

# Cyberbullying: A Challenge for Schools

Sheri Bauman, PhD

November 9, 2022



Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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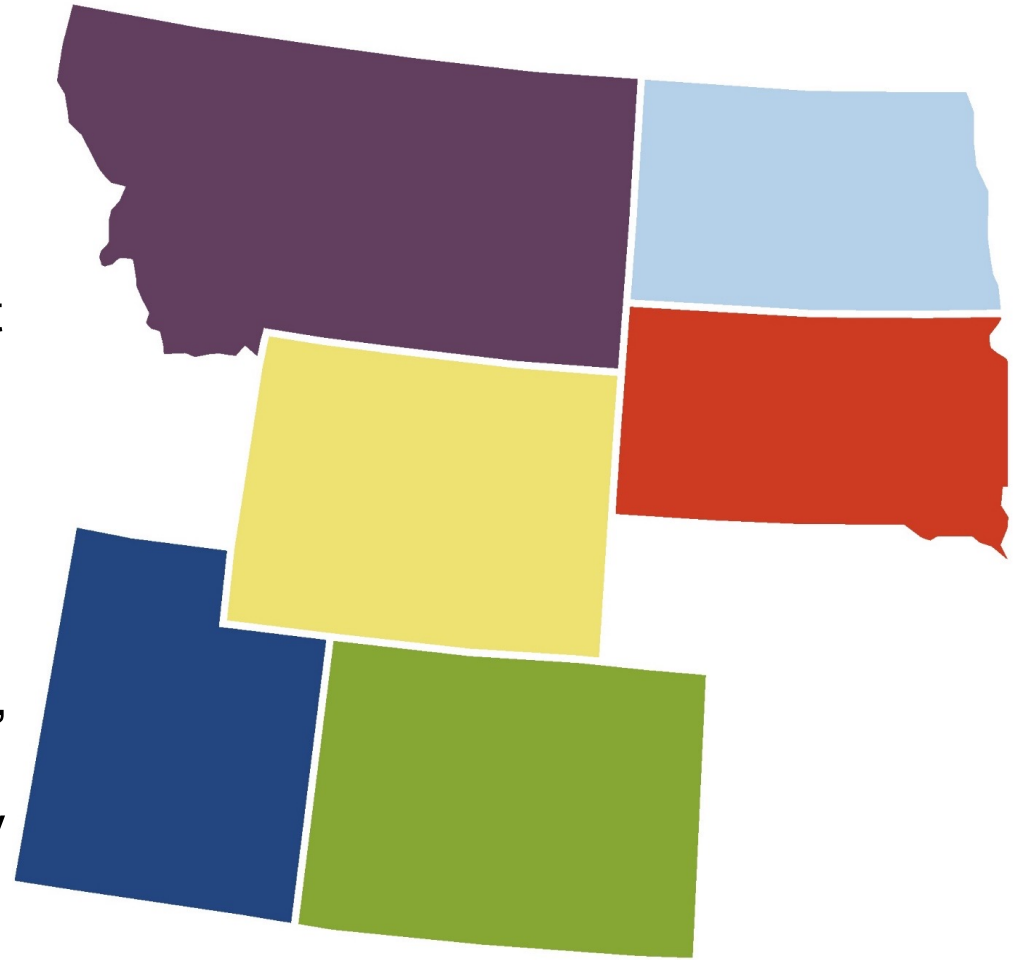
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The work of the Mountain Plains MHTTC is supported by grant H79SM081792 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

# The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains MHTTC) provides training and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental health concerns throughout Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).

We belong to the Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network, a national network of training and technical assistance centers serving the needs of mental health, substance use and prevention providers. The work of the TTC Network is under a cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).



# Land Acknowledgement Statement

Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeates this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.



The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

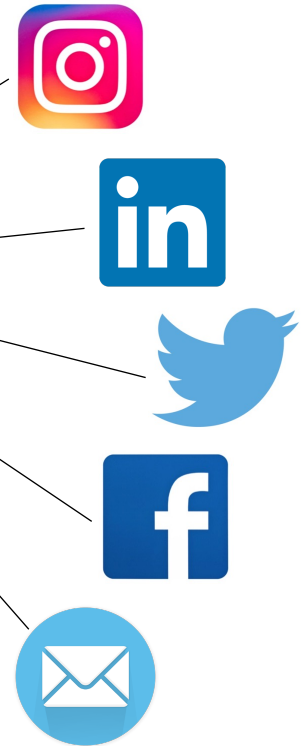
RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

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# CYBERBULLYING: A CHALLENGE FOR SCHOOLS

**Sheri Bauman, Ph.D.**

Professor Emerita  
University of Arizona

November 9, 2022

# OVERVIEW

- How do we define cyberbullying?
- How prevalent is it?
- Why do people do it?
- Why is it so harmful?
- What about rural schools?
- How can schools prevent and respond to cyberbullying?
- What are some key take-away points



# CYBERBULLYING IS ...

**a deliberate aggressive act using technology** that is repeated and directed towards a target who has difficulty defending themselves.

