Relationships Between Social Media and Interpersonal Violence
Lindsay Vo, M.A.
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Lisa May, Ph.D.

Overview
• Social media is now an integral part of daily life, for better or worse. We explore classic social theories and how they relate to modern cyber culture. We will address how social media can promote violence, both online and in real world examples, and what actions we can take.

Objectives
• List classic social theories of violence
• Describe how these theories are relevant in online social interactions
• Discuss examples of violence influenced by social media, both online and in the real world environment
• Apply strategies for addressing the issue of social media and violence in professional and personal atmospheres

Format
• Theories of violence (Lindsay Vo)
• Examples of social media violence (Emily Robinett)
• 10-minute break
• Prevention and intervention (Dr. Lisa May)

Disclaimer
• Please note that the purpose of this presentation is not to initiate or begin any political rhetoric. Rather, it is important to acknowledge that there are many factors that contribute to interpersonal violence, which may include political references.
• Throughout the presentation, there will be pictures and video clips that may or may not contain upsetting content. Please practice viewer discretion. You are welcome to leave the room at any time.

Theories of Violence
Lindsay Vo, M.A.
Psychology Intern
Statistics
- Global: 1.6 million deaths worldwide every year (2002)
- U.S.:
  - Youth homicide rates are more than 10 times that of other leading industrialized nations (2002)
  - Nearly 1 in 3 students reported being bullied during the school year (2013)
  - With less than 5% of the world’s population, the U.S. has nearly 25 percent (2.3 million) of its prisoners (2011)
  - 1 in 6 American women reported being the victim of an attempted or completed rape; 10% of sexual assault victims are men (2004)
  - WHO estimated $300 billion annual cost for taxpayers for interpersonal violence alone (2004)
- (Gathered from PeaceAlliance.org)

What is Violence?
- Difficult to find agreement on definition (Walby, 2013)
  - Physical act
  - Forces that drive the act (e.g., asserting power, aggression)
  - Both
- Interpersonal Violence: “Interpersonal violence occurs when one person uses power and control over another through physical, sexual, or emotional threats or actions, economic control, isolation, or other kinds of coercive behavior” (Reachout.com)
  - Include:
    - Abuse
    - Domestic abuse
    - Sexual assault/abuse
    - Bullying
    - Youth Violence
    - Gang Violence

Relationship between aggression and violence
- Important to note:
  - Aggression: behavior directed toward the goal of harming another living being that is not motivated to receive such treatment; associated with anger
  - Violence: can be aggression in action; intent to harm others
  - Can be motivated by other factors – fear, survival

Socio-Ecological Framework (CDC, 2016)

Individual Factors
- Biological/Genetic:
  - Aggression is in our nature
  - Testosterone
  - Executive functioning (impulsivity, disinhibition)
  - Lower cognitive functioning
  - Brain injury
- Substance abuse (lowered inhibition, social environment)
- History of victimization
- Attitude and beliefs
- Mental disorder
- (Archer, 2004; CDC, 2016)

Individual factors cont.
- Social learning/cognitive theory – Bandura
  - Media violence: chicken or the egg?
  - Does violent media increase violence or do violent people tend to watch violent media?
  - Observation of violence certainly can contribute. There are many other mediating factors that promote the learning of aggressive schemas
  - Ex. Less popular or lower intellectual ability children watch more violent television
  - (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Huesmann, 1986)
### Individual factors cont.

- **Operant conditioning**
  - Violence meets needs
  - Bad behavior = attention

- **Bystander effect/apathy**
  - [YouTube Video: Violent Meeting Needs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=175ig2I9rt0)
  - Diffusion of responsibility (Martin & North, 2015)
  - Deindividuation – looters

### Community factors

- **Social disorganization theory** (Shaw & McKay, 1942) – "inability of a community to realize common goals and solve chronic problems" (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003).
  - According to the theory, poverty, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, and weak social networks decrease a neighborhood’s capacity to control the behavior of people in public, and hence increase the likelihood of crime.
  - Fewer resources allocated to the area

- **Social exclusion and self-regulation theory**
  - "Nobody likes you" experiment
  - Perception of exclusion decreases self-regulation
  - (Blackhart, Nelson, Knowles, & Baumeister, 2009; Twenge et al., 2001)

