Cybervictims

- Around 33.5% report being cyberbullied over lifetime.
    - 93% of cybervictims indicate having been victimized in traditional bullying
    - Relational bullying victims particularly high risk
- Cyberbullies are most frequently students at school though significant amount occurs anonymously

Cybervictims Characteristics

- More intense Internet users that create content
- Have a myriad of concurrent psychosocial problems offline*
- Have poor parental and peer relations
  - Poor peer relations start early on
  - Lack of social support makes impact more pronounced
- Prior offline bullying victimization*
- Often reluctant to report for fear of losing tech privileges

At-Risk Students

- Kids who are at higher risk:
  - Poor social skills
  - Learning disabilities
  - Obesity
  - ADHD
  - LGBTQ+
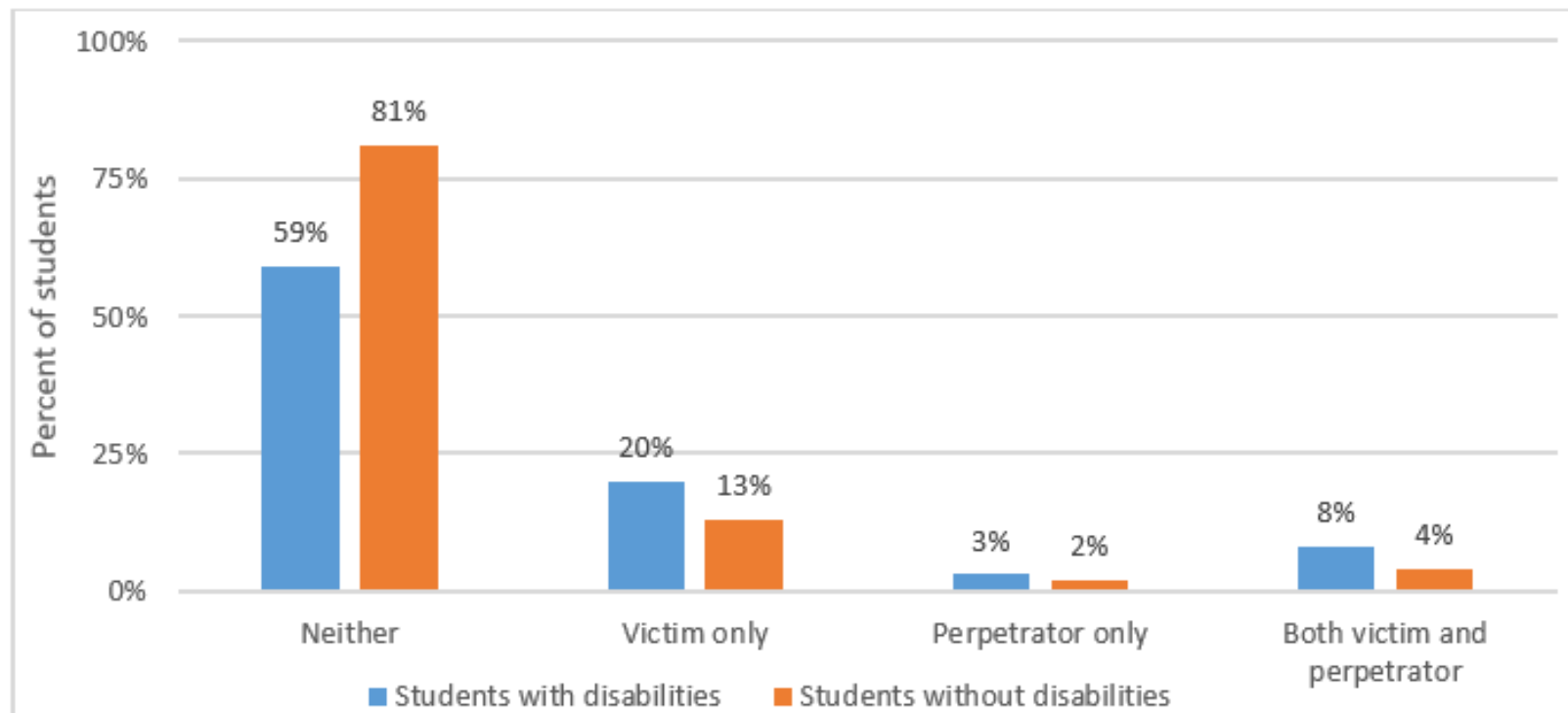 - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Autism
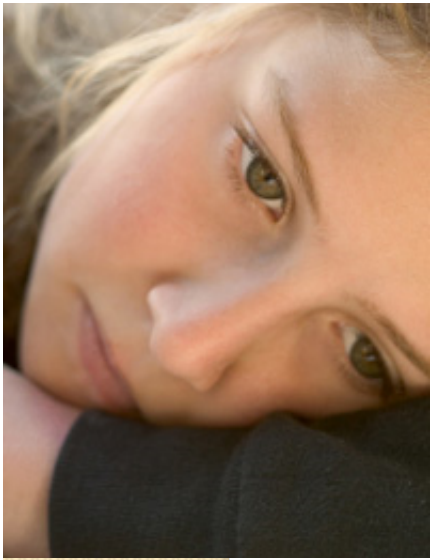
Students in Special Education

