology is relatively new and foreign, as a result, they believe that their children should be cautious. However, these technologies have always existed for adolescents, therefore, they have a greater level of comfort with them, which is hard for their parents to understand.

Kowalski, Limber & Agatston (2012) argue that many parents will candidly admit that all they have learned about the Internet and other recent technologies, is from their children. It is important to note, that children are not doing anything different from what their parents were doing while they were growing up, they just have new means of doing it.

The technological mediums used today,... present some unique challenges that didn't confront children two or three decades ago. Traditionally, notes were passed between two individuals, often in class, and hidden from the view of the teacher and most other students...Today, 'notes' are passed via instant messaging and e-mail for a much wider audience to see (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2012, p. 3).

In order to gain a better understanding of the impact bullying, particularly cyber bullying, has on the education of youth, I conducted a field practicum within Sylvan Learning, a private institution. Sylvan Learning provided a platform from which I was able

to observe the generation gap between the students, parents/guardians, and school teachers in regards to issues concerning technology. I was able to observe how teachers and parents dealt with issues of cyber-bullying.

Chapter 2.

Traditional Bullying

Prior to the development of the Internet as well as social media, bullying was conceptualized as being the result of an “exchange between at least two people, a bully and a victim, in direct face-to-face contact with each other” (Horner, Asher & Fireman, 2015, p. 288). Research on the concept of bullying began in Europe, when there was an increase in suicide among young boys as a result of severe bullying from their peers (Olweus, 1996). The early work of Dan Olweus on the topic of bullying, often referred to as traditional bullying, was concerned primarily with physical manifestations of bullying such as fighting, intimidating, isolating, etc., that occurred within schoolyards, however, this focus alienates a large portion of emotional and psychological damage that can be caused by less overt forms of violence, such as humiliation, misinformation, and malicious communication. However, it is important to note that most of the research regarding traditional bullying focuses primarily on the latter, and the definition for bullying used by most researchers is the one that is provided by Dan Olweus (1996).

Defining Traditional ‘Schoolyard’ Bullying

“Bullying is considered to be a subset of the overarching concept of aggression” (Griffin & Gross, 2004, p. 381). Bullying is a form of aggression that is directed towards another individual in an attempt to intimidate or dominate them. It can be difficult for some researchers to distinguish between aggression and bullying. As a result some prefer to use the term aggression while others embrace the term bullying (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Within their classification of bullying some researchers include any and all intentionally aggressive behavior towards others, whereas “other researchers specify that aggressive behavior directed toward others must be carried out repeatedly in order to be classified as bullying” (Griffin & Gross, 2004, p. 381).

Within many European countries traditional bullying, or the relationship between the bully and their victim is referred to as ‘mobbing’ (Olweus, 1996). Mobbing simply refers

to the harassment that one suffers at the hands of a large group of people. Olweus (1996) suggests that mobbing does not have to be restricted within its application to harassment suffered at the hands of a large group. He went on to give bullying a more general definition. He argued that bullying occurs when an individual is repeatedly exposed to “negative actions on the part of one or more other persons” (Olweus, 1996, p.265). The victim of bullying is usually physically weaker and far more submissive in nature than their tormentor. In order for bullying to occur there must be “an imbalance in the strength relations” (Olweus, 1996, p.265) between the victim and the bully, in other words, the victim must be unable to defend themselves against attacks posed by their bully. The term imbalance of power

can be derived from a physical advantage (e.g., size, age, strength), social status in a peer group (e.g., a popular versus less popular student), or strength in numbers (e.g., a group targeting a single person)...[A bully may gain power over their victim by knowing their victims] source of vulnerability (e.g. appearance, learning problem, family situation) and then using that knowledge to cause distress (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015, p. 136).

According to Olweus (1996) the intent to harm, presence of a power imbalance, and repetition of negative actions are the three key distinguishing factors that define traditional schoolyard bullying. The repetitive bullying behavior increases the bully’s power over the victim. It results in a loss of power for the victim, which in turn makes it difficult for the victim to respond or resolve the problem by themselves (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015).

Olweus (1996) argues that there are two common methods of traditional bullying: direct bullying and indirect bullying. Direct bullying refers to any form of harassment that is done openly against the victim, whereas, indirect bullying refers to less visible methods of bullying. When a victim is indirectly bullied he or she suffers “social isolation and expulsion from a social group [moreover, vicious rumours and/or lies are spread about them” (Olweus, 1996, p.265). Victims of indirect bullying may also be stalked, gossiped about, stared at, threatened verbally, or harassed. Indirect bullying can be either discriminatory or completely random, and can also include verbal harassment that incorporates homophobic, racial, and/or sexual slurs (Shariff, 2005). Whereas physical aggression, verbal and or physical threats are often experienced by victims of direct

bullying. Children are far more likely to report incidents of direct bullying to parents/guardians and teachers compared to indirect bullying (Griffin & Gross, 2004).

Having now noted, the two most common methods of traditional bullying, we must examine the traditional types of bullying that existed within the schoolyard. According to Brank et al. (2012) there are three main traditional types of bullying that occur within schools: relational, physical, and verbal. Relational bullying in its purest form refers to indirect methods of bullying. The victim is literally shunned from the crowd. Vicious rumours are spread on purpose about the victim throughout the school, which results in the victim being isolated from their peers. Victims of relational bullying find themselves to be completely alone, because their bullies refuse to interact with them, and other students will withhold their friendship as well in order to fit in with the crowd (Brank et al., 2012). Relational bullying is also referred to as social bullying, and is often experienced by young girls (RCMP, 2014). Physical bullying is a form of direct bullying, because it is done openly against the victim. Physical bullying refers to any form of physical aggression against the victim. Some examples of physical bullying that occur within schools are: pushing, shoving, biting, punching, kicking, and hitting. Verbal bullying is also a form of direct bullying. Verbal bullying has been defined as hateful words that have been spoken against the victim (Wang, Iannotti & Nansel, 2009).

According to research conducted by Cartwright (2010) there are a number of forms of bullying which have been identified and studied, including cyber bullying, workplace bullying, and adult bullying. Adult bullying consists of aggressive behaviors such as fear, and intimidation, partner abuse, or harassment of neighbors (Cartwright, 2010). Workplace bullying, is also a form of adult bullying, and it involves “verbal abuse, attempts to humiliate or embarrass other workers, intimidation or harassment of other workers, and threats to personal or occupational status” (Cartwright, 2010, p. 5). Cyber bullying arose with the advent of the Internet, and will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Within the field of criminology researchers have agreed upon five key features which define bullying. Firstly, the bullies intention to provoke fear within their victim, as well as inflict harm upon them must be present. Secondly, the aggressive bullying behavior must occur repeatedly against the victim. Thirdly, the victim must not have provoked the

unwanted bullying behavior by using any form of physical or verbal aggression against the bully. Fourthly, the bullying incidents are occurring within familiar social groups. Lastly, there must be a power imbalance between the bully and the victim, whether it is real or perceived (Griffin & Gross, 2004; Greene, 2000).

Measuring Traditional ‘Schoolyard’ Bullying

Even though there is consensus amongst researchers regarding the definitions of traditional bullying behaviors, approaches in measurement are continuously debated (Thomas et al., 2015; Felix et al., 2011; Griffin & Gross, 2004; Swearer et al., 2001). Very few instruments have been designed to measure bullying specifically (Griffin & Gross, 2004). As a result, many researchers have employed “instruments aimed at measuring various forms of aggressive behavior. However, using an instrument [to measure aggression can be] rather limiting...in explaining bullying behavior” (Griffin & Gross, 2004, p. 391). Teacher report measures, peer nominations, and self-report assessments are the typical instruments used to measure bullying.

The most common method used to measure traditional bullying is self-report assessments, which follow a bully/victim approach where children are classified as either victims or bullies (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Researchers argue that self-reporting is the best method of gaining the students perspective regarding bullying, because the students will be able to reflect on their own experiences, and provide an informed account of bullying and victimization. Self-reports provide victims with an opportunity to report incidents that may not be known to anyone other than the bully and themselves (Furlong, 2010; Vivolo-Kantor et al., 2014, Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015). Moreover, self-report assessments are the easiest method to implement compared to other methods, such as intensive behavioral observations of student interactions at school (Thomas et al., 2015), and third party questionnaires completed by teachers which would be limited to more overt forms of bullying (Griffin & Gross, 2004). In order to gain a clear and useful understanding of schoolyard peer-to-peer bullying it is best to ask the students themselves.

Self-report assessments require children to complete a questionnaire that rates their experiences. The experiences that are rated on the assessments are: location of

bullying, type of bullying, frequency of bullying, etc. (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Children are usually given one of two widely used questionnaires the Peer Relations Questionnaire (PRQ), or the Peer Relations Assessment Questionnaire (PRAQ). The PRAQ is a shorter condensed version of the PRQ and it contains parent, teacher, and student versions (Griffin & Gross, 2004). The parent and teacher versions of PRAQ focus primarily on their beliefs regarding bullying, and their opinions on intervention. The PRQ assess whether bullying incidents have been reported to adults, the location of bullying, the perception of teacher concern or involvement, individual versus group bullying, and reasons for participating in the bullying of peers (Griffin & Gross, 2004).

Another method used to research traditional bullying is peer ratings/nominations. This method is referred to as a normative measure because its primary focus is to provide information about what others think of the bully or victim (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015). Children are provided with a list of classmates' names, and they are asked to nominate or list off peers who fit into various descriptive categories (e.g., peers who are mean, peers who are picked on, and peers who are popular or unpopular). The primary aim of peer nominations/ratings is to measure the behavior patterns of the 'nominees'. It is important to note that methods such as this are not designed to measure bullying behavior specifically, they are used to gain more useful social information related to the overall climate of schoolyard bullying (Griffin & Gross, 2004).

There are several issues that arise when using the peer nomination/rating method for measuring the prevalence of schoolyard bullying. Firstly, this method does not provide information about the frequency of specific aggressive behaviors or conditions, instead it provides the number and proportion of peer nominations (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015). Secondly, the presence of cliques or other social pressures within the classroom may influence the nomination of certain peers. Thirdly, participants must provide informed consent in order to participate in the assessment, as a result there may be missing data, because all the children may not be available to provide a nomination, and not all of the children are available to be rated. Lastly, the participants' ratings may be influenced by personal difficulties or recent social events (i.e., jealousy, anger toward a peer because of an isolated event, or being in a bad mood on that day), which will lead to the collection of data that is not reflective of "stable trends or typical interactions" (Griffin & Gross, 2004, p.

394). The peer nomination/rating method is not sensitive to producing robust data regarding the prevalence of bullying, and using this type of data can be unsound (Griffin & Gross, 2004; Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015).

There are fewer problems with using the self-report assessment method for measuring traditional schoolyard bullying. This method does rely heavily on the honesty and integrity of students' when they are responding to the questions, of course some students may desire to be socially accepted, and as result deny any instances of bullying, however, most students take the task of completing the questionnaire very seriously (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015). Self-report assessments do require subjective judgement, yet there are advantages because they offer information on personal experiences that are only known by the respondent and are unknown by teachers, parents, and peers. Moreover, the questionnaires can be administered on a large number of students, for a relatively low cost, over a short period of time, and it does not pose complex ethical and consent issues unlike peer nominations/ratings (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015). As a result, self-report assessments are considered to be the method of choice by most researchers for measuring traditional bullying.

Operationalizing Traditional 'Schoolyard' Bullying Definitions

"Operationalizing definitional criteria of bullying behaviors (intention, repetition, and power imbalance) in [questionnaire] items is a challenge to the measurement of bullying" (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015, p. 139). Aggressive behavior may be misattributed by respondents on a self-report assessment. Even though Dan Olweus (1996) clearly defined bullying, and differentiated it from other forms of peer-to-peer aggression respondents may not be able to differentiate between the two. It is imperative that the respondents correctly interpret the intention of the behavior of the perpetrator, which may not be clearly defined on the assessment. For example, a particular behavior may not necessarily have been intended to cause harm or pain, but it may still be considered bullying if the victim believes it to be. Furthermore, if an incident caused long lasting fear, it does not need to be repeated to be considered bullying. Thomas, Connor & Scott (2015) found that most self-report questionnaires include a definition of bullying in

the beginning of the questionnaire. They found that the definition is made up of the three definitional criteria for bullying that was provided by Olweus. However they argue that although the intention, repetition, and matter of power imbalance are expressed at the beginning of questionnaires, it is not equivalent to operationalizing those criteria. As a result, prevalence rates of bullying can be overestimated within studies. Both the victim and aggressor may have different opinions in regards to the incident in question, the aggressor may deny that he or she intended to hurt the victim. There may be a serious lack of understanding between the differences of peer-to-peer aggression and bullying.