### Relationship factors

- **Group socialization theory**: theory that an individual’s peer groups influence his/her personality and behavior in adulthood; sense of belonging (adolescent development)
- **Cycle of violence**: Learn to express emotions and interact with others by observing (social learning theory)
- **Learned helplessness theory**: Constant abuse has stripped victims the will to leave
- **Power and control theory**: Abuse and threaten to exert and maintain control
  - (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2010)

### Societal

- **Roles**
  - Gender
  - Direct/indirect aggression
  - Guilt and anxiety after aggressing
  - Dominance/submission
  - Expression of emotions
  - (Archer, 2004)

#### Societal cont.

- **Groupthink** (Janis, 1982) – “process through which those individuals meet a consensus” (Herrmann, 2014).
  - See themselves as beyond the reach of punishment
  - See their “shared vision” as the correct path to follow
  - Believe that their decisions have no opposition
  - Believe that most people around them must share the same beliefs
  - Person who is “beholden” to a leadership position neglects to inform the group about alternative views, which contributes to ignorance and stronger bond.
  - Escaping
gating
  - Blaming others for someone else’s problems, resulting in feelings of prejudice

- **Attitude changes**
  - Marital rape (Bothmann, 2015)
  - Incidence of spouse
  - Did not include “spouse” in legal definition until 1879. Now, all 50 states include “spouse” in definition.

### The Connection to Social Media

- **Operant conditioning**
- **Social learning**
- **Bystander effect**
- **Social exclusion**
- **Social disorganization**
- **Group socialization**
- **Power and control**
Problems with Research
- Definition of violence
- Theoretical research with social media violence
- Generalizability/ethical concerns
- Where to start with social media?

Technology, Social Media, and Interpersonal Violence
Modern Day Examples of the Promotion of Violence and Aggression, Online and in Person
Emily N. Robinett, M.S.

Outline
- Cyberbullying
- The Use of Technology in Dating/Domestic Violence and Stalking
- Online Perpetuation of Rape Culture
- Hate Speech and Hate Groups
- Radicalization and Recruitment for Violent Groups Through the Internet

The Birth of the Cyber Bully
- Typically, thought of as a problem in child/adolescent populations.
- Although important to note this isn’t always the case
- From 2000-2005, 50% increase in percentage of youth who were victims of online harassment.
- 2010: 70% of teens and 85% of young adults (18-29) had a cell phone.
  - Teens up to 78% by 2013 (47% of these are smartphones)
- Over 90% of both teens and young adults go online.

Accessibility
- Shift from stationary, in-home Internet usage to mobile, constant access.
- More difficult for parents to monitor activities.
- Balance between independence and protection.
- Positive resources for teens: education, peer connectivity, etc.
- Potential consequences: giving personal info, inappropriate content
- Parents less likely to utilize technology than hands-on monitoring
  - Checking browser history, social media profiles, etc.
  - Virus parental controls, location-services, etc.
Who Bullies and Why?

- Many are both perpetrators and victims
  - Many who admitted to cyberbullying said they were bullied first
  - Not uncommon for both parties to see themselves as victims
  - Bullies tend to report negative family relationships, substance abuse, delinquency
- Tend not to think of it in terms of bullying
  - “Teasing” or “pranking”
  - These are seen as less juvenile/more adult
  - Diminishes power imbalance: don’t have to see self as “bully” or “victim”
- May be gender differences in types of cyberbullying
  - Girls: social exclusion, spreading rumors
  - Boys: online impersonation, posting embarrassing content

The Conflict of Intervening

- Positive: 65% of youth indicated they had done something to help someone experiencing online meanness.
- Felt more positively about reporting than about directly intervening.
  - Might do more harm than good to speak up
- Why might someone choose not to intervene?
  - Bystander effect
  - Moral disengagement (“not that serious,” “just a joke”)
  - Fear: being a target, making things worse, losing social status