It can be perpetrated in multiple ways



# slido

Respond at [slido.com](https://slido.com) with #2084877

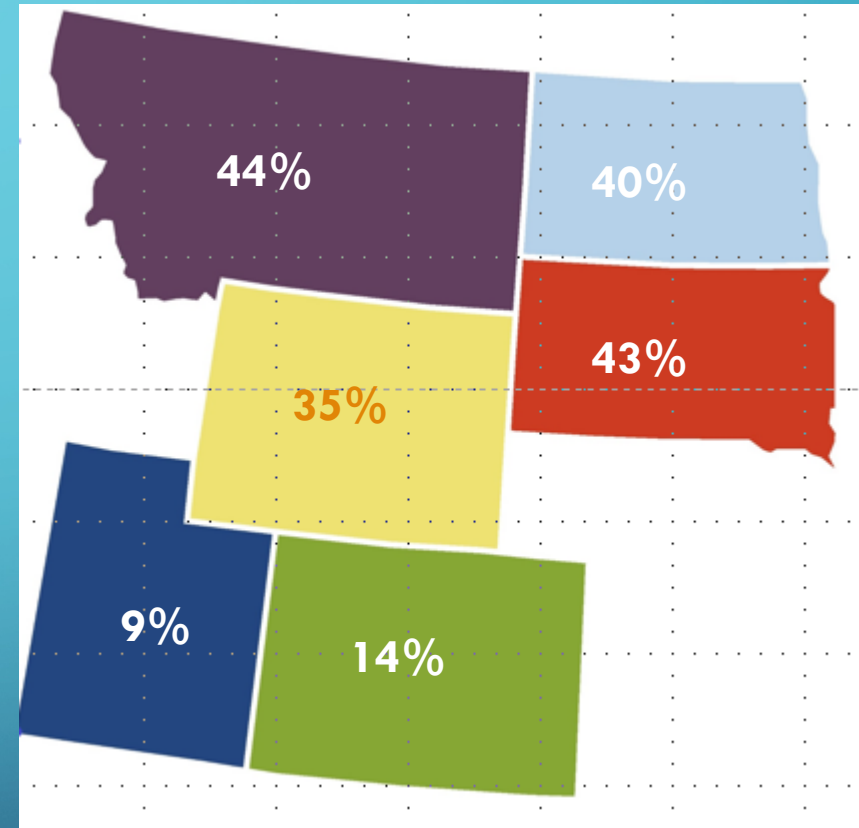


## How big a problem is cyberbullying at your school?

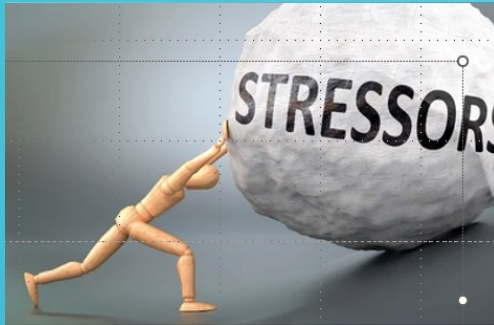
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# HOW IS RURAL DEFINED?

- US government was at least 15 different definitions of *rural*
- Open countryside with fewer than 500 persons per square mile
- fewer than 2,500 inhabitants
- ~ 18% of the US population lives in rural areas



Data from 2010 census by [www.nationalpopulartvote.com](http://www.nationalpopulartvote.com)



## RURAL SETTINGS:

### Stressors:

- Geographic isolation
  - Limited public transportation
  - Inability to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Fewer community resources
- Fewer educational resources
- Restricted social networks
- Internet access may be absent or unreliable
- Parental involvement?