In 1978 Dan Olweus developed an assessment for measuring bullying, which has been modified over time. Originally the explanation provided for bullying within the assessment created by Olweus “intended to capture all three main elements of the definition of bullying: the intention to harm the victim, the repetitive nature of bullying, and the imbalance in power between the victim and the perpetrator(s)” (Solberg & Olweus, 2003, p.246). The revised version of this assessment is known as the Olweus Bully Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ), and it has remained the most popular method of measuring bullying amongst researchers (Griffin & Gross, 2004). The revised version of the OBVQ expanded the explanation for bullying to include more specific forms of bullying. It consists of 40 items which measure verbal, indirect, racial, sexual and physical forms of bullying, as well as perpetration and victimization (Griffin & Gross, 2004). In order to measure the prevalence of victimization within the OBVQ prevalence is operationalized as having been bullied over the past couple of months, and perpetration is operationalized as having bullied others. The questionnaire consists of 36 main questions that focus on different aspects of the victim/bully problem. Many of the questions are broken down into sub-questions in order to provide the respondents with more clarity and direction, “in addition, it was made clear when teasing should and should not be considered bullying” (Solberg & Olweus, 2003, p. 246). The revised version of the OBVQ is considered to be the best method for measuring bullying because of how effectively the definitional criteria of bullying are operationalized. According to the OBVQ

a student is being bullied when another student or several other students: say mean and hurtful things or make fun of [the victim] or call him or her mean and hurtful names, completely ignore or exclude [the victim] from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose, hit, kick, push, shove around, or threaten [the victim], tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her or send mean

notes and try to make other students dislike him or her...[it is considered bullying when these things takes place frequently] and it is difficult for the [victim] to defend him or herself. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way. But [it is not called] bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight (Solberg & Olweus, 2003, p.246).

By operationalizing the definitional criteria for bullying behavior the OBVQ assessment provides the respondents with the opportunity to correctly interpret the intention of the behavior of the perpetrator, and provide more accurate results regarding bullying.

Felix et al. (2011) conducted research which consisted of self-report questionnaires that also operationalized the definitional criteria of intention, repetition, and power imbalance. As a result the respondents were able to understand what intention and power imbalance meant, and whether or not it applied to them. In order to accurately assess traditional bullying Felix et al. (2011) developed the California Bullying Victimization Scale (CBVS), this is a self-report scale which measures the three component definition of traditional 'schoolyard' bullying without using the term bullying. The CBVS was developed in order to measure multiple forms of bullying victimization, and to distinguish between peer victimization and bullying (Felix et al. 2011). It avoids the use of the label 'bully' because Felix et al. (2011) argue that the use of this term in self-report measures provides emotionally laden responses, and it influences victims and bullies not to provide accurate experiences of bullying. Within their study Felix et al. (2011) implemented three methods of operationalization in order to differentiate between peer victimization and bullying. Firstly, they specified in each question that the behavior in question must be done in a mean and hurtful way and on purpose, by doing this Felix et al. (2011) were operationalizing the definitional criteria for intention. As a result they found that students who initially stated that a particular behavior was a form of bullying, later went on to state that the behavior was not intended to be mean or hurtful, and was not done on purpose. Students who participated within their study were able to distinguish between peer-to-peer aggression and bullying. Secondly, they operationalized the term power imbalance without using a definition. Felix et al. (2011) assessed whether the reporter perceived a power imbalance between themselves and their aggressor. Power imbalance was assessed in terms of "how popular, smart, and strong the person was who did mean things on purpose to the respondent" (p.238). Finally, Felix et al. (2011)

operationalized the definitional criteria for repetition by addressing the time frame and frequency scale. They argue that individuals can not accurately recall incidents over a lengthy period of time. As a result, Felix et al. (2011) used a 30 day time frame, and a frequency scale which classifies victims of bullying as individuals who experience bullying 2-3 times a month or more.

Similar to the research conducted by Felix et al. (2011) in 2001 Swearer et al. implemented The Bully Survey (BYS) within their study. Swearer et al. attempted to examine the differences between bullies, victims, and bully-victims by including items in their self-report questionnaires that captured the respondents true understanding of power imbalance, intention, and repetition. Within their study Swearer et al. (2001) asked students to complete a three part survey that questioned them regarding the nature of the bullying they encountered, the motivations for bullying, and how bullying was being handled within their school. In the first part of the survey (part A), students were required to answer questions about when they were victimized. If the student was not a victim of bullying within the school year they skipped part A, and moved onto the next section of the survey (Swearer et al., 2001). Part B of the survey asked students questions about their observations of bullying behaviour among their peers. If the student did not observe any kind of bullying during the school year they skipped part B, and moved onto the next section. Part C of the survey asked students questions about when they bullied others. "Students did not complete this section unless they bullied others during the school year" (Swearer et al., 2001, p. 103). By operationalizing the definitional criteria of bullying Swearer et al. were able to help respondents clearly and concisely answer all the questions on their survey. Moreover, students were able to self-report whether or not they were bullies, victims of bullying, or if they were both.

Both the research conducted by Swearer et al., 2001 and Felix et al. 2011 highlight the importance of assessing the respondents understanding of the definitional criteria for bullying in order to help accurately identify victims of bullying. Furthermore, "the information [that is] gathered on all definitional criteria may then be used to inform the severity of different bullying experiences (perpetration or victimization) and may also be used to make useful comparisons between traditional and cyber bullying" (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015, p.139).

Chapter 3.

Cyber Bullying and Its Impact

Electronic methods of communication are a significant component within the lives of adolescents today. Devices such as tablets, portable personal computers, mobile and smart phones have given interpersonal communication a new identity (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015). An “overwhelming majority (approximately 90%) of adolescents (12-17 years) have Internet access. [Consequently,] the use of new technologies for the purpose of bullying has emerged, whereby electronic media are used to communicate intimidating or hurtful messages” (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015, p.136). Currently, there is a debate within the literature on what constitutes cyber bullying, and how it is different from and similar to traditional bullying (Thomas, Connor & Scott). Moreover, researchers are trying to adapt measurement tools to capture the “expanded spectrum of bullying behaviors. [As a result] a clear definition is critical for establishing validity in [the] measurement [of cyber bullying]” (Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015, p.136).

Defining Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is defined as being an intentionally aggressive act, that is carried out by an individual or a group, by using electronic methods of communication, “repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves”(Thomas, Connor & Scott, 2015, p.141). Moreover, cyber bullying has been defined as “the use of communication technologies such as the Internet, social networking sites, websites, email, text messaging and instant messaging to repeatedly intimidate or harass others” (RCMP, 2014, “Cyber bullying”). The RCMP highlights certain actions that constitute cyber bullying, some of which are:

sending mean or threatening emails or text/instant messages, posting embarrassing photos of someone online, creating a website to make fun of others, pretending to be someone by using their name, and tricking someone into revealing personal or embarrassing information and sending it to others (RCMP, 2014, “Cyber bullying”).

There are numerous tactics adolescents can use in order to cyber bullying other students some of which include: harassing their classmates online, posting denigrating (put-downs) messages online about the victim, outing students publicly online, excluding students from social groups or forums online, and flaming (sending derogatory messages to their victims) (Brown, Jackson & Cassidy, 2006).

Having already noted that direct and indirect bullying are the two most common methods of bullying, it is important to apply both concepts to cyber bullying. The application of direct bullying can be subcategorized into four categories: property (which occurs when virus infected files are sent on purpose to victims), verbal (occurs when either the Internet or mobile phone, or both are used to send insults or threats), non-verbal (occurs when obscene pictures have already been sent, or are being threatened to be sent), & social bullying (occurs when victims are excluded from online groups) (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). Indirect bullying occurs within cyber space when information that was sent in private via e-mail or text message is outed or masqueraded, by deceiving someone by pretending to be someone else. Indirect bullying can also occur online by spreading gossip via mobile phones, emails, or chat rooms. Furthermore, taking part in online voting on defamatory polling websites is also an indirect method of bullying online (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009).

The Internet and mobile phones provide numerous possibilities for indirect bullying. Cyber bullying can be a form of indirect verbal and written bullying where students create personal profiles online and list classmates whom they do not like, or they create their own virtual personalities within MUD rooms (multi user domains where individuals can take on many different characters), sometimes cyber bullying can take the form of sexual photographs which are e-mailed within friends circles, and are eventually altered and sent to an unlimited audience (Shariff, 2005). The Internet has created a more comfortable and convenient medium for social discourse for socially introverted people, but it has also created a forum that can at times encourage abusive conduct and antisocial behavior (Brown, Jackson & Cassidy, 2006).

Distinguishing Between Traditional Bullying and Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is considered to be an extension of traditional bullying (Shariff, 2005). However applying characteristics of traditional bullying to cyber bullying is a difficult task. For example, the intentional act of bullying from the perpetrators perspective, the non-provocative behavior of the victim, and the nature of the written messages over electronic communication cause problems (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). Text messages, chatroom messages, and e-mails can be misunderstood because there is no tone of word or eye contact present. As a result, messages that were considered humours, or just fun by the sender can be regarded as an act of cyber bullying (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). Moreover, the element of repetition is difficult to apply in the case of cyber bullying because of the nature of certain types of electronic communication. For example, denigrating comments made about an individual online may stay online for weeks or even months, whereas denigrating comments made in person 'disappear' right after they have been spoken (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). Slonje & Smith (2007) ask whether or not every hit on the webpage with the denigrating comment, video clip, or photo meets the repetition criterion for cyber bullying? Furthermore, the notion that bullying only occurs in familiar social groups is not the case in the cyber realm. People are able to connect with individuals they have never met before in cyber space. Information and communication technology (ICT) provides individuals with an opportunity to mask their real identities which is just not possible otherwise.

The last element of traditional bullying is the need for a power imbalance between the victim and the bully. With face-to-face bullying the power imbalance is often based on physical strength. However, people do not impress each other with their physical appearance or strength online, they use their superior technological knowledge online to harass others (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009).

Brown, Jackson & Cassidy (2006) argue that the distinct user mentality of remaining anonymous online provides individuals with an opportunity to use their technological knowledge to harass others, and this ability to remain anonymous is associated with cyberspace. The Internet can expose youth to questionable information,

and messages that are intended to manipulate their actions or beliefs (Brown et al., 2006). Youth are able to create unique identities for themselves online which in turn encourages a distinct user online mentality. Real identities can be withheld in cyberspace which affords a unique method of dominance over ones victims online. Power and control are central components in cyber bullying. Traditional bullying requires a difference in power between the victim and bully as well. However, a bully who is online victimizing others is given a different sense of power and control. Unlike traditional face to face bullying youth are able to remain anonymous in online settings, which is why the sense of power and control is far greater. Moreover,

students who are disempowered in the real world or are victims of face-to-face bullying, may resort to aggression through anonymity or fake identities. Therefore, the potential to withhold or assume alternate identities affords youth the opportunity to possibly communicate in abusive ways online that they perhaps normally would not undertake in personal encounters (Brown et al., 2006, p. 6).

Adolescents who create new identities for themselves online, may feel that legal sanctions cannot be made against them because there is no way anyone will ever find out their true identity (Brown et al., 2006).

Cyberspace may be conceived as a parallel world “where people can conduct ordinary activities without engaging in the physical acts traditionally associated with such activities...There is no central power, no real territory, and no hierarchical structure” (Milson & Chu, 2002, p.117). As a result, psychological mechanisms which are not typically possible in other human activities arise. Individuals are given the opportunity to protect themselves from embarrassment, retribution, and detection online, which allows people to feel more comfortable communicating and exchanging personal information with strangers online. Milson & Chu (2002) argue that this lack of inhibition online (or disinhibition) is characterized by the apparent lack of concern individuals have online for their self-representation, and the disregard for judgement by others. Milson & Chu (2002) argue that disinhibition “reduces one’s sense of social presence and leads one to behave without concern for social appropriateness” (p.117). Moreover, Milson & Chu (2002) found that many individuals disengage themselves from the consequences of their behaviour.

Disengagement...is a mechanism by which one disregards, minimizes, or ignores the consequences of [their] behavior because of physical distance. Cyberspace

creates disinhibition and allows for disengagement because its unique social conventions tend to distance people from any harm resulting from their actions (Milson & Chu, 2002, p. 117).

Individuals dehumanize others online as a result of the lack of “affective or tangible feedback” (Milson & Chu, 2002, p.117). Due to the lack of verbal/physical feedback and cues, online anonymity, and low personal self-awareness individuals behave differently when they are online as opposed to the real physical world (Milson & Chu, 2002).