- Higher rates of victimization and cyberbullying.
- Risk factors
  - Low social status
  - Poor social relationships
  - Lack social support
  - Adjustment problems
  - Feelings of rejection
  - Symptoms of anxiety and depression
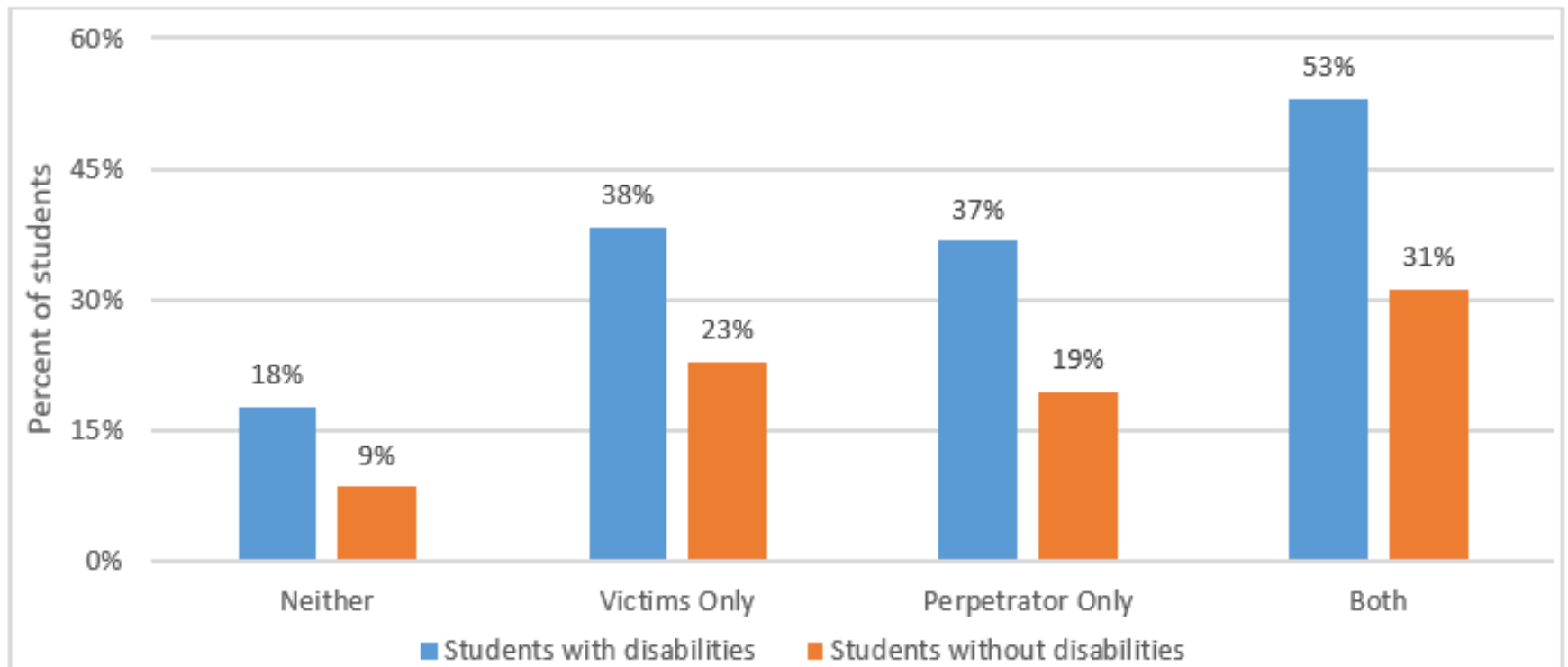 - Low self-esteem

Students with Disabilities

Figure 2. Percent of students reporting cyberbullying involvement in the past 12 months as victims, perpetrators, or both by disability status

Students with Disabilities

Figure 4: Percent of students reporting depressive symptoms in the past 12 months by disabilities status and cyberbullying involvement

Impact on Cybervictims

- Range of negative effects:
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Psychosomatic problems
  - Academic problems
  - Self-harm
  - Suicidal Ideation
- Depression & anxiety reciprocate with victimization
- Impact often influenced by frequency, length, and severity of attacks

Impact on Cybervictims

- Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation
  - Meta-analysis indicated:
  - Cybervictims
    - 2.35x to self-harm
    - 2.10x to exhibit suicidal behaviors
    - 2.57x to attempt suicide
    - 2.15x to have suicidal thoughts
  - Cyberbully
    - 1.21x exhibit suicidal behaviors
    - 1.23x to have suicidal thoughts