### Rural areas are

- Whiter
- Poorer
- Often more conservative
- Youth have high rates of risky behaviors



# BULLYING IN RURAL SCHOOLS


- Rural kids in Missouri\*: 28.5% of rural kids have been victims of bullying
- **25.3% have been victims of cyberbullying**
- 25.2% have been victims of social/relational bullying
- 28.6% have been victims of physical bullying
- 27.8% have reported being a bully




\*Missouri Office of Primary Care and Rural Health. Data collected in Missouri (n.d.)

## RELATED STUDIES

Earlier study by Dulmus et al. (2004) reported 82.3% of kids in rural Appalachia had experienced some form of bullying in previous 3 months.



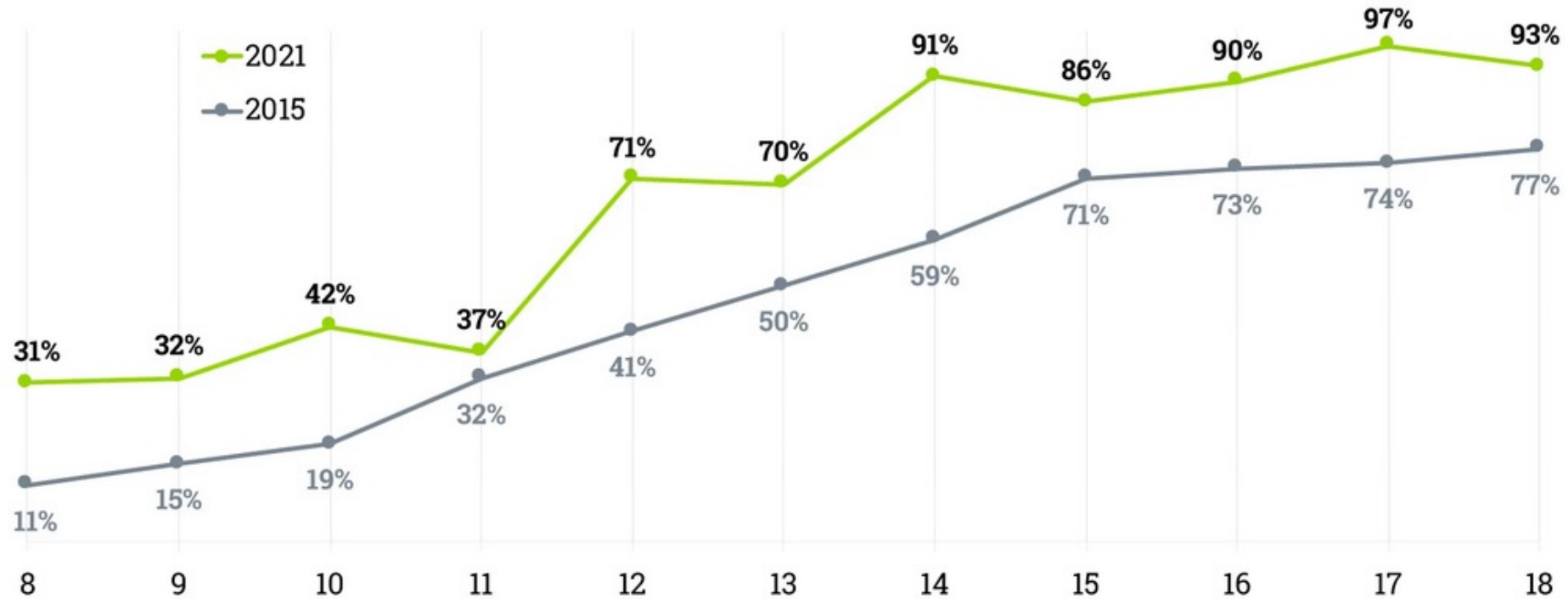
Smokowski et al. (2013) analyzed data from kids in 28 rural schools. An average of 22.71% experienced bullying victimization in the previous 12 months.



A study of Indigenous Canadian adolescents reported 35% of sample victimized offline, 17.3% online. 19% reported perpetrating each form (Broll et al., 2018).