Unlike traditional bullying which was restricted to the schoolyard, cyber bullying can occur during adolescent leisure time, in the evenings or even on the weekends off school grounds. Moreover, the consequences of online bullying may “arise on the school grounds the next day” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 9). Brown et al. (2006) argue that cyber bullying can be more pervasive than face to face bullying because victims are unable to easily escape from their bullies. Cyber bullying can occur at school, home, work, etc., and it can happen at any time of the day. Hurtful and damaging web posts are visible worldwide and are often irretrievable.

The Impact of Cyber Bullying

The impact of cyber bullying is enormous, some teenagers are committing suicide, suffering from depression, or have had their education compromised, as a result of being harassed by their peers (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Shariff, 2008).

According to Shariff (2005) 99% of teens use the Internet regularly, furthermore 74% of young girls spend more time instant messaging or on chatrooms than doing school work. Moreover, Shariff (2005) argues that one in four youth between the ages of 11-19 are threatened either online or via cell phones. Messages posted on the Internet can stay online indefinitely, and they can spread quicker than word of mouth messages (Keith & Martin, 2005), as a result, victims of cyber bullying are re-victimized on a daily basis. Unfortunately, victims of cyber bullying can never truly escape their perpetrators. Embarrassing pictures and hurtful messages can continually be added to the Internet, which suddenly creates an environment where the bully is someone the victim has never even met before. As a result, two aspects of cyber bullying make it a challenge to monitor

within schools: it is anonymous, and the Internet creates a forum that has an infinite audience (Shariff, 2005). Perpetrators are shielded online by screen names which protect their true identities. Although cyber bullying is anonymous in the virtual environment, it still impacts the education of youth within schools (Shariff, 2005). "The consequences can be psychologically devastating for victims and socially detrimental for all students. Fear of [not knowing who the perpetrators is] amongst classmates and bullying that continues at school distracts all students (victims, bystanders, and perpetrators) from schoolwork" (Shariff, 2005, p. 470). Sadly, victims of cyber bullying may not even know that they are victims until they come to school or another social setting, and only then learn publically from their peers that hurtful messages are posted about them on the Internet. This has become a major cause for concern for parents/guardians, teachers, and all other parties concerned with the education of youth.

Having already highlighted earlier many of the harmful side effects of bullying, it is imperative to understand the deep and profound impact bullying has on the education of youth. Some youth become suicidal, while others become depressed and drop out. Many youths find it difficult to concentrate on their studies. As a result, of the constant and relentless bullying, the grades of students is greatly affected. Which in turn affects their self-esteem, and will power/motivation to continue applying themselves to their studies. As a result, students will feel unsafe and unwelcome at school, and the school atmosphere will no longer create equal opportunities of learning for all the students (Shariff, 2005). Bullying that might begin on school grounds can quickly turn into,

verbal bullying that continues in cyber-space...The difference in cyber-space is that hundreds of perpetrators can get involved in the abuse, and class-mates who may not engage in bullying at school, can hide behind technology to inflict the most serious abuse (Shariff, 2005, p. 470).

According to the RCMP (2014) adolescents who either engage in bullying or are victimized find their own methods of coping with it. They argue that some may become depressed and withdraw, whereas others react negatively and become far more aggressive and engage in violent acts.

A study conducted by Cartwright (2010) examined 950 messages that were posted on www.bullying.org (a Canadian anti-bullying website). This website is aimed at

preventing, eliminating, and resolving bullying by inviting participants to play “an online anti-bullying game, and encouraging visitors to take an anti-bullying pledge” (Cartwright, 2010, p. 148). The messages that were examined within this study were posted by bullies, bully-victims, victims, parents, school personnel, bystanders, and many other individuals.

Cartwright (2010) tested a number of ‘truisms’ regarding bullying, particularly the argument that it is more widespread and more virulent today than it was 10, 20, even 30 years ago. He was primarily concerned with school bullying, but instances of cyber bullying did emerge in his study. Within his findings Cartwright (2010) found that bullying “has not really changed all that much over the years...[His findings] suggest that things may have been worse 10, 20, or 30 years ago” (p. 178). 316 of the messages that were examined made it possible for Cartwright (2010) to estimate that the timeframe in which the bullying occurred was over 10 years ago. Bullying that occurred during that time was well before interest in school bullying gained scholarly popularity. Furthermore, sixty-seven of the 316 messages described bullying that occurred over 20 years ago. That was a time “when there were few bullying researchers, even fewer anti-bullying programs, and little (if any) public interest in the topic” (Cartwright, 2010, p. 172). Fifty-eight of the 316 messages were of bullying that had taken place over thirty years ago, “35 of them [described] incidents that took place well before the time that Olweus (1978) published his groundbreaking work on bullying in Norwegian schools” (Cartwright, 2010, p. 172). Moreover, Cartwright (2010) found “no evidence” that there had been an appreciable change in the... prevalence of bullying over time” (p.191). He argues that bullying is very commonplace and widespread, and that it has been observed and studied in prisons, colleges, the workplace, and cyberspace. Cartwright (2010) found that much of the bullying that was occurring was not taking place at school, rather it was occurring in various different venues. Cartwright (2010) notes that some victims were followed “from school to school, and from school to the neighborhood or workplace, it was apparent that physical bullying followed some of the Web site participants from one side of a country to another, and even from country to country” (p. 159).

Similar to the findings of Shariff (2005), Cartwright (2010) found that victims of bullying were affected negatively in their personal, social, and school lives as a result of persistent, relentless bullying. Cartwright (2010) found that students were afraid to go to

school, they were unable to concentrate on their school work, and some either contemplated or attempted suicide. This study suggests that students have not necessarily become meaner nowadays, but with the increase in popularity of the Internet methods of harassment and bullying of peers have surpassed what was traditionally done (Richmond, 2010). Teens are now able to expand their opportunities for harassment and intimidation via the Internet for extended periods of time. Technological advancements have created a cyber environment which allows a wide range of instant means of communication to be used, which simply did not exist in the 1970s-1980s. Today people can willingly send videos to one another via the Internet and cell phones, or electronic devices can be misused/accessed inappropriately. Both ways the impact can be permanent, and the videos can be replayed and re-visited by an infinite audience.

Measuring Cyber Bullying

The term cyber bullying is broad enough to incorporate a wide range of cyber behaviors, and it differentiates from the more general term “cyber-aggression” (Thomas et al., 2015). Unlike cyber bullying, cyber-aggression does not require a power imbalance between the parties involved, it also does not require the act to be done repeatedly. Cyber bullying can be measured by focusing on multiple different cyber behaviors, or by using key global questions (Thomas et al., 2015). According to Vandebosch & Van Cleemput (2009) the two most common methods used to measure cyber bullying are (1) directly asking the respondents whether they have been victims, perpetrators, or bystanders of bullying via electronic communication tools (either through a specific medium or in general), and (2) asking the respondents whether or not they have been passively or actively involved in potentially hurtful mobile phone or Internet activities. However, there is debate amongst researchers regarding the measurement of the sub-types of cyber bullying, as well as the definitional criteria that is applied to cyber bullying behavior (Thomas et al., 2015).

Some researchers define and treat cyber bullying as a ‘type’ of bullying, that is equivalent to relational or physical bullying. For example, within their research Wang et al. (2009) measured cyber bullying by using two items (bullying that occurred using a cell phone, or bullying that occurred using email messages or pictures on a computer). Other

researchers define and treat cyber bullying as an 'environment', which would be equivalent to school. Within their research Ybarra, Boyd, Korchmaros & Oppenheim (2012) argue that measures of cyber bullying are vulnerable to double counting if it is treated as either a type of bullying, or as an environment. Ybarra et al. (2012) argue that cyber bullying becomes a distinct and meaningful category, "if it is treated as a communication mode (i.e. in person, text messaging, voice [landline or cell phone], or online)" (p. 54). Within their study Ybarra et al. (2012) were interested in identifying the best method for measuring bullying broadly, and aimed at identifying which measures resulted in the highest percentage of accurate self-classifications involving two items: the presence/absence of a definition of bullying, and the presence/absence of the word 'bully' within their test items (Thomas et al., 2015). In order to prevent misclassification Ybarra et al. (2012) used follow-up questions to examine: the definitional criteria of bullying, the power differential between the victim and the bully, bullying over time, and repetition.

Ybarra et al. (2012) found that measures that used a definition but not the word 'bully' had the highest rate of false positives, and the highest rate of misclassification. The authors concluded that measures of bullying should include the word 'bully' whenever possible. Moreover, Ybarra et al. (2012) found that although the definition is a useful tool for researchers, its results do not yield a more rigorous measure of bullying victimization. On the other hand,

directly measuring aspects of bullying (i.e., differential power, repetition, bullying over time) reduces misclassification. [In order] to prevent double counting across domains...mode (e.g., online, in person), type (e.g., verbal, relational), and environment (e.g., school, home) [should be distinguished and measured] (Ybarra et al., 2012, p.53).

Cyber bullying is regarded as a relatively new phenomena, therefore there is not a lot of consensus on how to measure it the best. Some researchers provide a definition of cyber bullying within their questionnaires, others use lists of behavioral items that are believed to be components of cyber bullying without providing a definition of what cyber bullying is, and others provide both. Generally, researchers utilize the definition that was provided by Olweus within his Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ). According to the OBVQ bullying is defined as an experience that must be repetitive, between two people who have a power imbalance, and it must continue over time. Since 2005 the OBVQ has been

revised to include items pertaining to global cyber bullying, and cyber-victimization. These items are followed by two sub-questions about the medium through which the bullying occurred: either the Internet, or cell phone, or both (Olweus, 2012).

Unfortunately, not all researchers agree that the definition provided within the OBVQ captures the aggressive behaviors online. In order to address this issue, many researchers have included lists of experiences which are specific to technology within their studies (Ybarra, 2013). On the other hand, some researchers continue to describe the collectively agreed upon behaviors described in the OBVQ as 'cyber bullying' (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). These behavioral lists "cannot be exhaustive, particularly given the rapid rate at which technological innovations emerge, and therefore they are invariably incomplete as well as inconsistent across studies" (Ybarra, 2013, p.184). The instruments used to measure cyber bullying have mostly been adaptations of traditional bullying instruments such as: self-report assessments, peer nominations, teacher reports, online surveys, questionnaires, and the OBVQ. The majority of the measurement instruments used to assess cyber bullying lack the minimum psychometric standards for scale development (Thomas et al., 2015). Half of the instruments do not include the concept of cyber bullying, many researchers are using other terms (e.g. Internet harassment, cyber-harassment, and electronic bullying), while the definitions used are congruent with cyber bullying behaviors (Thomas et al., 2015).

Operationalizing Cyber Bullying

Although many researchers use the definition provided by Olweus in the OBVQ for cyber bullying, they operationalize it differently. Some researchers measure cyber bullying by asking a simple question in their questionnaires (e.g. 'have you ever been cyber bullied?'). Whereas, others provide a definition within their questionnaires (i.e. 'we say bullying is...'), use a list of behavioral experiences, or both (Ybarra et al., 2012). There are many setbacks for each approach. When a definition is provided as a measure it may present a challenge to the respondents whose experiences differ from the definition. Moreover, researchers assume that respondents will read and simply understand the definition that is provided. When the word 'bully' is utilized within a questionnaire the participants are left with no choice but to adopt the label of having been bullied (Ybarra et

al., 2012). Moreover, the use of the word 'bully' presumes that the respondent and researcher,

share the same meaning of [the word] 'bully'. Because of rapid changes in technology, behavioral lists, [even though they provide] concrete examples of bullying, are vulnerable to constant [confusion] unless lists are [modified] to experiences that are universal across environments (Ybarra et al., 2012, p.54).

Behavioral lists must be coupled with follow-up questions or a definition in order to accurately measure cyber bullying.

In order to better understand how variations in definitions and operationalization affect the prevalence rates of cyber bullying Ybarra et al. (2012) conducted two studies. The first study examines the impact the word 'bullying' has on the prevalence rates of cyber bullying. The definition used for 'bullying' in this study was the one provided by Olweus. Ybarra et al. (2012) were interested in determining whether "the likelihood of youth admission of being bullied, and adoption of that label, varies by the appearance of the word "bully" or a definition in the survey question" (p.54). The second study examined the reporting rates of bullying when aligned with Olweus' three characteristics of bullying. Within their research Ybarra et al. (2012) conceptualized cyber bullying under the larger umbrella of 'bullying', Moreover, they proposed three components: mode of communication through which the bullying occurs (in person, or online), type (physical, or relational), and environment (school or home). The data from both studies suggests that the use of the word 'bully' in a survey measure, followed by follow-up questions about power differential between the bully and victim reduces self-misclassification by youth. An average of 25% of the respondents reported being bullied monthly in person, 10% were bullied online, 7% over the telephone/cellphone, and 8% via text messaging (Ybarra et al., 2012).

