



# Cyber-Bullying

Protecting Children and Young People from Technology Dangers

## **Presented by Robert Hugh Farley MS**

Consultant to the VIRTUS Programs on Crimes against Children

10 South LaSalle Street

Suite 1420

Chicago, IL USA 60603

Tel: 847-236-9134

Email: [rhfconsultant@aol.com](mailto:rhfconsultant@aol.com)

Web page: [www.rfarley.com](http://www.rfarley.com)

Diocese of Savannah, GA

Staff Development Institute

Columbus, GA

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Robert Hugh Farley M.S.  
Consultant in Crimes against Children



## **Cyber-Bullying**

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**Commanding Officer  
(Retired)  
Child Exploitation Unit  
Chicago, IL USA**

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**With ever changing electronic technology the home is no longer the refuge from bullies at school or on the school playground**

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**Bully – a young hoodlum who revels in making peoples lives a misery during school years.**

online urban dictionary

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## **Bullies can be girls or boys**

**Some bullies attack their victims physically such as shoving, slapping or punching while other bullies use verbal insults or psychological control to torment their victims.**

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**Bullying – is repeated acts over time that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power with the more powerful child or group attacking those who are less powerful.**

U.S. Department of Justice

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**Bullying may also be a “tradition” in some school settings where older students or certain groups of students feel superior to the younger students**

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**Where bullying was once considered a childhood rite of passage, bullies can make a school a place of fear. Children who are bullied are often afraid to eat in the cafeteria or even to go to school.**

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**Studies have shown that while envy or resentment may be motives for bullying there is little evidence to suggest that bullies suffer from any deficit in self esteem – As this would make it somewhat difficult to bully**

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**However, bullying can also be used as a tool to conceal shame, anxiety or to boost self esteem. By demeaning others, the abuser himself or herself often feels empowered.**

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**Victims of bullying often suffer anxiety, loneliness, depression and a lack of self esteem**

**Victims of bullying are not always unpopular loners**

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### **Megan Meier – 8<sup>th</sup> grade MySpace AOL Messenger**

#### **Parents: Cyber Bullying Led to Teen's Suicide**

*Megan Meier's Parents Push Worst Measures to Protect Children Online*

Nov. 18, 2007

The parents of a 13-year-old girl who believe their daughter's October 2006 suicide was the result of a cruel cyber hoax are pushing for measures to protect other children online.

Tina and Tom Meier, who are now separated and apart by divorce, have taken up the cause of internet safety after a hoax led to their daughter Megan Meier's death.

The mother of a former friend of Megan's allegedly created a fictitious profile in order to gain Megan's trust and learn what Megan was saying about her daughter. But the communication eventually turned hostile.

"There needs to be some sort of regulations out there to protect children. Parents can only be in so many places and so many times," Tina Meier said on "Good Morning America's Weekend Edition" Sunday. "I wish there were regulations with these forums. There's got to be something."

The Meiers said they are unsure why someone would do such a thing.

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**HR 1966 – 5/2009 – “Megan Meier Cyber-bullying Prevention Act”– Whoever transmits in interstate or foreign commerce any communication, with the intent to coerce, intimidate, harass, or cause substantial emotional distress to a person, using electronic means to support severe, repeated, and hostile behavior, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.....The bill has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee**

**Parents and educators are now dealing with tweens and teens who are the “always connected” generation.**

**As a result we are now dealing with a non-traditional approach to bullying.**

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**Cyber-bullying – is when the Internet, cell phones or other electronic devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.**

National Crime Prevention Council

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Unlike traditional bullying, electronic or cyber-bullies can remain virtually anonymous using temporary email accounts, pseudonyms in chat rooms, anonymous proxy servers, instant messaging programs, cell-phone text messaging, and other Internet or electronic means to mask their identity. This perhaps frees the cyber-bully from the normative or the social constraints of their behavior.

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**Cyber-bullies might be braver when utilizing electronic technology to carry out their hostile and intimidating behavior because it takes less nerve to express hurtful comments when utilizing a cell phone keypad or a computer keyboard.**

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Another problem is the inseparability of the victim’s “always connected” cell phone, making the child a continuous target for victimization. As the result, cyber-bullying can penetrate the walls of a home, usually a place where victims could seek refuge from the traditional forms of bullying.