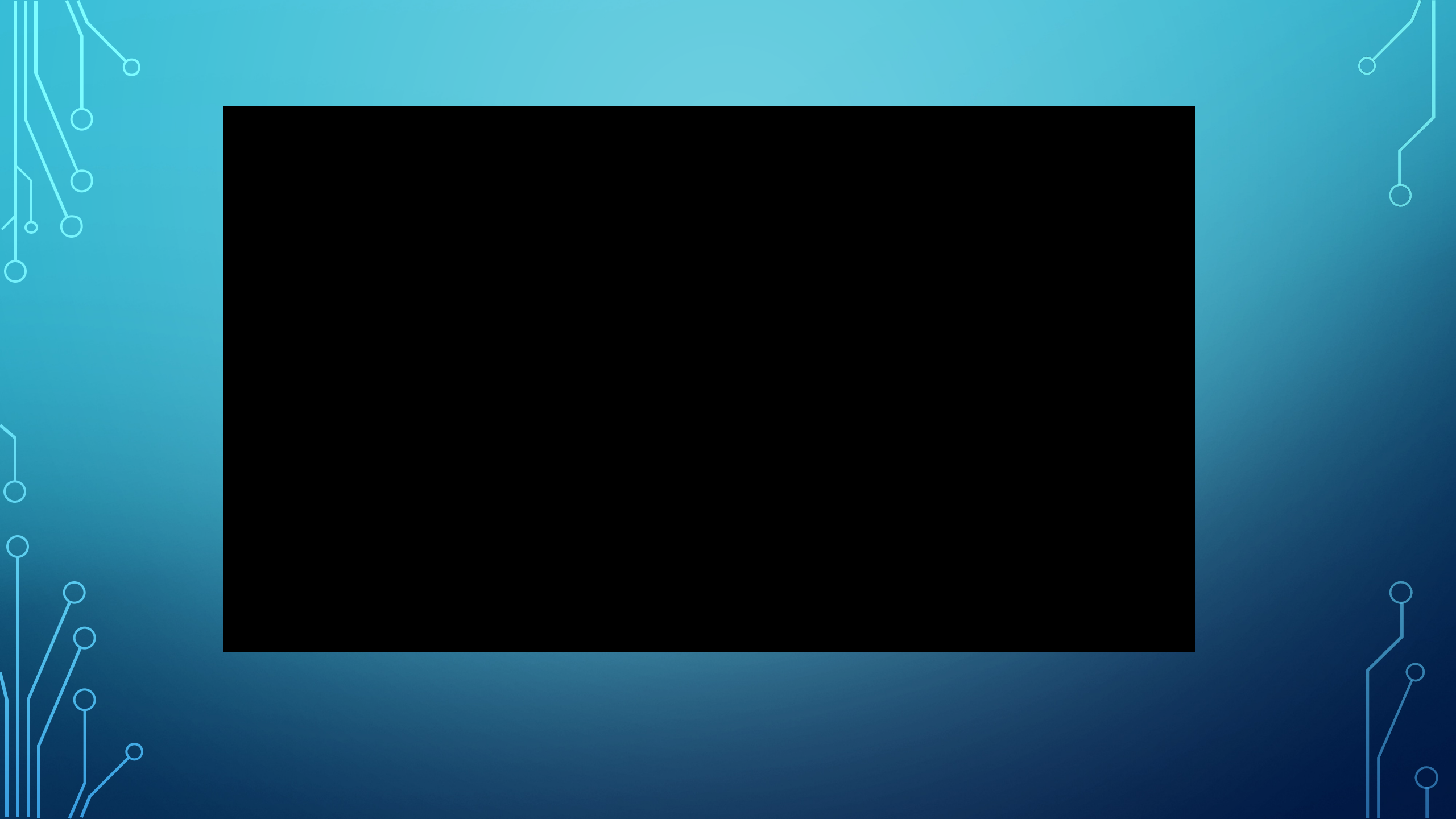
# Smartphone Ownership Among US Kids Ages 8-18

% of 8-18-year-olds who have their own smartphone, by individual age, 2021 vs. 2015