By conceptualizing cyber bullying under the larger umbrella of 'bullying' researchers are able to count rates of online experiences separate from those that are occurring face-to-face, which allows for direct comparisons (Ybarra et al., 2012). Some researchers may argue that cyber bullying does not translate well with the Olweus based definition of bullying. For example, the notion of repetition online may be different than face-to-face experiences. Pictures can be posted online once and then shared with an

infinite audience over and over again. Ybarra et al., (2012) argue that although the magnitude is different the notion of repetition is still very similar in face-to-face bullying. For example, “rumors written once on a bathroom wall [can be seen repetitively by many people]...Traditionally, we would not say that this meets the definition of ‘repetition’ off-line, and it is not clear why it should online” (p.58). Researchers argue that the issue of anonymity is something that is only unique to cyberspace, however, messages that are written on bathroom walls can also be anonymously written. It is important to note that all face-to-face incidents of bullying are not done by someone who is known to the victim. “In fact 12% of youth reporting being bullied at school say they do not ‘know’ who their bully is...The issue of anonymity applies beyond online spaces” (Ybarra et al., 2012, p. 58).

In order to truly measure the context of cyber bullying a single global item should be utilized for cyber bullying perpetration and victimization, “followed by additional sub-questions that ask respondents about the publicity and anonymity aspects of cyber bullying” (Thomas et al., 2015, p.144). Publicity and anonymity are crucial in a cyber bullying context when it comes to power imbalance and repetition. The fact that the information posted online is made public, and can remain online for infinite amounts of time, while the perpetrator remains anonymous distinguishes cyber bullying from traditional bullying.

Routine Activities Theory and Cyber Bullying

The dangers that arose with the increased reliability and accessibility of the Internet among youth had been foreseen by many scholars. The idea of creating an electronic global communication system originated in the early 1960s, this idea “entailed an internationally connected set of computers that allowed for easy accessibility to information...[this is] now known as the Internet” (Marcum, 2008, p. 346). Although, the Internet has expanded the social circles, and improved methods of communication for people of all ages, young Internet users often experience several forms of victimization online (Marcum, 2008). It is common behavior in almost all households for the Internet to be used daily. It is used for studies, socialization, work, entertainment, and many other activities. In the 1990s the Internet became a familiar commodity within businesses and homes (Marcum, 2008). Today the Internet is prevalent in most households. It is used by

adolescents far more than any other age group. More adolescents are using the Internet “to socialize [and are spending more of their free time online. As a result, of spending excessive amounts of time on the Internet adolescents are] placing themselves at risk for an increased likelihood of victimization” (Marcum, 2008, p.360-361).

It is important to note that even though “public interest in cyberbullying developed relatively recently...[studies identifying the potential consequences of cyberbullying date as far back as 1998]” (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011, p.81). Several of these studies found that 15-35% of students experienced cyberbullying, while 10-20% admitted to being the perpetrators (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Mesch, 2009; Marcum, 2008). The findings of many of these studies identified serious incidents of emotional and psychological trauma associated with being victims of cyberbullying. As a result, researchers began to focus on predictors of cyber bullying, by examining the relationship between the use of the Internet by adolescents, and the increased reliance on technology as it continues to advance. The use of routine activities theory (RAT) is one such theoretical approach that many scholars have used in order to predict cyberbullying (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011; Marcum, 2008; Mesch, 2009).

The routine activities theory provided criminologists with an innovative framework to explain the increase of crime post World War II. In 1979 Cohen and Felson theorized that the,

increase in crime was due to more activities occurring outside the home...[they argued that this led to an increase in motivated offenders. According to RAT] victimization is likely to occur during the convergence of...three factors: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and a lack of a capable guardian (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011, p.83).

If any of the three components are missing, the crime is less likely to occur (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011; Cohen & Felson, 1979).

RAT is excellent for the examination of predatory or exploitative crimes. Cyber bullying is a type of deviant behavior that can be both predatory and/or exploitative, as a result applying the concepts of RAT to cybercrime literature helps researchers better predict victimization (Marcum, 2008). The routine activities of children today have evolved significantly from playing with dolls, and riding bikes to using the Internet, and playing

video games (Marcum, 2008). Past research indicates that 87% of youth are using the Internet, and that as new technologies emerge, new methods of victimization are bound to develop (Marcum, 2008). According to RAT, crime is not a random phenomenon that occurs, there is a regular pattern that transpires when all three of the components are present. The interaction between the environment and the offender and victim is vital within RAT.

When applying RAT to cyberbullying, cyberspace becomes the environment. Cyberspace “thrives on the possibilities of the unknown, [and] also provides the opportunity for engaging in activities without the presence of a capable guardian” (Marcum, 2008, p.348). The motivated offender is regarded as the most essential component in RAT. Most RAT theorists agree that motivated offenders will always exist, and that there are plenty of them. Within the field of criminology RAT has been used to analyze a variety of forms of crime and deviance. Recently, it has been applied by scholars to evaluate cybercrime, however, the operationalization of RAT’s concepts of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and absence of capable guardianship varies throughout the cybercrime literature.

“General themes [regarding] cyberbullying are beginning to emerge” (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011, p.84). For example, Cohen & Felson (1979) argue that the suitability of the potential property or victim indicates the level of vulnerability for victimization. When applying RAT to cybercrime the concept of suitability is equated to the types of activities “one engages in while online, and or the extent of identifiable personal information [that is made] publically available” (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011, p.84). Researchers found that providing personal information online can be a risk factor when it is given to complete strangers (Mesch, 2009; Marcum, 2008). The concept of guardianship within RAT is described as “the presence of people or actions that decrease the risk of victimization” (Mesch, 2009, p. 388). When the concept of guardianship is applied to cybercrime literature its definition varies. Some researchers argue that guardianship is a more human element, and that it requires the presence of a person who will deter potential offenders from offending with their presence (Mesch, 2009; Lwin, Standalone & Miyazaki, 2008). Whereas others argue that in the case of cybercrime, capable guardianship is more electronic and that filters, protective software installed onto computers, and closed capture

cameras that monitor the actions of individuals using the computer are more effective (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011; Marcum, 2008; Mesch, 2009; Navarro & Jasinski, 2011).

Marcum's (2008) study on the previous use of the Internet amongst college freshman postulated the idea of predicting incidents of cyberbullying by using RAT. Within this study a survey was administered in which the respondents were questioned about their Internet behaviours, and their experiences of victimization during their high school senior year. The primary focus of this study was to investigate the Internet usage of college freshman by using the three variable constraints of RAT. Marcum (2008) found that individuals who provided their personal information online had higher rates of victimization, because it increased their exposure to motivated offenders, and increased their likelihood of becoming suitable targets.

These findings were reaffirmed again in 2009 by Mesch, and in 2011 by Navarro & Jasinski who stated that participating in certain activities online, and sharing certain vital pieces of personal information online increased the likelihood of cyber victimization. Marcum (2008) found that his results were similar to those of previous studies conducted on victimization through RAT, which argue that a person's likelihood of victimization decreases when they are no longer regarded as a suitable target (Felson, 1986; Felson, 1987). Surprisingly, Marcum (2008) found that the use of protective measures such as protective software, firewalls, etc. on the Internet had minimal effect on victimization.

Mesch (2009) attempted to expand the RAT approach in its application to cyber bullying. He investigated the effect that parental mediation had on exposure to online risks, and its impact on cyber bullying in a large sample of youth aged 12-17 within the United States. He conducted phone surveys and interviews with the teens and their parents, he found the application of RAT was more useful in explaining factors associated with increased risks for victimization, but not with guardianship or parental monitoring. In his study he found that participating in certain online activities (such as: providing personal information, and socializing in chatrooms) explained why youth were bullied online. Mesch (2009) found that parental guardianship or monitoring, however, did not have a significant impact on bullying.

Similar to the findings of Marcum's (2008) research, regarding the lack of impact the concept of guardianship had on cyber bullying, Mesch (2009) found that the location of the computer, the use of software to block access to certain websites as well as recording online activities had little impact on decreasing online victimization. Marcum (2008) and Mesch (2009) found that as youth aged their level of trust with their parents can waiver, some teens may have a strong level of trust with their parents, whereas others do not, and as a result they begin to hide their online activities. Moreover, they found that has adolescents age they become more tech savvy, and are able to work their way around the electronic methods of guardianship, which explains why parental monitoring or guardianship is not a significant factor in preventing cyber bullying. Similarly, Lwin, Standalone & Miyazaki (2008) found that parent mediation and Internet monitoring significantly reduced victimization amongst 10-17 year olds. They argued that the presence of a parent monitor who actively viewed their child's Internet behaviors decreased their participation in any risky online behaviors significantly. However, similar to the findings of Marcum (2008), as well as Mesch (2009), Lwin et al. (2008) found that as children aged the monitoring of their Internet behavior decreased, and the participation in risky online behavior increased, which resulted in an increased likelihood for victimization.

Navarro & Jasinski (2011) also attempted to evaluate whether RAT could predict cyber bullying and provide researchers with a framework of risk factors. They found that instant messaging was the most riskiest activity that youth were engaging in. Their study indicated that most victimization occurred via instant messaging rather than on social networking sites. Similar to the findings of Marcum (2008) and Mesch (2009) Navarro & Jasinski (2011) found that specific online activities conducted on social networking sites posed the greatest risk for experiencing cyber bullying, and that increased parental guardianship had no significant impact on cyber bullying. However, Navarro & Jasinski (2011) contradicted the findings of past research which suggested that electronic guardianship did not prevent cyber bullying.

The findings of Marcum (2008), Mesch (2009), and Navarro & Jasinski (2011) are inconsistent with past research conducted on victimization and RAT in regards to the effect guardianship has on cyber bullying. Past research suggests that the likelihood of

victimization decreases when there is an increase in protective measures, because these measures decrease the lack of capable guardianship (Felson, 1986; Felson, 1987), however when applying the concept of human guardianship via parental monitoring to cyber bullying there is very little impact on victimization (Marcum, 2008; Mesch, 2009; Navarro & Jasinski, 2011). The findings regarding electronic methods of guardianship varied this “highlights the need for further investigation into this area, especially as new technologies become available that can fulfill the guardianship role (e.g., Web cams, off-site tracking capabilities by parents, etc.)” (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011, p. 91).

Moreover, Navarro & Jasinski (2011) argue that it is very difficult to apply RAT to cybercrime overall, because of the disorganized structure of the Internet, which prevents victims from being able to create social situations that would enable motivated offenders. However, one could argue that the Internet allows for social integration in cyber space without the need of having the motivated offender, suitable target, and lack of capable guardian present in the same way (or even at the same time). In order for bullying to occur online the offenders and the suitable targets do not need to be in the same space at the same time compared to face to face bullying in the real world. It is important to note that, RAT is still a viable theory in analyzing cybercrime when scholars,

work towards clarifying the relationship between the theory and online victimization...Researchers must focus solely on one specific cybercrime in order to apply RAT successfully. [Marcum (2008), Mesch (2009), and Navarro & Jasinski, (2011) focused their research solely on cyber bullying, and found that RAT is a viable theory in predicting cyber bullying incidences as opposed to cybercrime overall] (Navarro & Jasinski, 2011, p.84).

Chapter 4.

Deconstruction of a Bully

Having now identified the key differences between traditional bullying and cyber bullying, it is important to understand how an adolescent can become a bully. One aim of research conducted on bullying is to identify risk factors for engaging in bullying behavior. According to some researchers bullies are exposed to aggressive or harsh child-rearing practices and inconsistent parental discipline strategies (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Olweus (1980) identified use of power-assertive aggression, and negative parental tolerance, as well as parents' negative attitudes towards their children as risk factors for aggressive behavior among young boys. These findings "emphasize the contribution of environment and social interaction in learned aggressive behavior" (Griffin & Gross, 2004, p. 384).

Risk Factors for Bullying

According to Brank et al. (2012), some of the risk factors that researchers have considered include: environmental variables, social cognitive variables, family variables, and behavioural variables.

Children first learn socialization through their interactions with their family. They learn what is "socially" acceptable and what is not by effective child-rearing methods, which are established and followed through by their family. Therefore, one could argue that the relationship between a child and their care-giver establishes "a crucial foundation for social interactions...[which in turn shape their] later interactions with childhood peers" (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001, p.349). Researchers believe that children who come from unhealthy familial backgrounds are more likely to become bullies.