Impact of Cyberbullying at School

- Impact on classes
  - Fear of unknown perpetrators
 - Rapidly spreading gossip
  - Hostile class environment
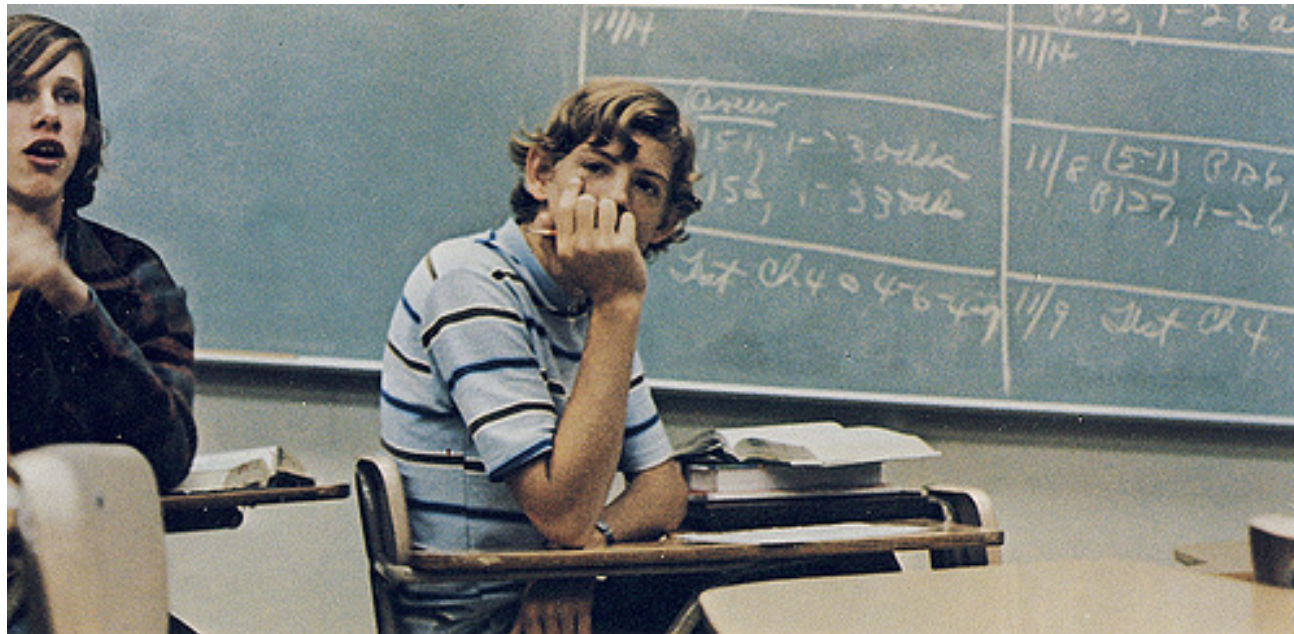
Cyberbullies

- Around 12% admit to cyberbullying others over lifetime.
- Intense internet users
- Often perpetrators in traditional bullying
- Poor empathy
- High social intelligence
- High levels of moral disengagement

Cyberbully Characteristics

- Often seen as popular but display conduct or behavioral problems
- At-risk for being target of cyberbullying and becoming cyberbully-victim
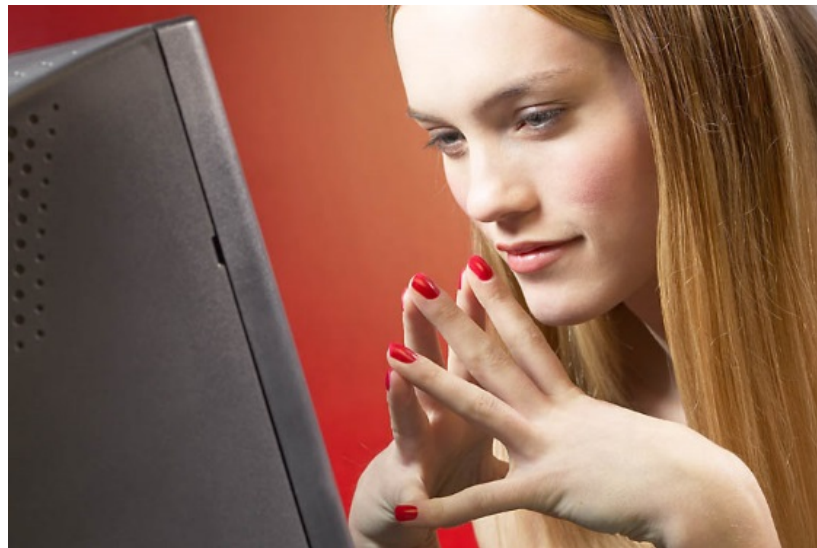
Cyberbully Characteristics

- High levels of impulsivity
- Support aggressive norms

- Prior offline bullying*
- Committing problem behaviors*

Why Do It?