Progression From “Playground” Bullying

- Potential for anonymity
  - Both for perpetrators and for witnesses
  - Ease of joining in: progression from witness to co-bully
  - Difficult to punish even if it’s reported
- Widespread/immediate consequences
  - As simple as tagging someone in a compromising/embarrassing photo
  - Entire social media network are new audience
  - Potential to go “viral”
  - Bullying/shaming can even backfire on the bully

Potential Real World Consequences

- Electronic victimization associated with:
  - Emotional distress
  - School conduct problems
  - Carrying weapons at school
  - Low caregiver/adolescent connectedness
  - Sexual solicitation

Social Exclusion: A Modern Twist

- Social exclusion: rather than active aggression, the individual is shunned.
- Children do this from a young age (“You’re not my friend anymore.”)
- Embarrassing content, name-calling, or aggression online may co-occur with social exclusion in daily life.
- Additionally, may experience the same name-calling and shaming in daily life.

July 2016 – model posted body-shaming photo of a 70-year-old woman showering at the gym.

- Public backlash – she ultimately publicly apologized.
- Real world consequences
  - Banned from LA Fitness
  - Fired from her job as a morning radio host
  - Charged with misdemeanor invasion of privacy
  - Could face up to 6 months of jail time
Aggression Turned Inward

- Association between being the victim of online harassment and accessing harmful online content.
  - Self-harm
  - Eating disorders
- Appears to have a significant impact on self image and emotional well-being.
- Both bullies and victims at increased risk for suicidal ideation, attempts, and completions.

Cyberbullying & Suicide

- High profile cases of youth suicides due, in part, to online harassment.
- All forms of peer aggression found to be related to higher ideation and attempts.
- Many who commit suicide have other emotional and social issues.
  - Rather than direct causation, may exacerbate instability and hopelessness.

Dating Violence in Adolescents

- CDC – In 2009, 25% of American students experience verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual dating violence annually.
- Evolution of technology adds new aspects to dating aggression.
- Over 25% of students in relationships have experienced electronic dating aggression (EDA).
- Between 10-38% admitted to perpetrating EDA.

EDA Behaviors

- Cyberstalking: online monitoring, demanding passwords.
  - 17% of students endorsed
- Harassment: teasing/humiliation using technology.
  - Most common form, endorsed by 1/3 of students
- Coercive sexting: pressure to send sexual messages, photos, or videos.
  - Reported by 8% of students
  - Boys more likely to engage in this behavior
Risk Factors

• Age – 9th graders 2.5x more likely than 6th graders to perpetrate.
• Lack of parental involvement.
• Engaging in other risky behaviors (substance use, aggression)
• Higher rates of adverse childhood events:
  - Violence, abuse, trauma

How Does it Start?

• Early adolescents lack skills for managing online interactions.
  - i.e., waiting for a response → anger, distress → perpetration of abuse
• Surveillance and teasing may be viewed as a normative part of a dating relationship.
• Attitudes toward male against female violence as normal
  - “It is ok for a boy to hit his gf if she did something to make him mad.”
  - “Sometimes boys have to hit their gfs to get them back under control.”
• More likely if individual has engaged in bullying.

Intimate Partner Stalking

• Stalking:
  - Pattern of repeated intrusive behaviors: following, harassing, threatening
  - Majority perpetrated by intimate partners or ex-partners
  - Women more likely to be victims, men to be perpetrators
• Risk factor for serious violence, including sexual violence or homicide, but often not taken seriously
  - Up to 82% of victims had also experienced emotional, sexual, physical, or financial abuse in the same relationship
  - Perceived as less dangerous than stranger stalking

The Nuts & Bolts of Technology-Assisted Stalking

• Victims may not recognize or label the behaviors as stalking
  - “Unwanted contact”
• Three functions of stalking behaviors:
  - To create a sense of omnipresence
  - To isolate
  - To punish/humiliate
• Most common tools used: smartphones, cell phones, social media
  - Email and GPS to a lesser degree