Published on MarketingCharts.com in April 2022 | Data Source: Common Sense Media

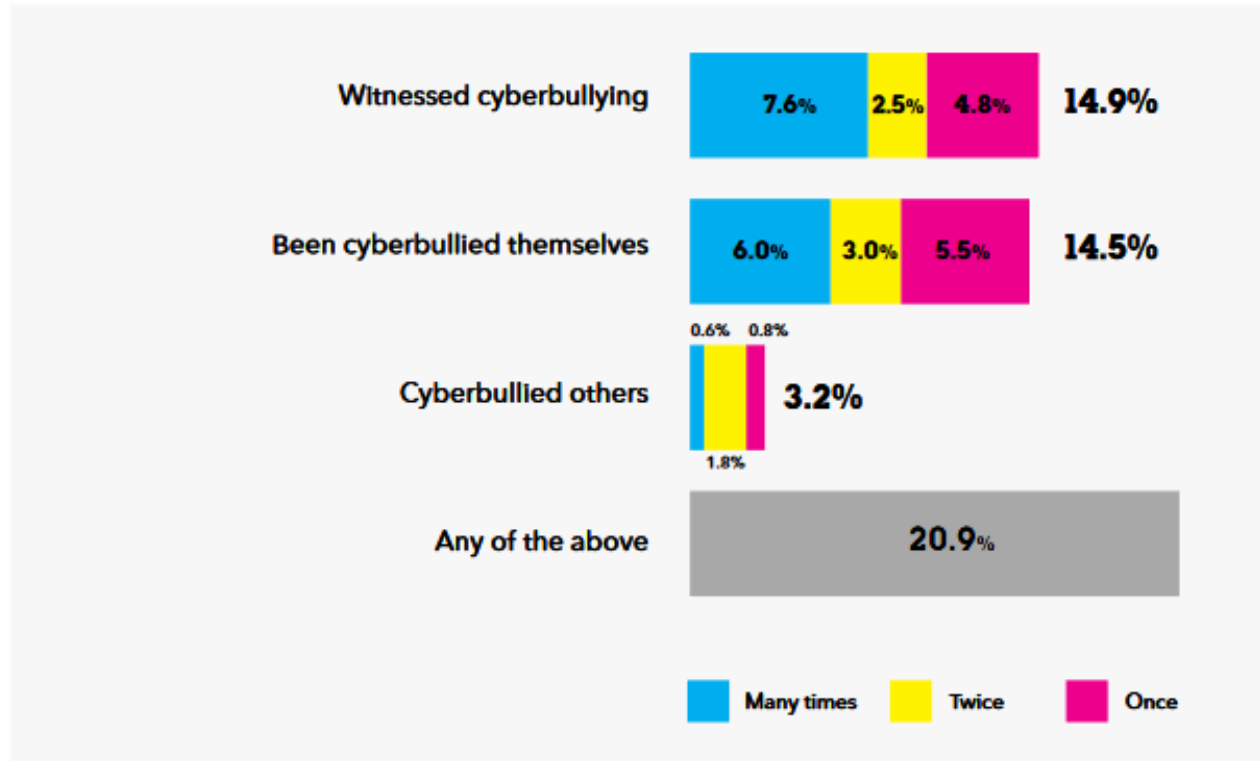
2021 data based on a September-October survey of 1,306 8-18-year-olds in the US





## EXPERIENCE WITH CYBERBULLYING

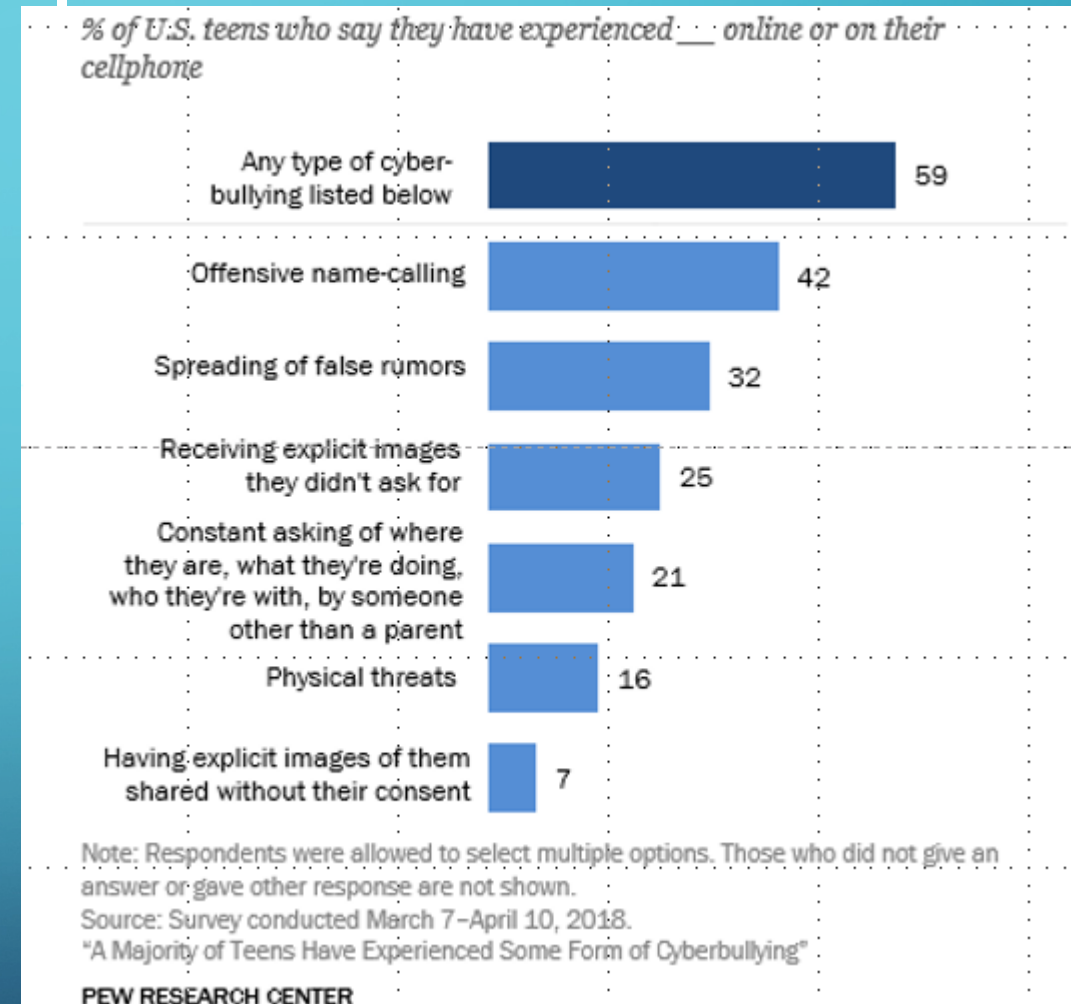
PERCENT OF 9- TO 12-YEAR-OLDS WHO SAY THEY HAVE EVER:



# TWEEN CYBERBULLYING\*

# PREVALENCE

A majority of teens have been the target of cyberbullying, with name-calling and rumor-spreading being the most common



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**What social media do you use most often?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

# Teen girls are more likely than boys to use TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat; teen boys more likely to use Twitch, Reddit and YouTube; and Black teens are especially drawn to TikTok compared with other groups

*% of U.S. teens who say they ever use each of the following apps or sites*



	YouTube	TikTok	Instagram	Snapchat	Facebook	Twitter	Twitch	WhatsApp	Reddit	Tumblr
Total	95	67	62	59	32	23	20	17	14	5
Boys	97	60	55	54	31	24	26	17	20	4
Girls	92	73	69	64	34	22	13	18	8	6
White	94	62	58	59	32	20	20	10	16	5
Black	94	81	69	59	34	31	18	19	9	4
Hispanic	95	71	68	62	32	28	22	29	14	6
Ages 13-14	94	61	45	51	23	15	17	16	8	3
15-17	95	71	73	65	39	29	22	18	19	7
Urban	95	71	70	58	40	28	15	29	13	6
Suburban	94	64	61	58	24	24	24	16	17	5
Rural	95	67	58	62	43	19	17	11	11	5



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**Which social media are most popular with your students?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

# WHY DOES SOMEONE CYBERBULLY?

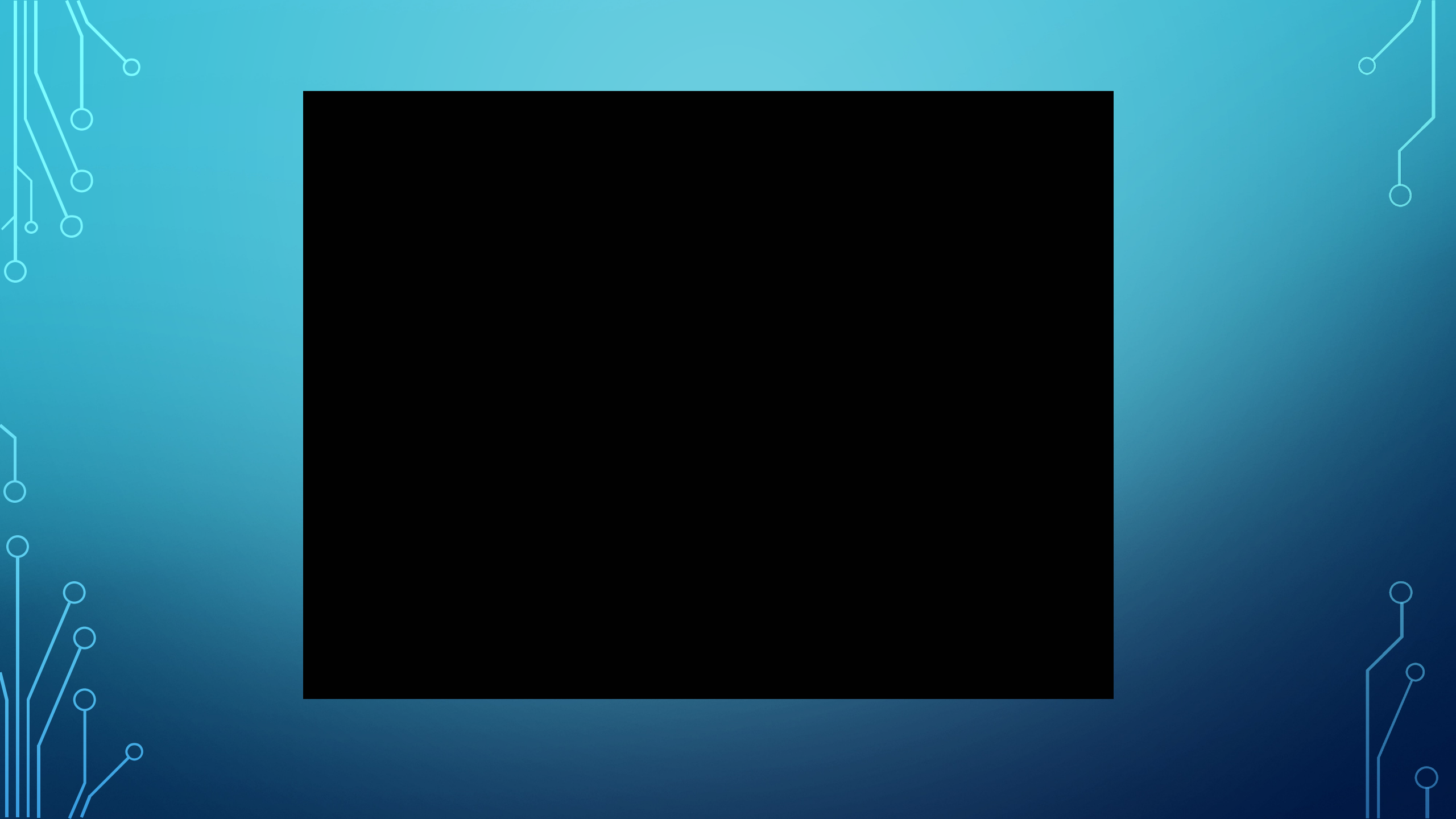
- They believe they were provoked and seek revenge (retaliation)
- They seek attention
- They seek increased power and status
