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# How Can Mobile Technology Help to Reduce the Incidences of Cyberbullying?

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# Can Mobile Technology Help Reduce Incidences of Cyberbullying among Youth?

Veronica Angel

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**EASTERN**  
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

start something **big**



*The goal of this report is to...*

Evaluate the *effectiveness of mobile technology* in reducing cyberbullying



# *Background*

## *What is cyberbullying?*

....Using *electronic technology to intimidate, threaten or bully* another person



## ***STATISTICS...***

- ✓ *16% of the* US population report *a recent experience*.<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ *50% of youth* report some form of digital abuse.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Cyberbullying is *most prevalent during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades*.<sup>1</sup>



SHUTTERSTOCK

# *How prevalent is cyberbullying?*

- ✓ Nearly **43%** of youth have been bullied online.<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ **1 in 4** youth have been bullied *more than once*.<sup>4</sup>
- ✓ **70%** report seeing frequent bullying online.<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ **90%** of teens who have seen social-media bullying say they have *ignored it*.<sup>6</sup>



## *Who are the perpetrators? They ...*

- ✓ Have a *positive attitude about violent behaviors*;
- ✓ *Lack empathy* for their victims;
- ✓ Have *difficulty following rules* and often argue with adults;
- ✓ Behave *impulsively*;
- ✓ Have at least an average self-esteem.<sup>7</sup>



## *The victims include...*

- ✓ Males and females are both victims and perpetrators.<sup>8</sup>
- ✓ *Female victims outnumber males* by 2:1 (22.1% versus 10.8% respectively).<sup>1</sup>



## *Traditional approaches to address bullying include...*

- ✓ *Raising teenagers' self-esteem* using online videos and social media;<sup>10</sup>
- ✓ Giving teenagers the *confidence to stand up* for themselves;
- ✓ Engaging youth in helping each other to **gain confidence**.<sup>10</sup>



## *Websites that have worked...*

- ✓ *WeStopHate* helps raise “teen-esteem” through online videos and social media.
  
- ✓ *DoSomething.org* is an organization *for young people and social change*; organization acts on causes like *bullying*.<sup>4</sup>



## *Mobile Health Promotion...*

- Mobile health promotion (*mHealth*) *uses technology* (short messaging service – SMS – and mobile applications)
- Goals of *mHealth* are *to reduce risky behaviors and improve quality of life* of the users of technology
- *mHealth* presents an opportunity to *offer education and support to youth about the dangers of cyberbullying*

# Objectives

Propose *mobile technology as an effective tool to help prevent cyberbullying* via:

- ✓ Promoting *skill-building*
- ✓ Improving *positive health behaviors*
- ✓ Improving *emotional well-being*

# ***Methods***

- ❖ Reviewed the *Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System* (YRBSS) to assess prevalence of cyberbullying
- ❖ Evaluated literature on the *social, environmental and cultural causes* and consequences of electronic bullying
- ❖ Assessed the *mobile health promotion literature* on the use of SMS and mobile applications to *provide support* to youth

# Results

*How can SMS improve health outcome and overall quality of life for youth?*

- (1) SMS promotes and *improves knowledge*
  - ✓ Delivery of SMS is shown to be effective in improving knowledge among youth.<sup>11</sup>
  
- (2) SMS helps to *build skills* to address complex phenomena
  - ✓ Studies have shown that SMS is effective in teaching young people appropriate behaviors in risky situations.<sup>12</sup>

# Results

- (3) SMS provides *motivational and behavioral support*
  - ✓ Through personalized feedback, SMS can effectively provide *behavioral support* to youth engaged in risky behaviors.<sup>13</sup>
  
- (4) SMS and mobile applications provide *emotional support*
  - ✓ Studies have shown that SMS helps depressed youth feel more connected and cared for.<sup>14</sup>

# Conclusions

SMS and mobile applications are shown in research to:

- ***Improve knowledge*** leading to positive health behaviors
- ***Promote skill-building*** by delivering positive skill-building messages
- ***Offer motivational support*** to develop and maintain positive behavior changes
- ***Offer emotional support*** through mobile applications that allow individuals to track moods and reflect on positive interactions

***How can mobile technology help with cyberbullying?***



# Summary...

- ✓ Mobile technology can *connect youth to existing online programs* (*WeStopHate*) that *offer support and facilitate discussions* about youth health promotion and how to avoid dangerous situations
  
- ✓ Mobile applications can provide *psycho-education on cyberbullying*

# Summary...

- ✓ Apps can offer *skill-building techniques* (self-esteem, confidence) *specifically tailored to youth*
- ✓ Apps and text messaging can offer motivational support (*motivational messages*) to youth during developmental stages most vulnerable to social pressures

# *Final Thoughts...*

- The research tells us that we can make a difference through *education, skill-building* and *improved motivation...*
- *Online programs exist* to help youth who are facing the dangers of cyberbullying...
- Youth are the most *frequent users of mobile technology...*

*Let's bring it all together and help youth navigate the dangerous world of electronic bullying...*

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