Two Faces of Technology

• Can assist with safety/recovery for the victim
• More tools/greater scope for the stalker
  - Repeated calls, texts, or emails inciting dread/terror
  - Use of hidden cameras or GPS
  - Location can be compromised simply by being tagged in a picture/status
  - Monitoring email or social media accounts
  - Harassment/bullying can be done publicly – comments multiply the abuse
  - Photos/videos can be used to threaten or control (revenge porn)
• Increases ease/accessibility of controlling behaviors
  - Can monitor/harass without being physically present
Table 1. Women’s Experiences of Stalking Methods Via Mobile Technologies. (Woodlock, 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used text messages, phone, and so on to call her names, harass her, or &quot;put her down&quot;</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used mobile technology to check her location</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made her feel afraid not to respond to a phone call or text because of what the caller might do (e.g., threaten suicide)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checked her text messages without her permission</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracked her via text, email, and/or social media</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared private photographs or videos of her without her permission</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted negative information about her on social media (e.g., Facebook)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracked her via GPS (e.g., using applications such as Find My Friends)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demanded her electronic passwords</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonated her in emails, text messages, and/or social media</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used their children’s social media accounts to attempt to communicate with her</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased a phone for her for the purpose of keeping track of her</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave a phone or other device to their children to create further opportunities to contact her against her wishes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
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Difficult to Escape

- Disabling GPS may increase risk for escalation of violence
- Ease of access to mobile technology creates the sense that, even if physical escape is achieved, the victim cannot psychologically escape
- Humiliating content posted online is permanent, can lead to repeated revictimization
- Can monitor social media through friends’, children’s, or catfish accounts
- Proxy stalking: using other people to contact the victim
- The abuse and attempts to escape it can be socially isolating

Intermission

Technology and the Perpetuation of Rape Culture

- “A complex set of beliefs that encourage male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm . . . In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable . . . However . . . much of what we accept as inevitable is in fact the expression of values and attitudes that can change.”
  - Emilie Buchwald

Publicizing What is Private
Posting Nude Photos/Videos

• High profile instances of nude celebrity photos and sex tapes posted online.
• Ranges from baseless threats, to hacked accounts, to media that had been given to/made by exes.
• Not just a celebrity problem:
  - Pressure to sext
  - May be filmed/photographed without knowledge or consent
  - Can be used to control or punish

How Do People Get Away With This?

• Many states have laws against harassment via technology and social media
  - Perpetrators can face fines or imprisonment
  - Also child pornography charges if the victim is/was underage
• Barriers to punishment
  - Anonymous accounts
  - Difficult to definitively prove
  - Victims may be afraid/ashamed to come forward

Diverse Responses

• In 2014, Twitter suspended any account that published leaked nude celebrity photos.
• In contrast, 4chan is known for allowing/encouraging anonymous posting of content that includes trolling, nudity, violence, bullying.
  - Threads expire, creating a (sometimes false) sense of impermanence
  - Typical user is young, male, college-educated, from a primarily Caucasian country
  - Known for promoting mass bullying/harassment; subculture on other sites

How Do People Get Away With This?

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Online Rape Threats

• Another method to control – not about sex, about intimidation/power
• What “provokes” rape threats?
  - Talk about sexism in gaming
  - Support female gamers
  - Talk about how rape jokes aren’t funny
  - Really, supporting/discussing women’s issues of any kind
  - Criticizing a comic book
  - Reporting sexual assault allegations
  - Talking about how a man made you feel violated
  - Talking about gun control
  - Talking about rape culture
  - Be a victim of revenge porn

Slut Shaming

• Defined as judging and/or maligning a female for her actual or perceived sexual activity.
• Why men slut shame: power, control, maintain a social system that benefit them
• Why women slut shame: create a sense of belonging/power, a measure of social standing, liberates self and own behavior
• Both have to do with promoting inequality/establishing dominance
• Internalized misogyny: “Involuntary internalization by women of the sexist messages that are present in their society and culture”

Online Slut Shaming

• Posting compromising photos/videos elevates a male’s social status while simultaneously causing the involved female’s to plummet
• #slanegirl
  - Picture taken of a young woman engaged in a sexual act at a concert
  - Went viral, trending hashtag
  - Her information was found and published online (she was under 18)
  - Barrage of comments calling her “rotten,” “whore,” “vile slut”
  - Man was never named, other than being called a “hero”
Victim Blaming