- Internal
  - Revenge
  - Boredom
  - Jealousy
  - Redirected feeling
- External
  - Non-confrontational
  - No perceived consequences

Varjas, Talley, Meyers, Parris, & Curtis, 2010
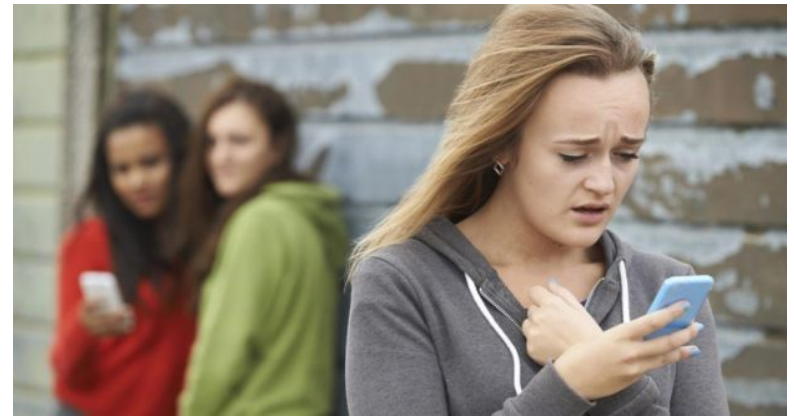
Impact on Cyberbullies

- Range of negative effects:
  - Depression
  - Conduct problems
  - Substance Use

Cyberbully-Victims

- Can be traditional bullies or cyberbullies now being bullied online.
- Tend to be rejected by peers more than any other group and poorest peer relations
- Have conduct and behavioral difficulties including impulsivity and hyperactivity
- At-risk for most severe emotional, psychological, and social problems compared to bullies or victims.

Bystander

- Witness cyberbullying
- Largest group
- Influence how widespread cyberbullying information is spread
- Types
  - Upstander
  - Passive
  - Encourage

Upstander

- Assist cyber-victim
- Friends with cyber-victim
- Prior personal victimization
- Elevated levels of affective empathy
- More often girls and older
- Have more social support
- Low level of loneliness

Passive Bystander

- Most bystanders empathize with victim but do nothing about it. Due to:
  - Bystander effect – diffusion of responsibility
  - Blame victim for not standing up for themselves or deserving it
  - Bullying done by popular students and not feel confident to challenge
  - Not perceived as being of a serious enough nature
  - Fearful of making themselves targets of a bully

Passive Bystander

- Other reasons
  - Higher levels of impulsivity
  - Lack of social skills (social, empathic, coping)
  - Older adolescents
  - Witness prior cyberbullying – less empathy

Bystanders - Encourage Cyberbully

- Have high norms of aggression
- High moral disengagement

5-Step Bystander Intervention Model

○ Notice that something is happening

○ Interpret event as emergency

○ Take responsibility for providing help
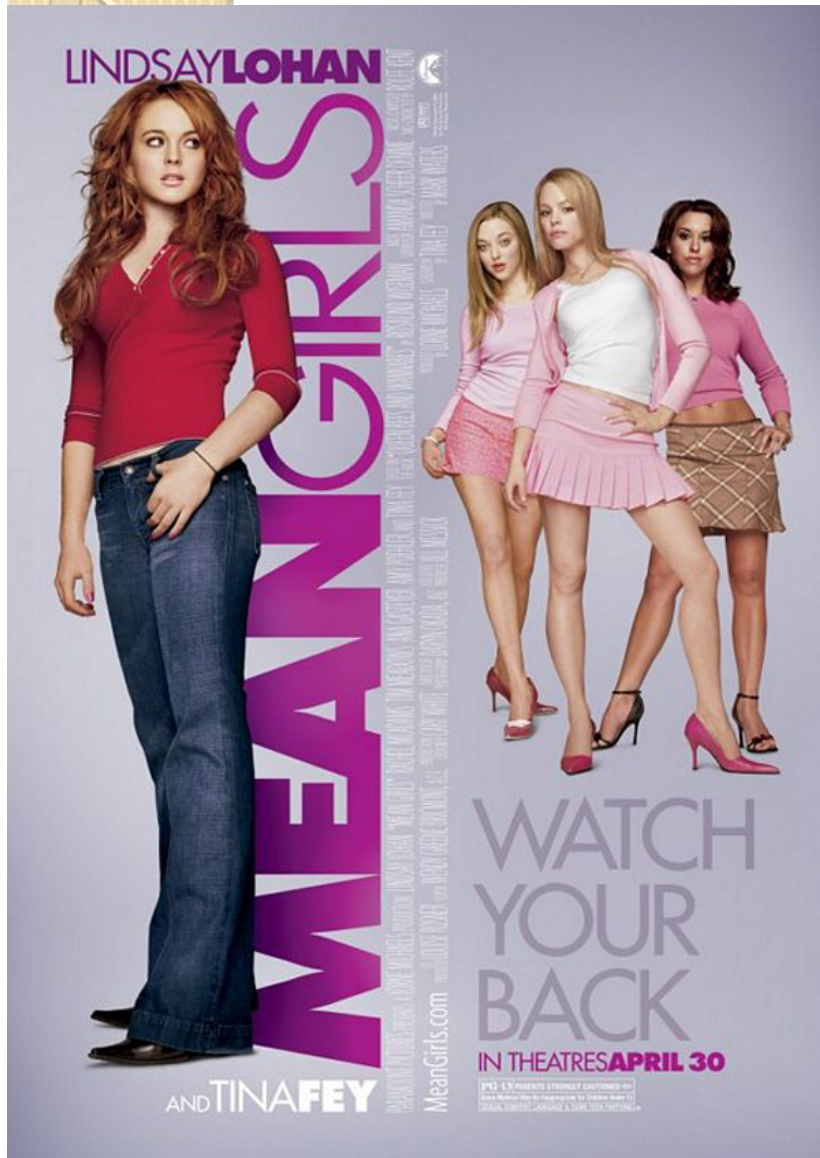
○ Decide how to help