In order to test this connection Mohapatra, Irving, Paglia-Boak, Wekerle, Adlaf & Rehm (2010) examined the relationship between the histories of family involvement with Child Protective Services (CPS) and bullying. The CPS is required to protect children from unhealthy family environments, where caregivers are abusive or neglectful, they also

provide caregivers or parents with tips and techniques that create safer and more nurturing environments for their children (Mohapatra et al., 2010). In order to determine whether a child is living in an unhealthy family environment, “a CPS worker becomes involved with [that] family... [it is up to the assigned CPS worker to] investigate suspicions of abuse or neglect” (Mohapatra et al., 2010, p.158). Abuse has been defined by the CPS as: any instance where a child is exposed to domestic violence (Mohapatra et al., 2010). According to the CPS neglect occurs when a caregiver is unable to: provide adequate housing, provide adequate nutrition, or provide any of the child's other basic needs (such as: clothing) (Mohapatra et al., 2010). This study stipulates that families who have a history of involvement with the CPS typically have dysfunctional and neglectful family environments. Mohapatra et al. (2010) found that there was a positive correlation between family involvement with the CPS and bullying; they found that females who came from families that were involved with the CPS were more likely to either bully their peers or become victims of bullying. These findings suggests that there is a connection between negative unhealthy familial backgrounds and bullying.

Shields & Cicchetti (2001) examined parental maltreatment and the risk factors for bullying. Indeed Shields & Cicchetti (2001) found that children who were maltreated by their caregivers displayed far more antisocial behaviors, because these children came from unhealthy familial environments wherein they were constantly exposed to physical and/or verbal abuse, violence, coercion, neglect, and exploitation by their caregiver. These negative antisocial behaviors were commonly displayed amongst adolescent bullies. Moreover, these children blatantly disregarded the feelings and the rights of others, and had no problem using exploitative behavioral methods.

A study conducted by Laeheem, Kunin & McNeil (2009), had a similar finding where children who came from unhealthy family environments were more likely to display bullying behaviors. Laeheem et al. (2009) argued that the major contributing factor for bullying was physical abuse by a parent; when children either witnessed abuse between the parents, or the abuse was projected onto them, they were more likely to engage in a similar fashion amongst their peers.

Similarly, Wang, Iannotti & Nansel (2009) conducted a study wherein they wished to determine whether socio-demographic characteristics such as having friends, and parental support were associated with bullying. The findings of Wang et al. (2009) were consistent to those of the previous studies that had been conducted on risk factors for bullying. They concluded that adolescents who experienced higher parental support were less likely to engage in bullying.

Having now highlighted the familial and environmental risk factors for bullying, it is important to consider the social cognitive variables. Past research regarding social cognitive risk factors suggests that in order to gain a better understanding of why adolescents bully we need to understand their mind set. According to a study conducted by Farrington & Baldry (2010) there are many individual risk factors for bullying, some of which they highlight are: aggressiveness, low intelligence and achievement, low empathy, hyperactivity-impulsiveness, depression, low self-esteem, and unpopularity. Farrington & Baldry (2010) found that children who displayed low-empathy and high hyperactivity-impulsiveness were more likely to bully, they argued that these are the most important risk factors. The findings of this study were consistent with past research, which also suggests that bullies tend to display low cognitive empathy towards their peers who are bullied. Farrington & Baldry (2010) argue that self-reported bullies have far lower IQs than their peers, which affect their self-esteem. Moreover, one could argue that children who suffer from high impulsivity-hyperactivity, but also have low IQs and cognitive empathy, may be unaware of the fact that their actions are hurting others. They may not be able to truly understand the depths and the severity of their actions.

Past research conducted on risk factors for bullying suggests that children who engage in bullying have many behavioral issues. Children who engage in bullying tend to come from unhealthy family environments, where they learn aggressive behavior. These children are more likely to act out, and become incredibly aggressive when they feel threatened or uncomfortable, or simply when they do not know how to react to a particular situation (Garner & Hinton, 2010).

Characteristics of a Bully

It has been suggested that bullies use violence to solve problematic situations, or in order to get whatever they want (Griffin & Gross, 2004). This understanding has developed under the theoretical assumption of proactive aggression (i.e. using aggression as a strategy to achieve any desired goal). In order to truly gauge what type of adolescents engage in cyber bullying it is important to formulate a profile of these Internet harassers. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) conducted a study in order to determine what the characteristics are of the youth who engage in online harassment behaviors. The findings revealed that many of the youth suffered from poor parent-child relationships, and the misuse of both legal and illegal drugs. "Poor caregiver-child relationships were significantly related to online harassment...44% of the [Internet harassers] reported a very poor emotional bond [with their caregivers]" (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004, p. 328). As a result, Ybarra & Mitchell (2004) concluded that a weak emotional bond between a child and their caregiver is a significant characteristic of online bullies.

Some of the psychosocial characteristics associated with cyber bullies are: the lack of perceived peer support, a feeling of being disconnected from their school, having a sense of moral approval for bullying, and having below-average grades in school (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). Moreover, Ybarra & Mitchell (2004) highlighted three significant psychosocial factors for online harassment behaviour- frequent substance use, delinquent behaviour, and being the victim of traditional face-to-face bullying. Delinquency such as: damaging property, having contact with the police, physically assaulting a non-family member, stealing, and consuming cigarettes or alcohol are all significantly associated with the elevated odds of harassment. Ybarra & Mitchell (2004) found that 37% of youth who engaged in delinquent behavior harassed others online. Moreover, 6% of online harassers reported either physical or sexual victimization, 32% reported frequent substance use, over half of the online harassers (51%) reported being bullied. The authors noted that depressive symptomology, delinquency, and failing a class elevated the odds of youth harassing others online. Moreover, the findings suggest that both males and females are equally likely to report their aggressive behaviours online.

Ybarra & Mitchell (2004) noted that youth who engage in cyber bullying online are more likely to frequently: smoke tobacco, fight, drink alcohol, and show indications of academic under-achievements, which can lead to those youth dropping out of school (Brown et al., 2006). Lastly, the authors found that the odds of Internet abuse become elevated with the daily frequent use of the Internet. Cyber bullies have been described as individuals who use the Internet (instant messenger programs in particular) more than their peers. Moreover, there appears to be a more positive relationship between frequent online use and certain types of cyber bullying. For example, adolescents who spend more time online tend to say things online that they would not normally say face-to-face, or they send infected emails to their victims (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). Ybarra & Mitchell (2004) found that 64% of youth who harassed others online used the Internet four or more days every week. Internet harassers have a keen way of identifying their victims online. They are very adept at identifying who will either not retaliate, or will be unsuccessful in their attempts to retaliate, which in turn makes those victims more of a desirable target (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Internet harassers rate themselves as having almost expert knowledge of the Internet (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009).

By understanding the mind set of Internet harassers, and identifying the characteristics that they possess “an opportunity emerges to educate [ourselves] about safe and appropriate Internet use, but also an opportunity to intervene about other adolescent health-related issues, such as traditional bullying and substance use, the youth may be facing” (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004, p.332).

Chapter 5.

Deconstruction of a Victim

Having now closely examined the variables that define what constructs a bully, it is important to deconstruct the definition of a victim by highlighting the risk factors for becoming a victim, and identifying the different types of victims. Victims of bullying are characterized as individuals who have poor self-esteem, have high rates of internalizing problems such as depression or anxiety, and have few friends to rely on for emotional support. Repeated victimization leads to increased anxiety and depression, as a result victimization can be considered a risk factor for psychological and social difficulties (Griffin & Gross, 2004).

Risk Factors for Victimization

Past research stipulates many risk factors for victimization some of which are: submissive behavior, low social competence, internalizing behaviors, and lack of family support. In regards to online victimization researchers found that youth who participated more online were more likely to experience online bullying (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). Individuals who spend a lot of time online and provide personal information online are more likely to experience online bullying. Particularly, researchers argue that youth who use instant messenger (IM), and webcams frequently have an increased likelihood of being cyberbullied repeatedly (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). In order to better understand why certain children are victimized Garner & Hinton (2010) conducted a study where they considered certain cognitive and emotional factors. This study suggests that children who are victimized by their peers are unable to truly understand the mental state of their peers. Garner & Hinton (2010) defined the term mental states as the intentions, thoughts and beliefs of the peers. According to Garner & Hinton (2010) this lack of the victim's ability to understand their peer's mental states inhibits their ability to interact with their peers. As a result, these children are far less assertive, and they are unsure about how they should react in social settings where a problem arises. Their lack of a response in regards to their interaction with peers creates a cycle of victimization. Garner & Hinton

(2010) found that bullies believed that children who exhibited the aforementioned qualities were easily manipulated. However, one could also argue that children who are constantly victimized by their peers may actually understand the mental state of their bullies, and make the personal choice to remain aloof and completely ignore the behavior.

In their study Wolke, Woods & Samara (2009) defined victimization as the consistent exposure to negative actions inflicted by one or more peers with the clear intention of hurting others. Victimization can include acts such as: being bitten, beaten, threatened either verbally or physically, and being purposefully rejected entrance into a social group (Wolke et al., 2009). Researchers have begun to study risk factors associated with becoming involved in, escaping, and remaining victims of bullying; they found that a child who is bullied in their primary years will continue to be victimized in their adolescent years (Wolke et al. 2009). Children who are continuously victimized tend to have a small circle of friends, and do not have strong ties to their school, they typically have high rates of absenteeism, and display a significant amount of behavioral problems (Wolke et al., 2009).

Research conducted on victims of cyber bullying suggests that there is a strong relationship between certain psychological characteristics and being victimized, although these characteristics can be either the cause or consequence of cyber bullying (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). Patchin & Hinduja (2006) found that 42.5% of reported cyber bully victims were frustrated, 27% felt sad, and close to 40% felt angry. Ybarra (2004) found that males who reported having severe depression were more than eight times as likely to report being victims of Internet harassment. Moreover, researchers found that victims who report being victimized online tend to have higher levels of social anxiety (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009).

In order to better understand why certain children are more susceptible to victimization Wolke et al. (2009) introduced two proposals. Firstly, hierarchical structures within peer groups where key roles of dominance and subservience are established play a pivotal role in social interactions, which make it difficult for children to escape the victim role within the classroom (Wolke et al., 2009). Secondly, a child's ability to cope with bullying determines the longevity of victimization; a child who has strong coping strategies

is far more likely to escape victimization. According to Wolke et al. (2009) there are two resources that a child can draw upon for coping methods: internal resources and external resources. Internal resources are linked directly to the child, they include: intelligence, personality, self-esteem, and emotional and physical health. Wolke et al. (2009) found a positive correlation between internal resources and escaping victimization. External resources refer to support systems, such as: family, friends, teachers, coaches, and changes in environment (like moving away) victims who lack strong external resources will continue to be victimized. Wolke et al. (2009) found that past research supports the notion that strong supportive peer groups, and strong social support systems protect adolescents against victimization.

Types of Victims

It is important to note that bullies target peers who are easily subdued. Victims might be considered good targets as a result of their poor social skills, low confidence levels and lack of friends. Camodeca, Goossens, Terwogt, & Schuengel (2002) found that bullies use proactive aggression in order to dominate their victims who use reactive aggression. Moreover, Camodeca et al., (2002) noted that victims are more likely to engage in reactive aggression after they have been repeatedly targeted by their bullies/bully. This reaction does not stop the bullying, on the contrary, the authors noted that it makes the bullies even more ruthless. Victims of bullying respond to bullying in a variety of ways, this leads them to be classified as either provocative victims or passive victims (Griffin & Gross, 2004).

Passive, submissive, or innocent victims

Passive victims are the most common types of victims, they are usually described as children who are insecure, extremely anxious, sensitive, cautious, lonely, quiet, physically weak, have poor self-esteem, are without friends, and who withdraw and/or cry when they are attacked by others. These children do not like violence of any kind. Olweus (1994) notes that these types of victims are at a greater risk of internalizing psychological difficulties, and are often rejected and ignored by other children in a social group.

Provocative victim or bully/victims

Provocative victims are not only victimized by aggressors, but they also engage in aggressive acts towards others (Griffin & Gross, 2004). This type of victim is found less frequently than passive/submissive victims. This phenomena of “‘tech-savvy’ victims of traditional bullying ‘getting their own back’ on their bullies through the Internet or mobile phone is sometimes referred to as ‘the revenge of the nerds’” (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009, p.1355). It is important to note that victims who are cyber bullied are also victims of traditional school yard bullying. Provocative victims are often described as individuals who elicit negative reactions from the majority of the students in their class, not just from bullies (Griffin & Gross, 2004). “In other words, most children would judge this type of victim to have poor social interaction skills” (Griffin & Gross, 2004, p. 387). Olweus (1993) noted that 10% of children within his study sample could be categorized as both victims and bullies. After finding that a large number of self-reported victims of bullying were also claiming to engage in bullying behavior towards others, Cartwright (2010) suggested that the status of being a victim of bullying could also be a risk factor for engaging in bullying.