Issues of Blaming the Victim

- Excuses the perpetrator
- Discourages reporting crimes
- Leads to shame/guilt
- Frequently leads to cyberbullying, slut shaming, and/or revictimization
- Promotes the normalization of violence against women
- Support for the perpetrator

Elliott Rodger: The Santa Barbara Shooter

- Posts just before rampage, including a YouTube video and hard copy “manifesto”
- Basically, women brought the “Retribution” on themselves by choosing other males over him and not giving him the sexual attention he believed he deserved.
- After the shooting, support pages began appearing:
  - Ties to Men’s Rights Activists
  - Fueled #notallmen (but also the #yesallwomen rebuttal)

Using the Internet to Find Victims

- Perhaps the most well-known example: the Craigslist killer
- Seemingly “normal” medical student
- Found victims who posted ads for erotic or massage services on Craigslist, then met them in a hotel room
- Robbed or attempted to rob three victims; murdered one
- Security footage, emails, and texts used as evidence
- Committed suicide in jail in 2010

Other Ways to Victim

- Grooming victims of pedophilia or sex trafficking
- Actually conducting the business of sex trafficking online
- Using dating apps to find victims to sexually assault/rape
- More common, less severe – unwanted sexually explicit and/or harassing messages

Hate Speech and Hate Groups
Types of Hate Groups Online

- Anti LGBTQ sites
- Racist/xenophobic sites
- Sites glorifying mass murderers
- Recruitment for terrorist organizations
- Sites advocating violence for any number of reasons

Proliferation of Hate Groups

- Southern Poverty Law Center: number of hate groups increased exponentially with the advent of the Internet
- Left wing hate groups as well
- Not only has the number of groups increased, social media have allowed increased visibility
- Membership increased as well – new avenue for recruitment
- 1996: ~150 active hate groups
- 2009: 11,500 social networks, websites, forums, & blogs focused on spreading intolerance

Youth and Online Hate

- Younger generations may be particularly susceptible
  - Spend more time online, online presence started earlier
  - Online exploration may contribute to identity development
- Active recruitment using technology
  - Web pages directed toward children
  - White supremacist subreddits and other social media pages
- Differential association theory: virtual associations may also promote engaging in criminal behavior

Teaching Techniques for Hate

- Hate group sites frequently provide messages about the attitude to be adopted toward the hated individuals
- Some sites and games provide "techniques" for violence:
  - Online games shooting members of the hated groups
  - RPG games for Columbine and Virginia Tech shootings
  - Instructions on how to behead, build bombs, create a cell phone detonator, using weapons, committing mass murder, how to successfully suicide bomb, and other methods for violence and terror

What Makes Someone Become Violent IRL?

- Priority: if violence/crime is learned early in life
- Duration: if exposed to pro-violent messages for a prolonged period
- Intensity: if taught violence by someone who is highly influential
- Social media influences frequency and duration of pro-violent messages
- Example: unlikely (though possible) for a potential school shooter to find support for a school shooting in offline network
  - Don’t have to look long or far to find support online
  - In fact, more likely to find support for any views you happen to hold

Part of a Community

- Members of online groups may feel as close to group members as they do to family and offline friends
- Positive feedback loop: messages of hate, pictures of hateful acts garner comments and reinforcement for these behaviors
- Users are quite aware of what garners approval and curates pictures/posts to fit these standards
### White Supremacist Groups Recent Moves
- Very recent trend toward recruiting on college campuses
- Potentially emboldened by online recruitment and current political climate
- Tactics: posting fliers, outreach to students, organizing on-campus speeches by controversial activists
- Anti-Defamation League tracked 104 instances of posting fliers since Sept. 2016, with a spike in January (63 of the instances)

### Other Examples of Technology, Social Media, and Violence

#### Internet Banging
- Recent phenomenon: gang affiliates use social media to trade insults or make threats
  - Leads to violence/victimization IRL
- Content – talking about people they’ve fought/killed, or who they want to fight kell
- Functions:
  - Promoting gang affiliation
  - Achieving status/authority
  - Sharing information about rival gangs