○ Provide help

● Direct vs. indirect bystander intervention depends on factors such as:

  ○ Displacement of responsibility, moral justification, euphemistic labeling

Vocabulary of Cyberbullying

- **Harassment** -- repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and/or insulting messages

- **Denigration** -- sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships

Mean Girls and Juicy Campus Phenomenon

Slut Shaming

- Meme sent out that went viral and inspired copycats

At the speed of light… RUMORS

- Antonio received a text message on his cell. It read, "Monique S d8n Darnell"

- Antonio was sure Damon would want to know Monique was cheating on him. So he forwarded the text to Damon and several of his other buddies.

- Later that day Damon ambushed Darnell in the hallway. Both boys were suspended.

At the speed of light… RUMORS

- The rumor ended up not being true though most of the school had heard about it in less than an hour through receiving and forwarding the text to friends.

Vocabulary of Cyberbullying

- **Impersonation** -- breaking into someone's account, posing as that person and sending messages to make the person look bad, get that person in trouble or danger, or damage that person's reputation or friendships

Impersonation

BFF or not?

- Tonya and Monique are best friends and they tell everything to one another, even their passwords of their social media accounts.

- One day, Tonya goes to school and notices everyone is looking at her.

- Her friends don't let her sit with them at lunch.

- Tonya doesn't know what is going on.

BFF or not?
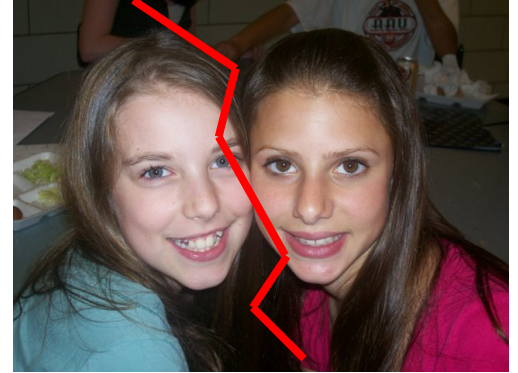
- Someone finally tells her that she has been posting rude messages to everyone in school.
- Tonya is baffled on how this happened.
- After a few days, she finds out that Monique broke into her social media account and posted the messages because both Tonya and Monique liked the same boy.

Vocabulary of Cyberbullying

- **Outing and trickery** -- sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online and/or tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared online;

Vocabulary of Cyberbullying

- **Exclusion** -- intentionally excluding someone from an online group, like a buddy list

Vocabulary of Cyberbullying

- **Cyberstalking** -- repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating: and
  - Engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for her or her safety.

Let's get Piper

- Several sixth grade girls became annoyed with a friends of theirs, Piper.
- They decided to make a cartoon online they titled "Six Ways to Kill Piper" which included:
  - Girls shooting Piper
  - Making Piper commit suicide
  - Pushing Piper off a cliff
  - Poisoning Piper

Let's get Piper

- The video was posted on YouTube
- Piper became afraid to go to school
- Piper's mother and the school principal soon found out.
- The girls were suspended

Many of the girls later called and apologized saying they had not thought how Piper would react.
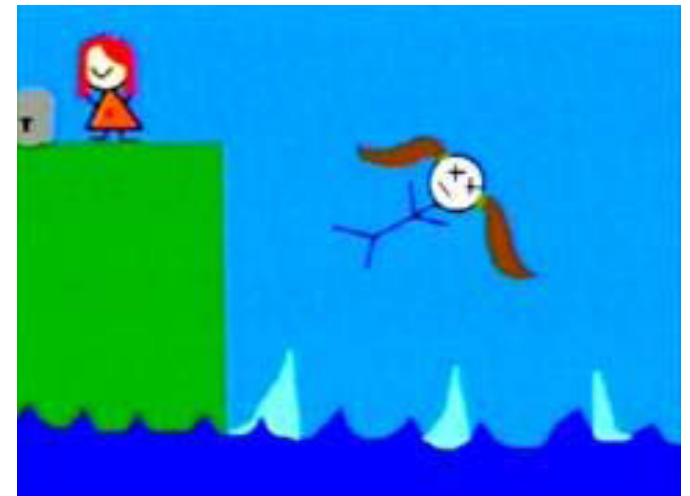
Role of School Psychologist

- Take lead in effort to address school violence
- Lead efforts in promoting awareness of cyberbullying and psychological impact
- Assess prevalence and severity of cyberbullying in school
- Develop prevention programs and intervention strategies regarding cyberbullying

Three-Tiered Model for Cyberbullying and Cyber Abuse

TIER I

All stakeholders receive training and education on cyberbullying.

STUDENTS

Students receive empathy training and education. They learn safety. Student and staff screening occurs.

PARENTS

Parents receive a letter describing cyberbullying, how to detect it, and what the consequences will be for a student who is a cyberbully.