- They are bored and like to create drama
- They think it's fun
- They dislike the target



## AND ...



- They think it will impress their friends
- They think they won't be caught or punished
- The online disinhibition effect is working
- They think everyone does it (social norming)
- They observe role models doing it (social learning)
- They don't think about how the target feels (lack empathy)







**NOTICE**

**INTOLERANCE  
WILL NOT BE  
TOLERATED.**

## **OTHER MOTIVATIONS**

Based on interviews with 8 recent graduates of a rural high school

- Jealousy over romantic relationships
- Intolerance of diversity: cultural, religious, sexual orientation
- Level of cruelty higher online
- Victims did not know what to do – helpless and irate

## WHY IS IT SO HARMFUL?

- The size of the audience is huge
- Content is permanent
- It can happen anytime, anyplace (no escape)
- People say things in texts or online they would never say in person (online disinhibition effect)



AND ...



- When it is done anonymously, the target may be scared, worried that it could even be a friend
- Hard to identify “just kidding” or sarcasm in text
- Lack of oversight – “wild west mentality”
- It interferes with sleep



# SIGNS OF CYBERBULLYING - TARGET

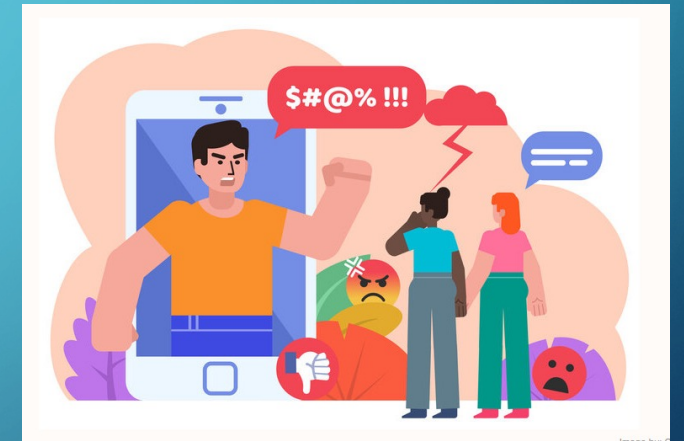
- Sudden changes in mood, demeanor
- Reacts strongly when a new alert occurs
- Avoids conversations about their online activities
- Avoids friends and social events