It is important to note that provocative victims or bully/victims are known to have difficulties with their social skills, might suffer from hyperactivity disorder, and they might appear to be aggressive or anxious in response to the behavior of their peers (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Greene (2000) noted that provocative victims violate social norms by displaying behavioral issues that are consistent with attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHA). These victims often interrupt conversations, and have difficulty being patient, or taking turns appropriately. Moreover, provocative victims often have a combination of both aggressive/anxious reaction patterns, as a result they behave in ways that may cause others to be tense or irritated (Olweus, 1994).

Provocative bully victims use different dynamics than passive victims. Provocative bully victims use both proactive and reactive aggression, whereas, passive victims respond primarily with reactive aggression. Passive victims rarely respond aggressively when they are being victimized, when they do respond aggressively it is at a lesser level than those who are bully victims. As a result of a lack of social support and friendships passive victims are at a greater risk for more severe social and psychological difficulties,

unlike provocative bully victims who are more likely to have “the protective factor of at least one friendship” (Griffin & Gross, 2004, p.387).

Even though many researchers are comfortable assigning labels to the various types of victims, most children do not have a great deal of insight regarding the dynamics of such social relationships. Although victim reports provide useful information it is difficult to ask a child to both interpret and then report their experiences.

Age and Victimization

According to research conducted by Olweus (1993) the percentage of children who report being victimized gradually declines with age. Children who continue to experience bullying in junior high school and high school experience far less physical aggression (Olweus, 1993). However, although there is a decline in victimization, 2.5% of junior high girls and 11.3% of junior high boys report being bullied compared to 10.7% of elementary school boys and 4.0% of elementary school girls (Olweus, 1993). These findings suggest that the decline in victimization is not a very substantial one.

Cartwright (2010) found that bullying that was reported by participants on www.bullying.org started in kindergarten or elementary school, and then continued through junior high and high school. This suggests that bullying was not necessarily limited to a particular grade, peer group or age (Cartwright, 2010). Of the 557 messages that were reviewed 172 of them described episodes of bullying that lasted five years or longer.

Eslea & Rees (2001) argue that although many researchers suggest that bullying declines with age, the decline might actually be due to a change in the child's definition of bullying (e.g., they may no longer consider or classify verbal teasing as bullying). Eslea & Rees (2001) emphasized that bullying that occurs during middle childhood is more memorable in adulthood, but it might not have been the most severe bullying that is experienced throughout development.

It is important to note that many studies that gauge bullying and age examine traditional school yard bullying. One can use the Internet to sexually harass their victims

by distributing unsolicited text messages or photos of a sexual nature, or requesting sexual acts online or offline (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabri, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012). The Internet is a public domain and as result email messages, text messages, and photo messages can be viewed and distributed not only by the perpetrator but by anyone who can access it (Mishna, et al., 2012). Cyber bullying encompasses the use of an electronic medium to bully and harass anyone at any time no matter the age. It occurs within schools amongst young children and adolescents, but it also occurs within adulthood at work.

Chapter 6.

Implications of Bullying

Adolescents all cope with the effects of bullying in various different ways, Goldstein (2012) attempted to highlight some of the social implications that are associated with bullying. In some cases bullying can go unacknowledged by mainstream society; however, for the victimized adolescent it can be classified as a scarring event (Goldstein, 2012). Many adolescents view themselves through the eyes of their peers, as a result, bullying leads to a damaging sense of self-worth for the victimized adolescent. Goldstein (2012) argues that adolescents are already burdened with physical developmental changes, and physiological developmental changes. Therefore, they are unable to handle the stresses associated with bullying.

Newman, Holden & Delville (2005), found that there are a number of negative psychological outcomes for bullying, including anxiety, depression, and poor perception of self-worth and competence. Newman et al. (2005), argue that bullying must be considered a chronic stressor for adolescents who suffer from any of the aforementioned psychological conditions. In their study Newman et al. (2005) found that the effects of bullying can last for many years. Similarly, Nordahl, Beran, & Dittrick (2013) argue that cyber bullying is a significant problem for youth today. In their study Nordahl et al., (2013) found that youth ranging from the ages of 10-17 were all affected psychologically by incidents of cyber bullying. Moreover, the authors noted that students who were cyber bullied reported having high levels of depression, anxiety, and externalized their emotions aggressively.

With the advancements in technology bullying has become harder for schools to monitor and prevent. Adolescents are now using the Internet to demean their peers in ways that would have traditionally been inconceivable; there have been many cases where the victims of bullying were unable to bear the public shame that resulted from one incident of bullying, and they took their own lives (Goldstein, 2012). Children who have been victims of cyber bullying report high levels of sadness and embarrassment (Nordahl et al., 2013). Online sexual solicitation can be linked to delinquent behaviors as well as

depression, but threats made online that are nonsexual in nature are not associated with delinquent behaviors but only with depression (Nordahl et al., 2013). Nordahl et al., (2013) argue that different types of cyber bullying have specific consequences on the victims.

Some researchers suggest that some graphic types of cyber-bullying, such as personal videos or pictures sent to others, are more hurtful than other types, given the highly public and revealing nature of these forms of cyber-bullying (i.e., a student can actually be shown in a hurtful or embarrassing context), thus, different types of cyber-bullying may be related to specific forms of harm (Nordahl et al., 2013, p. 385).

Another study that highlighted similar findings was conducted by Patchin & Hinduja (2006); they found that the impacts of cyber-bullying were not trivial by any means. Moreover, Patchin & Hinduja (2006) argued that cyber bullying could lead to potentially serious emotional, psychological, or social harms. Victims of bullying can seriously injure themselves or others, can retaliate with violence, or even kill themselves. Some cases of extreme bullying and victimization can also lead to criminal convictions (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Many victims of extreme/consistent bullying find it difficult to continue with their studies, they are physically unable to attend classes because they feel sick to their stomachs, or suffer panic attacks, or have severe cases of anxiety just by knowing that they will have to face their bully.

There are numerous mental and physical ailments that can arise as a result of cyber bullying in both adults and youth all over the world. Unlike traditional bullying which is confined typically to school boundaries, cyber bullying “can take place at any time or place, even in the privacy of one’s home. Therefore, students who are electronically engaged can be cyberbullied at any time” (Brown et al., 2006,p.15). Victims of cyber bullying do not have many options to escape from their perpetrator, the only viable options are to either ignore the harasser, or give up the Internet (Brown et al., 2006). Willard (2006) found that cyber bullying can produce a substantial amount of damage to youth ranging from school absenteeism, poor grades, an increased tendency to harm others, and youth suicide.

Bullying and Suicide

The relationship between bullying and suicide has been investigated extensively within prisons, schools, and workplaces (Cartwright, 2010). Both bullies and victims of bullying can exhibit suicidal ideation, where bullies are suicidal and the victims are more depressed (Cartwright, 2010). A study in the “New York area [found that students who were] involved in bullying, either as a bully or as a victim, were at a much higher risk for depression and suicidal ideation than those who were not involved” (Cartwright, 2010, p. 21). Olweus (1993) highlights the suicidal deaths of three young Norwegian boys, who were bullied at school by their peers. These three young boys were constantly ridiculed and isolated by their peers. Similarly, in Japan 16 students who were also bullied by their peers committed suicide between 1984 -1985 (Cartwright, 2010). In Canada, a 14 year old boy committed suicide by jumping off a bridge. In his suicide note he stated how he was bullied relentlessly by his peers, how he was constantly called gay, a geek, and a faggot. He ended the note by saying he was no longer able to take the constant bullying (Cartwright, 2010). In 2000, a 15 year old girl committed suicide by hanging herself in her own home. She also left a note for her family in which she said “that she had been threatened by school bullies, and that she felt that death was her only means of escape” (Cartwright, 2010, p.19). In 2004, a young boy committed suicide by shooting himself outside of his home. He too left a note for his family stating he could no longer take the bullying at school. In the Nanaimo- Ladysmith area of Vancouver Island, British Columbia a 15 year old boy hung himself but did not leave a note instead his family was already aware of the bullying he was facing at school, and had him transferred to another one. Unfortunately, the bullying did not stop at the new school, it got worse (Cartwright, 2010).

Researchers argue that some school shootings are the result of bullying, and are themselves intentional forms of suicide. In the infamous 1999 Columbine school shooting the two shooters Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris claimed to be victims of school bullying. Moreover, both Klebold & Harris planned to commit suicide prior to arriving at school, they wanted to “go out in what they thought of as a blaze of glory” (Cartwright, 2010, p. 20). Many incidents resulted in similar outcomes, in the 2005 school shooting in Red Lake High School in Minnesota, the shooter (who was also described by peers as being a victim of

severe bullying) shot himself (Cartwright, 2010). In 2007 another victim of bullying shot two teachers, and injured two classmates before killing himself (Cartwright, 2010).

There is a lot of power in the written word, and it is important to emphasize its lasting effects in regards to cyber bullying. Traditional face-to-face bullying may be severe at the time it is occurring, however over time the memory of the incident fades. Cyber bullying, on the other hand, can involve written words which last forever. For example, in 2004 a student committed suicide following incidences of constant bullying via text messages (Brown et al., 2010). Further, “a sixteen-year-old-female in Hungary developed anorexia nervosa after online sexual harassment, [and in] Japan, one young girl resorted to murdering her classmate over a contentious website” (Brown et al., 2010, p.15). It is important to note that students can revisit the written taunts again and again, which forces them to re-live the entire experience. As a result, a prolonged sense of victimization may arise which can lead to physical and mental disorders, as well as depression, and suicidal ideation.

Furthermore, Brown et al., (2010) argue a youth's life may become unbearable as a result of: the perpetrator(s) anonymity, combined with the fact that the victims may be forced to either completely give up, or limit their online use, due to constant harassment. The Internet has amplified teen angst, where bullies use nasty rumors, post humiliating pictures online, unleash putdowns, and make verbal threats on blogs or in chatroom, which can all strike the victims at home during any time of the day (Brown et al., 2010).

Chapter 7.

Legal Implications of Bullying

There has been a lot of media attention given to the issue of bullying recently here in the province of British Columbia. There is a lot of talk within the community for stricter legislation regarding bullying. Currently many forms of bullying are considered illegal (RCMP, 2014, "Bullying and the Law"). According to the RCMP some acts of bullying which are considered illegal include: threats (whether done face to face, online, over the phone or through text messaging), assaults (including pushing, tripping, slapping, hitting or spitting), theft of personal items (like a backpack, books, electronic devices, etc.), harassment (repeated tormenting online, with texts, phone calls and/or emails), sexual exploitation (sharing videos or photos with nudity of people under 18), and hate crimes (bullying based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, etc.) (RCMP, 2014, "Bullying and the Law").

The province of Ontario already has set forth a bill, which mandates students to report any and all incidents of bullying (Anonymous, 2012). According to the bill students who engage in bullying will be suspended or expelled from school. The province of Quebec is planning on implementing a similar bill, while the province of Alberta is contemplating whether or not they should follow suit (Anonymous, 2012). Implementing such bills can prove to be difficult because operational problems can arise from the vague definitions provided within such legislation.

The province of Quebec legally defines bullying as "any direct or indirect behavior, comment, act or gesture, including the use of social media, intended to injure, hurt, oppress, intimidate or ostracize another" (Anonymous, 2012). Moreover, Anonymous (2012) highlights the fact that most adolescents who bully their peers also report being bullied themselves, as a result it becomes very difficult to define legally who "the victim is and who deserves to be punished" (p.18). Laws already exist in regard to physical assault, verbal abuse, and defamation of character; therefore, the implementation of bills regarding bullying seems counterproductive.

Chapter 8.

Anti- Bullying School Policies and Programs

Having now stipulated the legal implications of bullying, it is imperative that we consider school policies within the province of British Columbia regarding bullying, and how they are applied within Sylvan Learning. Past research suggests that self-reported bullies are victims of bullying themselves, and that there is a positive correlation between strong peer and other social support systems and victimization; as a result, Brank et al. (2012) argue that the best method of tackling bullying is through the implementation of intervention programs and policies via schools and teachers.