#### Suicide as an Epidemic
- Use of social media to communicate last thoughts
  - Also frequently used as memorial
- Others see the attention/remorse/guilt others express publicly
- See potential to accomplish goals of suicide
  - “Then they’ll be sorry.”
  - “Would anyone even miss me?”
- Recent incident: 11-year-old committed suicide after girlfriend faked suicide on social media

### Strategies to fight social media violence

#### Three approaches
- Manage on-line community
- Education – Positive Digital Citizenship
- Behavioral activation – No Social Loafing!
Understanding the community

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Metafilter
- On Line Gaming (League of Legends)

Facebook – bullying and harassment policy

- Pages that identify and shame private individuals,
- Images altered to degrade private individuals,
- Photos or videos of physical bullying posted to shame the victim,
- Sharing personal information to blackmail or harass people, and
- Repeatedly targeting other people with unwanted friend requests or messages.

https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards#bullying-and-harassment

Facebook – user response

- Hide – hide any post you want to get rid of
- Delete – once a comment is hidden, can delete or report comment
- Unfriend – remove from your friends list
- Report – report comments if they violate terms and conditions
- Ban – can ban a user from making comments on your page

Twitter

- Hateful conduct: You may not promote violence against or directly attack or threaten other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or disease. We also do not allow accounts whose primary purpose is inciting harm towards others on the basis of these categories.
- Examples of what we do not tolerate includes, but is not limited to behavior that harasses individuals or groups of people with,

  - violent threats;
  - wishes for the physical harm, death, or disease of individuals or groups;
  - references to mass murder, violent events, or specific means of violence in which/with which such groups have been the primary targets or victims;
  - behavior that incites fear about a protected group;
  - repeated and/or non-consensual slurs, epithets, racist and sexist tropes, or other content that degrades someone.

https://support.twitter.com/articles/18311

Twitter – User response

- Mute – you can no longer see the other users tweets
- Block – prevents them from following or adding you to a direct message or adding you to a photo
- Report – could result in a warning or suspension of their twitter account
- Protect your tweets – only allow people you approve to see your tweets
Instagram

Respect other members of the Instagram community.

- We want to foster a positive, diverse community. We remove content that contains credible threats or hate speech, content that appeals private individuals to disclose or share their personal information, posts of Holocaust or lgbtq+ hate speech, and content that may cause harm to an individual through harassment or shaming. We remove content that promotes violence, and we generally remove content from accounts that appear to be dedicated to spreading misinformation or hate.
- We remove content that encourages or directs people to content that promotes violence, or threatens physical harm to the account owner or other individuals.
- We do not allow accounts solely dedicated to spreading misinformation, or accounts that appear to be dedicated to spreading misinformation or hate.

https://help.instagram.com/477434105621119/

Instragram – User responses

- Delete comment – from your post
- Unfollow or block
- Report – team reviews complaints

Snapchat

Snap Inc. respects the rights of others. And so should you. You therefore may not use the Services in a manner that:

- Violates or infringes someone else’s rights of publicity, privacy, copyright, trademark, or other intellectual-property right.
- Bullets, harasses, or intimidates.
- Defames.
- Spam or solicits our users.


Snapchat Reporting

- I Need Help – Snapchat Support
  - Can report on type of concern
  - Many responses put responsibility on user

MetaFilter

- Users Guide – “Golden Rule”, “Don’t be an ass”
- Posts can be “called out” by members
- Report by flagging posts for moderator review
- Moderators use communication skills to calm users and situations

Online Gaming – League of Legends

- Was known for in-game taunting that at times escalated to threats
- Created simple hurdles
- Enforced rules in a way people understood
- Involved users in moderation process
Challenges

- Many current communities rely on the victim to report.
- Next the aggrieved party is told to block the other person.
- Threats may have to be very specific to get action.