SCHOOL STAFF

All school personnel receive training on properly reporting and managing cyberbullying cases.

TIER II

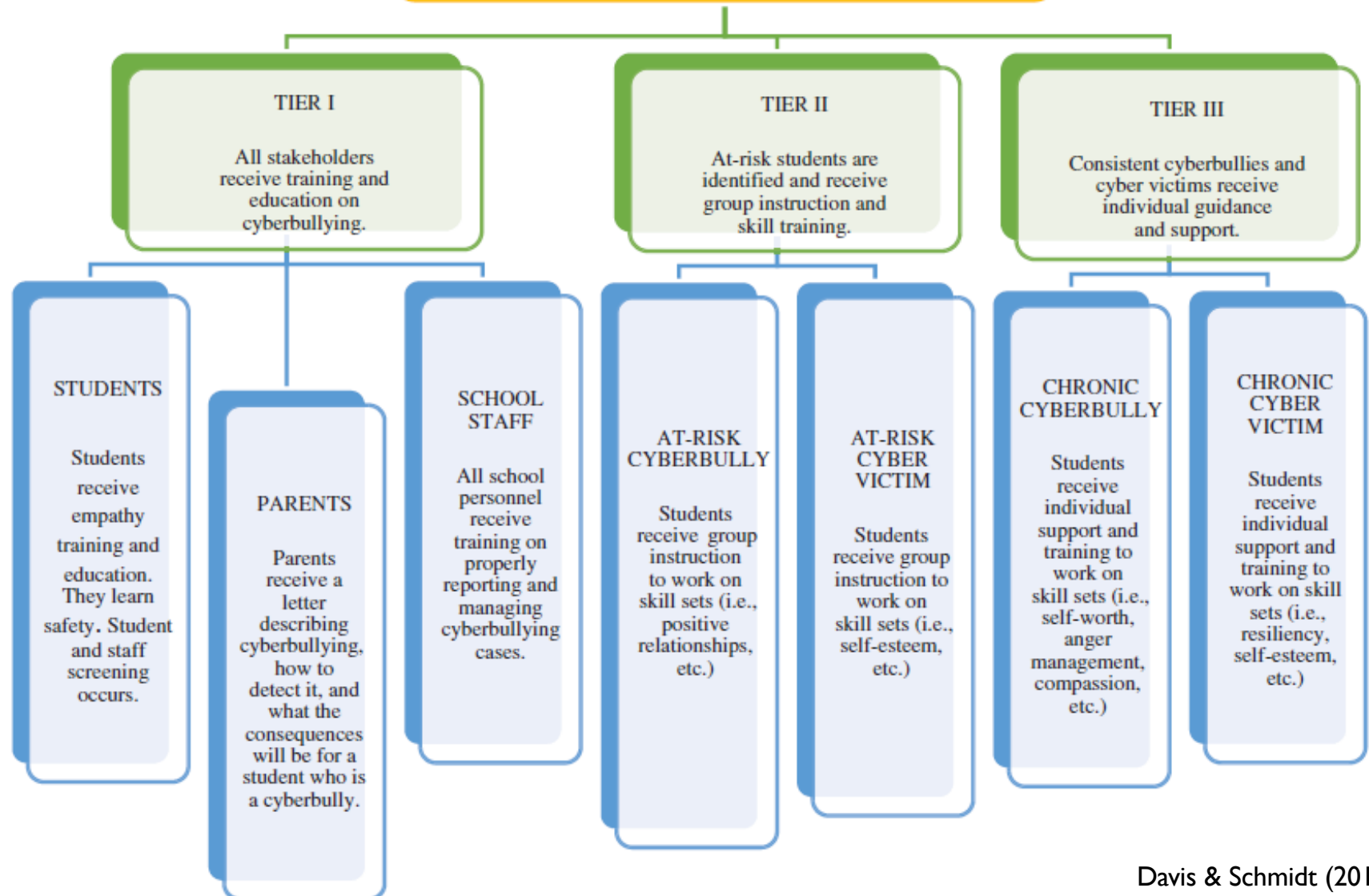At-risk students are identified and receive group instruction and skill training.

AT-RISK CYBERBULLY

Students receive group instruction to work on skill sets (i.e., positive relationships, etc.)

AT-RISK CYBER VICTIM

Students receive group instruction to work on skill sets (i.e., self-esteem, etc.)

TIER III

Consistent cyberbullies and cyber victims receive individual guidance and support.

CHRONIC CYBERBULLY

Students receive individual support and training to work on skill sets (i.e., self-worth, anger management, compassion, etc.)

CHRONIC CYBER VICTIM

Students receive individual support and training to work on skill sets (i.e., resiliency, self-esteem, etc.)

Davis & Schmidt (2016)

Prevention / Intervention Efforts

- Less effective strategies when used in isolation:
  - <u>Punitive sanctions</u> – imposing punishments such as detention or suspensions
    - Can serve to encourage students to hide their behaviors
    - Longer term more effective to focus on concern for victim more so than applying blame to bully.