Within the province of British Columbia (BC) both school policies and programs regarding bullying vary. School district 36 (SD 36), for example, is the largest school district within the province of British Columbia; it manages the municipalities of Surrey, Barnston Island, and South Surrey. SD 36 is made up of: 19 secondary schools, 5 learning centers, and 101 elementary schools (“Keeping schools safe,” n.d.). During the 2012/2013 school year the district enrolled 71, 974 students, and employed around 5, 500 teachers (“Keeping schools safe,” n.d.). SD 36 has the reputation of having the largest student body within the province.

In order to maintain a healthy learning environment throughout the expanding district the Surrey Board of Education was developed. The Board overlooks and regulates all of the schools policies and procedures within the district. In order to create healthy and safe learning environments the Board implemented, The Safe and Caring Schools Policy (Policy 9410). This policy contains provisions not only for SD 36 but for teachers, students, parents/ guardians, and any –and or all- other partnering agencies about their guidelines, when it comes to dealing with any issue(s) regarding potential harm to a learning environment.¹

¹ Refer to Appendix for Policy 9410.

Policy 9410 takes into consideration the diversity that is seen amongst the schools within SD 36. Some of the schools within SD 36 are located in low socio-economic areas; whereas, others are located in affluent neighborhoods; therefore, the needs of each and every school within SD 36 will significantly vary. As a result, the policy instructs each school within the district to establish their own school code of conduct, which must include the expectations of what is classified as appropriate and inappropriate student behavior within Policy 9410. According to Policy 9410, these representative codes of conduct must be displayed in a section of the school which is visible to everyone who visits, or attends the school. Although the policy provides each school with the liberty of creating their own code of conduct based on the characteristics and needs of their populous, it does specify that these codes of conduct be consistent with the School Act, as well as district policy, and that they are developed around the stipulations under policy 9410.1.

In order to combat the sensitive, yet wide spread issue of cyber bullying, the *Safe and Caring Schools Policy* set forth expectations for the student populous within SD 36. A few of the relevant expectations outlined in the policy state that students must:

- (a) neither take part in, nor condone (provoke, encourage, or support) any form of violence, including bullying, harassment, threat and intimidation, verbal, physical or sexual abuse, discrimination in any form;
- (b) seek to prevent violence and potentially violent situations; demonstrate, when using electronic resources, appropriate on-line conduct in keeping with Policy #5780 – Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Access and Use, including refraining from any acts of cyberbullying;
- (i) use respectful language and refrain from using obscenity or profanity while in a school building, on school or district property and at school-sponsored activities;
- (j) demonstrate commitment to learning by coming to school prepared to learn and by contributing to a positive, orderly, and peaceful environment (“Keeping schools safe,” n.d.).

Even though the policy clearly stipulates codes of conduct for students, cases of bullying continue to occur within schools. However, bullying does not go un-noticed; parents, teachers, and peers alike witness the event of bullying, or, they witness the change within the victim; these noticeable changes may be physical and/or emotional. As a result, the

policy highlights guidelines for parents and guardians in how to deal with the aftermath of bullying. According to the policy parents/guardians are requested to:

- (a) be familiar with the District Threat Assessment Protocol (available through your school);
- (b) adhere to board policies and the School Code of Conduct when in attendance at school functions and support all students by reinforcing and modeling appropriate social skills;
- (c) support students by demonstrating appropriate academic, social and emotional behaviours through co-operative school and parent/guardian partnerships;
- (d) support the school's and district's role in taking disciplinary action when necessary and reinforce students' understanding of the consequences of their behaviour. ("Keeping schools safe," n.d.)

In order to effectively and efficiently deal with issues of both cyber bullying/traditional bullying, parents/guardians must work collaboratively with the acting authorities. They must contact either the school counsellor, principle, vice principal, RCMP school resource officer, or the manager for safe schools. The policy clearly outlines the principals' and vice principals' authority to act when any of the provisions are broken. The policy states:

5.1 Principals and Vice Principals are authorized by the Board under Section 85(2) (c) of the School Act to suspend a student from attendance at school in keeping with district policy, regulation and procedures and will make reasonable accommodation to continue the student's education program during the period of the suspension.

5.2 Principals and Vice Principals may conduct or authorize a search of a student, personal property or locker if there are reasonable grounds to believe that policy has been or is being violated and that evidence of the violation will be found in the location or on the person of the student searched. The search should be conducted in a sensitive manner and be minimally intrusive ("Keeping schools safe," n.d.).

In order to swiftly and justly deal with issues of bullying parents/guardians are encouraged to support the disciplinary actions/decisions of the acting authorities. Under the *Safe and Caring Schools Policy* the Surrey school district has:

- developed and implemented student conflict resolution skills strategies,

- provided educational seminars on issues pertaining to bullying, or violence of any form for students, staff, parents, and members of the community,
- implemented a classroom and school based approach on addressing issues of bullying, intimidation, and violence of any form,
- created consistent guidelines in student disciplinary action,
- developed and distributed a student code of conduct pamphlet to students, parents/guardians, and staff,
- rewarded positive social behaviors of student body,
- provided access to professional staff for students who require the help, and
- built and maintained collaborative relationships with law enforcement as well as community stake holders (“Keeping schools safe,” n.d.).

Many schools within British Columbia have implemented the safe and caring schools policy, however, they have also implemented their own anti-bullying policies that meet the needs of their student body. Having stated earlier that Sylvan Learning is a private institution it is important to note that Sylvan Learning does not use the safe and caring schools policy. Instead Sylvan Learning has implemented its own anti-bullying policies and programs which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Many of the programs that are currently being implemented within schools as well as tutoring institutions such as Sylvan Learning are based on research conducted by Dan Olweus (Brank et al., 2012). Olweus developed a program, which is aimed at preventing and reducing bullying. Under this program there are three primary focuses of intervention: school based, classroom based, and individual level based (Brank et al., 2012).

Under the school based intervention program the school administration must determine what the status of bullying currently is within their school via questionnaires that are distributed to the student body (Brank et al. 2012). Once the data is gathered from the questionnaires the school administration will determine whether or not additional supervision from a teacher is required, if additional supervision is the administration will place the supervising teacher in the problematic locations during peak bullying times, problematic locations and peak bullying times are retrieved from the data that is gathered from the questionnaires. Schools implement these methods of intervention because they are incredibly easy to operationalize. It is easier for the administration as well as the

teaching staff to determine when students are being bullied, and where they are being bullied, by asking the students to complete anonymous questionnaires.

Under the classroom based level of intervention teachers attempt to establish stronger peer relationships, by encouraging their students to engage in activities that require high levels of communication. Having noted earlier that youths who are typically victimized tend to be the less social students, this level of intervention takes these students out of their comfort zone. Students are asked to engage in role-playing, where each student is provided the opportunity to play the part of the victim and the bully. This is both a fun and educational method of teaching adolescents the harms associated with bullying, and it also creates an avenue to decrease bullying (Brank et al., 2012).

Lastly, and arguably most importantly, the individual based level of intervention focuses primarily on support for both the victims and the adolescents who engage in bullying (Brank et al., 2012). Almost all the research done on the topic of bullying suggests strong correlations between positive support and a decrease in both victimization and engagement in bullying. Adolescents who have strong and positive support systems such as: family, friends, teachers, coaches, and counselors tend to deal with instances of bullying more positively than adolescents who lack adequate support systems.

Prevention methods for cyber bullying can be far more difficult to implement in today's technology addicted society. It is nearly impossible to take away iPods, cell phones, and computers from adolescents. Even though it is incredibly difficult, many programs have been established in order to combat cyber bullying. One such program is called *Stop a Bully*. This is a national non-profit organization within Canada; it was developed by a teacher from British Columbia in 2009, and its aim is to provide an avenue for victims of bullying (cyber or traditional) with a safe venue for reporting incidents of bullying to school officials anonymously; this program is not just limited to victims of bullying it is also a venue for witnesses of bullying to report what they have seen, and receive any support that they may need after the fact (Stop a Bully, 2009). The *Stop a Bully* program provides school officials with critical information regarding prevention techniques for bullying, as well as proactive techniques for assisting students who witness bullying or have been victimized themselves. This program aims to increase the awareness and accountability of bullying (Stop a Bully, 2009).

Another program that has been developed within BC is called ERASE (Expect Respect and a Safe Education). This program provides an online application, which is available for parents, students and teachers alike to download on their cell phones; the application allows students to report incidents of bullying anonymously (Steffenhagen, 2012). The implementation of this program across the province of British Columbia provides: schools with tougher codes of conduct for dealing with cases of bullying (traditional or cyber), safe school coordinators in all 60 districts across the province, and more sufficient pre-service training and professional development for teachers to deal with bullying (Steffenhagen, 2012).

Sylvan Learning faces unique challenges of its own regarding issues pertaining to bullying. Firstly, students do not spend as many hours, or have as much invested in sessions at Sylvan Learning compared to their own schools. Students who attend Sylvan Learning are only there for about an hour a day, students are required to attend a minimum of three sessions in the week, each session is an hour long. If the students' educational needs require more help than a student can attend Sylvan for five days a week for an hour each session. Due to both the controlled environment and time constraints within Sylvan the students do not really make strong or weak personal bonds with each other. Moreover, the bullying that is occurring is happening away from Sylvan (either at school, over the Internet, or via text message). Many of the students who attend Sylvan Learning are either victims of bullying, bullies, or bully/victims. As a result, the students have all had their education compromised in some way. Sylvan Learning deals with the aftermath of bullying, which is why Sylvan Learning strongly emphasizes educating both parents/guardians as well as youth about the negative impacts of bullying on the education system.

Chapter 9.

Sylvan Learning: My Experience

My Responsibilities:

I worked as a mediator for students, parents/guardians, and teachers at Sylvan Learning for a period of 4 months. It was my duty to speak to the students who were victims of severe bullying, and had their education compromised within their schools. It was my job to inform the parents/guardians about the issues of bullying that their children were facing, and how deeply it was affecting them. I was responsible for educating the students, teachers, and their parents/guardians about: the current policies pertaining to issues of bullying, the current programs that are offered to aid victims of bullying, preventative methods for bullying, and coping methods that could be used at home and school.

There was no such thing as a typical day at Sylvan Learning, which is why the entire experience was so fulfilling. I was always working around the schedule of the families of the students, their teachers, and the students themselves. The student body at the location where I conducted my practicum was primarily East Indian. This particular location of Sylvan Learning was located in an area where the population was mainly of Indian descent. The students that I was working with were all first generation Canadians, their parents were usually working double shifts or evening shifts, and were incredibly hard to meet with. Unfortunately, the teachers from the schools of the students were also encountering the same problems with the parents of the students. The parents were just too busy to schedule meetings with teachers or counsellors, many of the parents did not really view what was happening at school to be a real issue, they felt their child was just making up excuses for their bad grades. When I was able to meet with all of the aforementioned parties I was able to apply many of the concepts and theories I learned in the classroom. However, most of the knowledge I passed onto all of the parties involved was collected through my research on the issue of cyber bullying.

Having now highlighted my responsibilities within Sylvan Learning, it is important to provide some background information about the agency, in order to understand how they dealt with issues of bullying, prior to my practicum experience. Sylvan Learning is a private tutoring organization that has a four step program (called Sylvan Insight) designed and implemented to enhance children's learning. The first step of this program begins by assessing each student's individual academic strengths and weaknesses, as well as the attitudes and beliefs the student has towards their school and learning. In order to achieve this Sylvan Learning uses a combination of skill assessments, attitude surveys, and one on one observations with a Sylvan tutor. The results highlight what Sylvan program is best suited for the needs of each student, in order to help them develop new skills, enhance skills they already have (but in some cases are unaware of), and overcome any beliefs and behaviors that can limit their success.

The second step of this program is focused on planning a tailored made program for each child's specific needs. Sylvan Learning is aware of the fact that each child has their own unique style of learning, and that not all children learn the same way, or at the same pace. As a result, Sylvan Learning designs a plan for each student that maps out all of their unique skills and strengths in an order that will not only make the most sense, but will also prove to be the most effective. The plan is adjusted to meet the needs of each student, so as a student progresses academically the plan is modified, this way the student is continually being challenged.

The third step of this program is allocating the best teachers with the latest technology to teach the students. Society has progressed quite drastically in regards to technology within the past decade, students no longer use pencils and paper to take notes. They are writing their notes, assignments, and projects on laptops or tablets. As a result, Sylvan Learning has integrated personal instruction (or tutoring) with digital tools. Sylvan tutors use iPads to provide the students with interactive lessons. Students are also given iPads to follow the lessons and complete their work. This creates a more fun and interactive environment for students. With that being said students are unable to use the Internet on the iPads for browsing of any kind. Students are unable to download apps on the iPads. The only application that students can open on the iPads are their learning sessions.