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## **Types of Cyber-bullying**

### ***Internet***

- Cruel instant computer messaging
- Harassing, threatening or insulting emails
- Creating a social networking site in order to mock certain students
- Posting humiliating, “photo-shopped” or digitally modified photos of students

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## Direct vs. Indirect Cyber-bullying

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## MORPHING Photo Shopping Pseudo Photos

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## Types of Cyber-bullying

### *Internet*

- Pretending to be someone else by using someone's online screen name
- Verbally abusing someone on an online gaming site or an avatar based website

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## WoW – World of Warcraft

Massively multiplayer online role-playing game

- MMORPG
- 11.5 million monthly PAID subscribers (2009)
- Players control a character - avatar within a game world

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## Types of Cyber-bullying

### *Internet*

- Flaming – which is posting offensive messages or so called “flames” within online discussion forums, the IRC or the various newsgroups

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## Types of Cyber-bullying

### *Cell phone*

- Harassing telephone calls
- Threatening or insulting text messages
- Surreptitiously taking cell phone photos or videos and then posting them on the Internet or a social networking site

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## Types of Cyber-bullying

### **Cell phone**

- Forwarding “private” photos or videos to other students
- Sexting – is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between cell phones

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In September 2006, ABC News reported on a survey of 1,500 students between grades 4-8 that was prepared by I-Safe.org:

- 42% of kids have been bullied while online
- One in four have had it happen more than once
- 21% of kids have received mean or threatening e-mails or other messages
- 58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online
- More than four out of ten say it has happened more than once
- 58% have not told their parents or an adult about something mean or hurtful that happened to them online

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In a 2008 cyber-bullying study 10% of school district respondents reported they had been cyber-bullied in the previous 30 days while over 17% reported being cyber-bullied at least once in their lifetime.

Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard,  
Hinduga & Patchin

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## What is the Schools Role?

- Educate the students regarding the many implications of electronic harassment
- Be proactive – Require that student cell phones be left in school lockers
- Add a provision to the school’s “Student Policy Manual” reserving the right to discipline a student for any type of cyber-bullying on or off school property and then discuss the policy provision with the school attorney

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## What is the Schools Role? (cont.)

- Enlist the assistance of the School Resource Officer (SRO) or the Police Department’s Juvenile Officer
- The best school cyber-bully intervention and prevention model is threefold:

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## School Bullying Intervention Model

- **School wide-level Interventions** – A survey of bullying problems at the school, increased supervision, school wide assemblies, and teacher in-service training to raise the awareness of children and school staff regarding bullying.
- **Classroom-level Interventions** – The establishment of classroom rules against bullying, regular class meetings to discuss bullying at school, and meetings with all parents.
- **Individual-level Interventions** – Discussions with students identified as cyber-bullies and the victims of cyber-bullies.

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## The Initial Conversation with the Cyber-bully and the Parents



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## The Initial Conversation

- The student's discipline file should include: computer screen captures, message logs, photos, or any evidence that will demonstrate the seriousness of the student's behavior and its impact on the victim and the school
- Explain what cyber-bullying is and why it is not acceptable – Student Policy Manual
- You may first have to explain electronic technology and the Internet to the parents!!

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## The Initial Conversation (cont.)

- Talk with the student about the impact of bullying – Try to get them to understand what it is like being bullied
- Make it clear what the school rules are on cyber-bullying and the consequences
- Have the student acknowledge that what was done was a violation of school rules
- Discuss what the student thinks might help them to stop bullying in the future

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## The Initial Conversation (cont.)

- Inform the parents that the police may have to be notified of the incident by the school
- Inform the parents that the police may be notified by the victim's family
- Increase the Internet or electronic communication supervision of the student
- NO school Internet access
- NO cell phone on school property

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## What should parents do if your child has been the victim of a cyber-bully?

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## What Should a Parent Do ?

- Refrain from the knee jerk reaction of immediately banning a victim's access to instant messaging, email, social networking sites a cell phone or the Internet – You punish the victim not the offender
- Talk with your children and caution them about opening emails, text messages, etc. from people that they don't know

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### What Should a Parent Do ? (cont.)

- If your child receives a text message, IM or an email that is hurtful, tell them to NEVER respond to it – Save it to a folder and tell a trusted adult or a parent
- Internet Service providers can often block cyber-bullies
- If a child has been threatened the police should be notified immediately – “Child Predator Protection 101”

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### What Should a Parent Do ? (cont.)

#### *Notifying the Police*

- What kind of threat? (direct or indirect)
- What was said exactly?
- What type of technology was used?
- How often has the threat occurred?
- Do you know who is responsible?

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### Stopping Bullying

- Parents
- Family
- School system
- Community

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### MAKING A COMPLAINT - NCMEC



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# Thank you !

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Robert Hugh Farley M.S.  
Consultant in Crimes  
against Children for VIRTUS™  
10 So. LaSalle Street, Suite 1420  
Chicago, IL 60603 USA  
847-236-9134  
Email [RHFconsultant@aol.com](mailto:RHFconsultant@aol.com)  
Web Page [www.rfarley.com](http://www.rfarley.com)

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