Prevention / Intervention Efforts

- Less effective strategies for more severe cases of cyberbullying:
- <u>Teach basic internet protection strategies</u> – good for infrequent cyberbullying events
  - Keep passwords and login details secret
  - Not disclose personal details

Internet Safety

Teach Basic Internet Protection

- Bars on the windows philosophy
- Block the sender of IM or text messaging
- Log off the account and spend time letting situation cool down
- Not responding to hurtful messages

Teach Basic Internet Protection

- Instagram – Cyberbullying Prevention Tools
  - Navigate to Settings and go to Comments.
  - Turn on Enable Keyword Filters to add words that you'd like to restrict.
- If account public, can choose who can comment on posts, from every user to certain groups of people,
- Whether account is public or private, will be able to block other accounts from commenting on posts altogether.
- Learn more go to Instagram-Together.com.

Prevention / Intervention Efforts

- Less effective strategies:
  - Restorative Conferences – bring bully and victim together to discuss what has happened
    - Limited effectiveness as systems requires appropriate training of staff which does not typically happen
    - Can result in more harm and discomfort to victims

Establish Mentoring Program

peer mentorship

- Pair older students with younger students
- Encourages students to be proactive in addressing cyberbullying
- Encourages leadership skills in older students
- <u>Mixed findings</u> – key is to have high level of training and ongoing support offered to young people selected as peer mentors.

Prevention / Intervention Efforts

- More effective strategies:
- Combine less effective strategies into comprehensive program
  - Use basic internet safety strategies as starting point
  - Role of coping strategies
    - Encourage reaching out to friends, parents, and teachers
    - Teach problem-focused coping
  - Encourage empathy development

Monitor At-Risk Students

- Kids who are at higher risk:
  - Poor social skills
  - Learning disabilities
  - Obesity
  - ADHD
  - LGBTQ+
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Autism
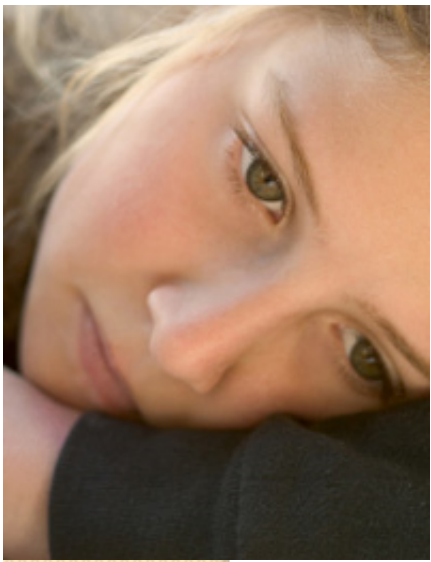
Involving Parents

- Parents become informed about types of activities students engage in online and ways to ensure students are safe from cyberbullying.

- Encourage to start dialogue with children regarding internet use early on to establish safe communications between parents and child.
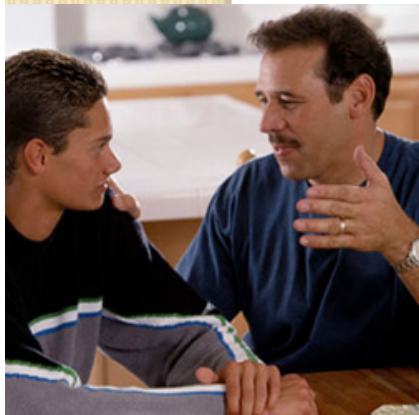
Involving Parents

- Parents serve as role models and teach children how to interact appropriately online without aggression and with respect and tolerance of others.

- Have parents familiarize themselves with school policies on cyberbullying

- Increase parent awareness of signs of cyberbullying and possible impact

Whole School Approach

- Most effective where positive or prosocial behaviors from students are acknowledged and promoted

- <u>School Policy</u>
  - Have clear roles for school personnel to play
  - Establish committee that determine the specific needs of the school
  - Purpose of policy is to protect students, staff, and educational environment of school and that cyberbullying is clearly prohibited.

School Policy

- Address use of school's internet system as well as use of personal cell phones and computers while on campus.
- Policy needs to address cyberbullying off-campus
- Need specific definition of cyberbullying and harassment
- Graduated consequences and remedial actions
- Procedures for investigating
- Clear statement that students will be disciplined if behavior results in considerable disruption of educational environment
- Procedures for educating students, teachers, staff, and parents about cyberbullying
- Let teachers, students, and parents have input into school policy

Peer Group Interventions

- Involve bystanders by teaching students how to support victims in safe and constructive way.
  - Provide clear guidelines so it is clear in best ways for students to intervene in addition to preventing and reporting cyberbullying.
  - Students must be active in establishing anti-bullying policy and rules.

NoTrap! Program

- School-based intervention, which utilizes a **peer-led approach** to prevent and combat bullying and cyberbullying to:
  - ◦ Change individual cognitions, coping strategies, and values

- Experimental group showed a significant decrease over time in all target variables:
  - ◦ Victimization, bullying, cybervictimization, and cyberbullying.
  - ◦ At 6-month follow-up there was a lower dropout rate for students who participated in the NoTrap! program.