Helpful Interventions

- Comforting the victim in private (Craig, 2014; Davis & Nixon, 2013)
- Promoting pro-social behavior - 73% of youth surveyed indicated they would intervene if they knew others would respect them for it (Davis & Nixon, 2013)
- Immediate intervention by others in community
- "The bully being "seen" - takes away anonymity"

Global Perspective

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

- Call for placement of media and information literacy at the level of core instruction at all levels of formal education
- Promote digital citizenship – not only trained in digital literacy skills, but empowered to speak out as digital citizens

Social Media Literacy

- Critical thinking regarding posts
- Teaching Empathy
- Assessing risk
- Model healthy behavior

Digital Ethics
Programs/Resources
  - Responsible Social Media
  - Crime and Social Media
  - Risk for violence on Social Media
  - Risk Assessment Strategy
  - Managing Your Social Media Content for Work
  - Privacy Tips

E-Responder
- NYU Steinhardt’s Community and Oppression Research Engagement Team and The Citizens Crime Commission of New York City
  - Serves traditionally marginalized populations
  - Focus is on health and mental health disparities in women and youth who are involved in or at risk of involvement with the legal system
  - Three pronged approach: building healthy on-line engagement, building life skills and targeting risky on-line behaviors

Life of a NYC Crew
- Geographically based groups of young people (ages 16-25)
- Often violent turf rivalries
- Lack structure and profit mechanisms of gangs
- Involved in almost 50% of all shootings in NYC
- Use social media to threaten, buy and sell weapons, coordinate shootings, post pictures with guns or videos about violence
- Link between on line altercations and real world violence

Goal – to prevent escalation of violence
- Prevent the escalation of on line provocation that can lead to in person violence
- Support youth in developing life skills related to leadership, empathy, emotional regulation, and sociopolitical development
- Support Violence Prevention Professionals – use social media to increase awareness about the problems with social media violence

E-Responder Methods
- Interruption Toolkit – trains responders to assess social media content for potential violence and how to respond
- Promote Digital Citizenship – Use of social media to respond to strategies, change violence norms, raise awareness about the issues of violence in social media, and promote positivity

Prevention
- Youth Leadership Program – 12 week program promoting positive digital citizenship.
  - Twice a week sessions focusing on emotion and expression, sociopolitical education, passions and interests, leadership, and digital activism.
  - Emphasis on mindfulness and emotional regulation skills as well as the critical consumption of on-line content.
6 month pilot study results

- Quasi experimental design – intervention across four NYC Cure Violence Sites and one high school
- Cure Violence – model to stop community violence by treating it as an epidemic
- Three of four Cure Violence Sites received intervention, one was control group (someone watching posts but did not receive training)
- High School received Youth Leadership Program Only

Findings – over 6 months

- 154 reported instances of risky online behavior
- Low Risk: bragging about crew affiliation, posting videos of mobbing
- Medium Risk: Tagging or posts about past violence, posting fight videos, making general threats against rivals, arguments in comments
- High Risk: Calls outs (taunts) to rivals, naming specific individuals when threatening, posting pictures with guns, selling guns/bullets

Findings

- Engaged posters on social media (interruptions)
- About 50% time (75 incidents) resulted in positive outcomes descalation of conflict, post taken down, or building emotional management skills
- Experimental sites – significantly more likely to identify risky posts
- Trained E-Responders reported being able to understand on-line posts as more on a continuum of the youth’s behavior

Sexual Violence - Ottawa

- Survey of community organizations, educators, violence prevention advocates and frontline workers
- Follow up interviews
- Social Media Scan
- Community Forum on sexual violence, social media and youth
- Start to mobilize entire community surrounding this issue – focus on prevention

Social Cognitive Strategies

- Programs target elementary school age through high school
- Involve teacher, school administration as well as student
- Use kid language – same words
- Include role playing and small group exercises
- Include training on multicultural issues so kids understand and can see others’ points of view
- Educate about risk factors or triggers that can lead to violent confrontation
Tips for Positive Digital Citizenship – no social loafing!

- Call out negative on-line behavior
  - May be done privately to avoid starting a negative bandwagon
- Present information in ways that do not belittle other points of view
- Report inappropriate actions/comments to moderators
- Promote empathy; other points of view
- Reach out to injured party for support – publically or privately

Final thoughts.....

Questions??

References


References cont.

References cont.


• Twenge, J. M., Baumeister, R. F., Tice, D. M., & Stucke, T. S. (2001). If you can’t join them, beat them: effects of social exclusion on aggressive behavior. Journal of personality and social psychology, 81(6), 1058.