The final step in the Sylvan Insight Program is applying all of the aforementioned steps in order to maximize the results. Within this program the results of each student's progress are measured after every lesson. The primary focus for Sylvan learning is determining whether or not the students are applying the skills that they are given within their schools and at home. In order to measure this Sylvan Learning collaborates with the students teachers from their school. Together they determine whether or not the skills are being applied and demonstrated within the classroom. In order to maximize results at home parents/guardians are informed to stay involved in their child's educational experience via mySivan. This is a website which all the parents/guardians can use to view: feedback given on their child's progress, access activities that can be done at home, and view the next week's lesson plans.

Each student is unique and has their own skill sets, as well as strengths and weaknesses, by identifying all of the aforementioned traits Sylvan Learning hopes to create healthier attitudes, positive thoughts and beliefs, and stronger more encouraging self-promoting views. When a student feels more confident and relaxed they are able to achieve success academically as well as personally, Sylvan Learning hopes to aid both students and their parents/guardians with this via their Sylvan Insight Program.

Having noted earlier that many schools within Canada are implementing the techniques provided by Dan Olweus to deal with issues of bullying, it is important to highlight the fact that Sylvan Learning was also applying these very techniques without really knowing that they were. According to Dan Olweus there are three types of intervention programs: school based, classroom based, and individual based. All three of these intervention programs were already being implemented within Sylvan. Under the school based intervention program Sylvan Learning asks their students at the time of enrollment to complete questionnaires regarding their views and opinions about their school, and whether or not these views and opinions were a result of issues of bullying. They are asked questions about bullying in order to determine how significantly it is effecting their education. The parents/guardians are also asked privately if they are aware of any issues of bullying pertaining to their child. They are asked if there child has ever been bullied, or fallen under peer pressure. It is important to note that these questionnaires are not based on the self-report types of questionnaires that are implemented by most

researchers in the field of cyber bullying literature, these questionnaires were uniquely designed by Sylvan Learning in order for them to gauge the impact bullying has on the students education.

Once the questionnaires are completed, Sylvan Learning is able to better understand why a student is not succeeding academically, with this information they are able to implement the classroom based level of intervention. They are able to create plans and programs that cater to the very needs of each student. After reviewing the results of the questionnaires as well as considering the information provided by the students' parents/guardians, they are able to determine which students are victims of bullying. Once they have gathered all of this information they attempt to establish stronger peer relationships between the quieter more submissive students (which are typically the students who are victims of bullying) and the outspoken students. In order to accomplish this they encourage their students to engage in their learning by seating the quieter more submissive students next to students who are more confident. Sylvan Learning attempts to purposefully engage their students in activities that will require higher levels of communication, thus providing them with new skills. By incorporating this technique within their classrooms, Sylvan Learning creates an environment wherein the students feel comfortable communicating with one another because they all feel like equals. This creates an avenue to decrease bullying.

Having noted earlier that all of the research conducted on the issue of bullying suggests strong correlations between positive support systems and a decrease in both victimization and engagement in bullying, it is imperative to note how Sylvan Learning provided positive support to their students. According to their policy Sylvan Learning was not authorized to get involved directly in any issues of bullying that were occurring off of their grounds, unless they were invited to do so by the parents/guardians of their students. In many cases the directors of Sylvan Learning were acting as mediators between their victimized students and their schools (this only occurred once they were invited to do so by the families of their students). Moreover, the directors would inform their students to seek the help of their school guidance counselor, because they felt that the counselors would have more training on the topic of bullying, and would be far more capable of helping them.

It was difficult for the directors to determine how to help their students effectively, simply because they were unaware of all of the venues that were available for both the students and their families. During my time at Sylvan there were eighty students enrolled in the center, and 20 of them were either victims, bully/victims or bullies. We were able to determine this based on the results from the questionnaires. It is important to note that during my time at Sylvan I learned that many of the students who were victims of bullying at school admitted to bullying others online. They argued that “a lot of those kids deserved it because they think they can get away with being jerks at school”. I was given the duty of educating the students about all of the possible resources that existed, and would be beneficial for them. Having mentioned earlier that the student body was first generation East Indian it is important to note, that many cultural issues arose when it came to dealing with issues of bullying that these youth were facing. Many of the students were afraid to approach me for help because they felt that they would be judged. When these students attempted to confide in their families they were broken down. Most of the students were told by their families that they need to “suck it up” or “be stronger because its only high school”. Unfortunately, victims of cyber bullying tend to be victimized by the individuals who are there to help them. After meeting me and speaking to me for a few weeks the twenty students began to open up to me, they informed me how difficult it was for them to share what was happening at school with their parents, because their parents did not understand what was happening. On the contrary the majority of the parents thought this was normal, and that their child’s tormentor was only trying to make them stronger. Within the Indian culture bullying at school is considered to be a very normal aspect of growing up, a lot of parents think it makes one stronger, and that it builds character.

In some cases the families of the students were unaware of just how severe the instances of bullying were for their child. Some students did not feel comfortable telling their parents that they were being victimized at school because their parents would respond by saying “take a couple of your cousins with you, and beat him up after school that’ll resolve everything”. Many of the students found that reacting violently against their aggressors made their situation far worse at school. Their bully would find other ways of tormenting them. Only after speaking to the students and directors at the agency was I permitted to sit down with the parents/guardians and explain what the situation was like for their child at school, and how deeply it was affecting their education, self-image, and

self-confidence. In many cases I had to educate the parents just how negatively the concept of an eye for an eye in regards to bullying affects the school and classroom environment. Unfortunately, the families of some of these students just felt that their child was disinterested in school, or was irresponsible and lacked motivation. Only after being educated on the topic of bullying and its severity did the parents fully understand the scope of their child's situation.

After educating both the students and their parents/guardians about bullying I introduced them to two programs that were established to combat bullying. The first program I introduced was *Stop a Bully*. Many of the students, parents/guardians, as well as Sylvan Learning staff were unaware that such a program existed. I informed all of the aforementioned parties that this was a non-profit organization which provided a safe venue for reporting incidents of bullying to their school officials anonymously. Not only does this program allow students to report issues to their school officials, it also educates the school officials with prevention techniques.

The second program I introduced during my time at Sylvan Learning was ERASE. Similar to *Stop a Bully* this program allows students to report incidents of bullying anonymously. It was my responsibility to walk both the students and their parents/guardians through the websites of both programs, and educate them on how to effectively navigate around the site, and how to report issues of bullying anonymously.

Many of the students were completely unaware of how to react when they were being bullied. They did not know how to help themselves. Unfortunately, many of them became quiet and kept to themselves. Their attitudes and opinions towards their school and themselves became negative. Unfortunately, many of them were afraid to go to school and face their bullies, as a result, their education suffered. During my time at Sylvan Learning I informed the students and their families on what they could do to deal with bullying. Unfortunately, many of the students were not knowledgeable in regards to being safe online. Many of the students were providing their names, address, home phone numbers, cell numbers, and credit card information online. During my time at Sylvan Learning I noticed how I would unintentionally blame the students for giving up such personal information online when we are all taught not to do such things. I immediately

realized how the victims were being re-victimized by me when they would suddenly withdraw, As a result, I changed my approach in regards to helping the students by removing all my own personal biases.

I provided the students, Sylvan Learning Staff, and the parents/guardians with tools and techniques that were established by the RCMP. Some of the information I provided was to: talk to their children/students about any changes that they notice in them (there are obvious signs when a child is a victim of bullying, such as: depression, becoming quiet, not wanting to go to school, suicidal thoughts and behaviors, etc.) and letting them know that they are not alone, and that they can and should trust you, leave any online conversation that is negative, walk away from any situation where they are being bullied, be responsible and keep track of all the incidents of bullying (by keeping a journal and writing it down and/or saving the text message or e-mail), speak to someone that they trust. If they feel uncomfortable speaking to someone, or they feel they don't have anyone to share these things with they could either report it anonymously to *Stop a Bully*, ERASE, or call the Kids Help Phone, report any and all issues of bullying to their school administrators, report any instances of bullying that are considered criminal offenses to the RCMP (incidents such as: pushing, shoving, punching, verbal threats, sexual exploitation, etc.), report any text messages that are hurtful and extremely negative to their telephone service provider, and lastly report any issues of online bullying that occur on any social media site to the site, and block the person responsible (RCMP, 2014, "What You Can Do Youth").

During my time at Sylvan Learning I noticed that many of the teachers of the students were unaware of Policy 9410, as well as the anti-bullying policies that their own schools had in place. In order to truly combat cyber bullying and traditional bullying education about the topic is paramount. I believe that Policy 9410 is all encompassing however, the staff within schools seem uneducated about it, as a result the families of the students are not receiving vital information that is contained within the Policy. As a result, I believe that there needs to be a bridge within this existing educational gap this information must be passed onto teachers who can then share it with the families of their students. Schools may want to consider holding information sessions at the beginning of the school year or during parent teacher meetings where they discuss technology. It is

important to note the diversity within the student body, in order to deal with this it is imperative that cultural expectations and norms be considered when implementing programs or policies. In some cultures bullying is viewed as being a normal school experience, it is regarded as an event that shapes character. Unfortunately, some cultures just do not completely understand the gravity of cyber bullying, and its implications on the education of youth as well as their overall mental and physical well-being. Many parents admittedly know very little about cell phones and social networking whatever they do know they learned from their children. This lack of mobile technology and social networking technology knowledge spans all cultures as a result intervention programs, policies, and bills should also emphasize specific community needs in order to be effective.

Chapter 10.

Conclusion

Having noted earlier that the student body within my practicum was of East Indian decent, it is important to note that there are multiple locations of Sylvan Learning located all across the lower mainland, each center has a unique student body, which in turn leads to a tailor made approach to dealing with issues of bullying. This case study dealt primarily with one ethnicity other locations seem to be far more multi-cultural as a result, they face different issues in regards to dealing with bullying. Furthermore, Sylvan Learning does not have access to as many resources (such as trained guidance counsellors, trained staff, or liaison officers) as schools have therefore the information that they could provide to parents/guardians and students was limited.

One common theme that emerged was the fact that the majority of efforts deal with the aftermath of bullying there are not many preventative programs available for students, teachers, or parents/guardians. Future studies should examine why there is a lack of such preventative programs. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the anti-bullying programs that exist today should be evaluated by future researchers in order to understand if they truly are helping adolescents.

In order to combat bullying it is absolutely imperative that the family, legal community and the school system all work together (Goldstein, 2012). There are definitely tell-tale signs for victimization of bullying, it is up to the families of these children to notice the warning signs and address the issue responsibly. As a society we are constantly bombarded with news about bullying through the media, however, the bills that currently exist within Canada are unhelpful. The majority of the bills that have been written in regards to dealing with issues of cyber bullying have been composed by older men who did not grow up with the Internet or technology and are less tech savvy, as a result they may not truly understand the severity and the scope of cyber bullying. Therefore, these bills should be reformed or changed so that they incorporate reflective information about the impact of cyber bullying.

Moreover, it is the responsibility of the school system to promote awareness regarding what is acceptable behavior within their schools to their student body, and make sure that students are aware of any and all consequences for behaving otherwise. Similarly, parents/guardians need to become more Internet friendly by educating themselves on the various uses of the Internet. In short, tackling the issue of bullying requires the joint systematic co-operation of the family, legal community and school system.

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APPENDIX.

Policy 9410

1. DISTRICT CODE OF CONDUCT

1.1 The Board is committed to providing safe and caring environments in which all learners can achieve academic excellence, personal growth and responsible citizenship.

1.2 The Board promotes clearly defined behavioural expectations that represent the highest standards of respectful and responsible citizenship and lead to a culture of non-violence among all persons in all schools and at all school-authorized events and activities.

To this end, the Board expects that persons will:

- comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws, and with district policy and regulations;
- value and encourage learning and working environments that are inclusive and respectful of the diverse individual, collective, social and cultural needs of our community;
- treat one another with dignity and respect;
- refrain from engaging in, or encouraging acts of violence of any form;
- show care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need; and
- respect those in positions of authority.

2. MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR IN SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS

2.1 Responsibility for an effective discipline program is shared among many partners including the district, schools, students, parents/guardians, community groups, social agencies and the RCMP. The Board promotes understanding and acceptance of the interactive roles required to achieve safe and caring schools.

2.2 Safe and caring school environments are free of acts of:

- bullying, cyber bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation, verbal or written abuse, racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination of any kind, including but not limited to, real or perceived socio-economic status, race, skin colour, appearance, ethnicity, sex, gender, disability, sexual orientation,

gender identity or expression, religion, culture, age, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or if based on an association with an individual or group with any of aforementioned characteristics;

- any form of violence;
- theft; and
- vandalism (“Keeping schools safe,” n.d.).