Classroom Intervention

- Incorporate dedicated curriculum or one embedded within existing curriculum.

- Create a positive relationship between teachers and students

- Teachers need to be informed on school policies and clear guidelines on how to respond when they become aware of it.

Empathy through YA Books

- Positive bystander impact
  - Don't Call Me Ishmael
    - by Michael Gerard Bauer (2007)
  - The Skin I'm In
    - by Sharon G. Flake (2007)
  - How to Rock Braces and Glasses
    - by Meg Haston (2012)

Empathy through YA Books

- **Negative bystander impact**
  - Stargirl
    - by Jerry Spinelli (2004)
  - Unfriended
    - by Rachel Vail (2015)

School Climate

- Create an ethic of caring – prosocial behavior is modeled and promoted by teachers and school authorities.

- Note the important role of trusted adults in helping to buffer negative impact of victimization by bullying.

Cyber Friendly Schools Program

- Whole-school cyberbullying prevention and intervention program
- Aims to reduce cyberbullying by fostering positive behavior and using a harm minimization approach
- Mediating factors include empathetic responsiveness and moral disengagement

Cyber Friendly Schools Program

- Distal determinants of cyberbullying
  - School organizational factors
  - School ethos and social climate
  - Parental monitoring
- Program associated with significantly greater declines in cyberbullying victimization and perpetration than control schools.

Media Heroes (Germany)

- 1 day and 10 week versions
- Raise awareness about risks of tech use
- Increase empathy and social responsibility
- Teach strategies to defend oneself
- Reduced cyberbullying
- Reduced traditional bullying
- Increased affective empathy

Other Effective Programs

- Second Steps Middle School Program (US)
  - SEL focus with indirect effect on cyberbullying
- ViSC (Autstria) – anti-bullying program
  - 6 months continue effects for cyberbullying
- Cyberprogram 2.0 (Spain)
- Help-Assert Yourself-Humor-Avoid-Self-Talk-Own (US)
- ConRed (Spain)
- Noncadiamointrappola (Italy)
- KiVa (Finland)
- Surf-fair (Germany)

Long-term Solutions

- <u>Digital Citizenship</u>
- Good behavior – external to internal motivation
- Students develop internal moral compass
- Efforts need to be across multiple grades with integration into existing curriculum
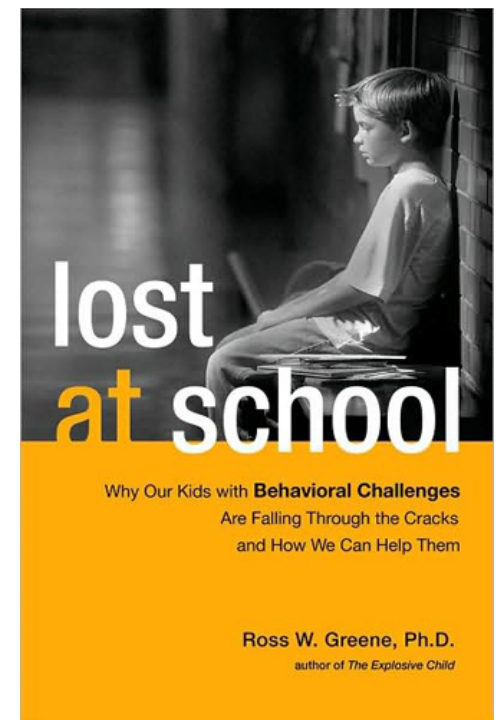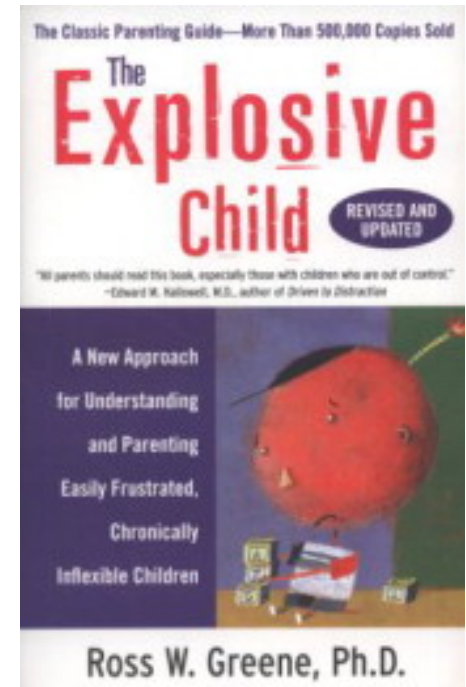
First Steps

- Focus on school climate
  - Anti-bullying programs
  - Bolstering students self-esteem
  - Student connection to school

First Steps

- Adopt collaborative problem-solving approach to discipline
  - Ross Green – *Explosive Child* & *Lost at School*

- Focus on students who are causing the problems and positive behavior supports are ineffective.

Digital Citizenship

- Flexible model schools adopt to needs
- <u>Narrow to two areas</u>
  - Respectful behavior online
  - Online civic engagement
- High levels in both areas associated with less online harassment and positively related to helpful bystander behavior.
  - (Jones & Mitchell, 2016)

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