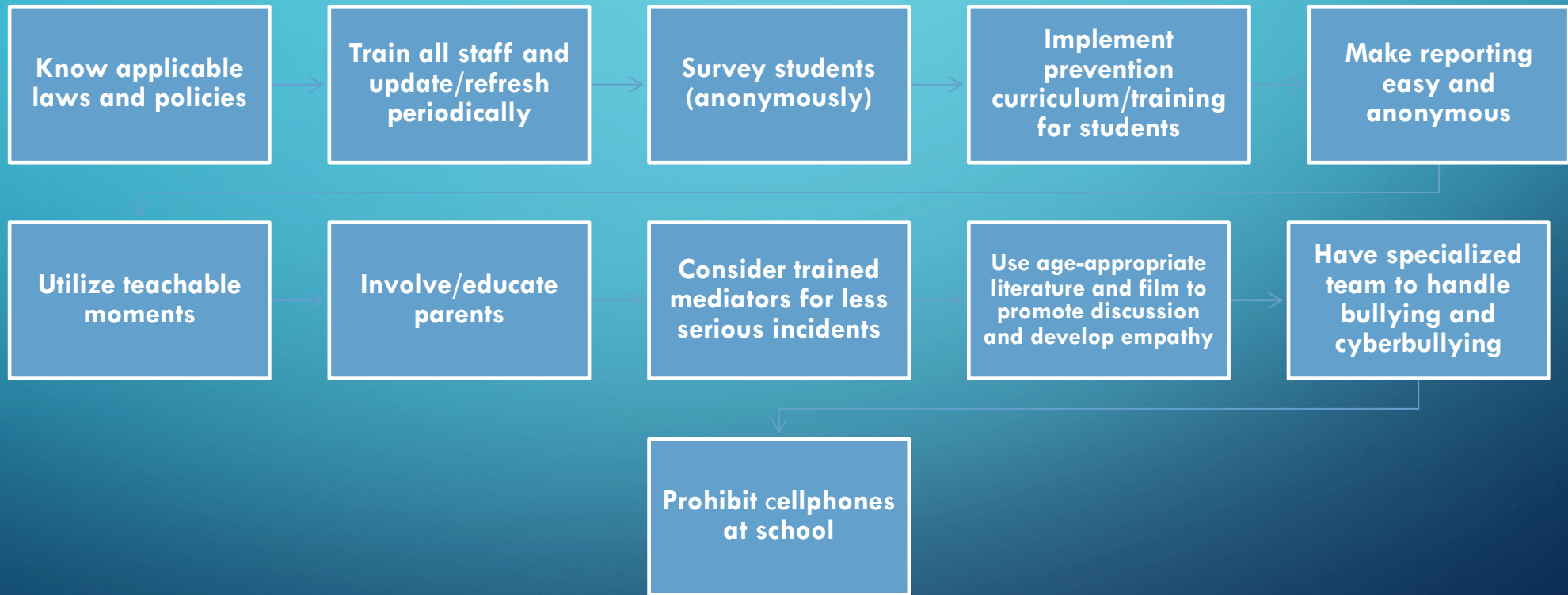


# SIGNS OF CYBERBULLYING – PERPETRATOR

- Hides devices from adults
- Uses digital devices when out of sight of adults
- Has multiple accounts on social media sites (e.g., finstas)
- Refuses to give parents passwords or access



# WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO?



# WHAT TO DO IF IT HAPPENS?

Report

Block

Preserve  
evidence

Respond ONCE

Ask how  
can I help?

Involve  
parents



A yellow rectangular warning sign with a black border and rounded corners. The sign is centered on a blue background with faint white circuit-like patterns. The word "WARNING" is written in large, bold, yellow capital letters on a black rectangular background at the top of the sign. Below this, the words "DO NOT FEED" and "THE TROLLS" are written in black capital letters on the yellow background.

**WARNING**

**DO NOT FEED  
THE TROLLS**



# PREVENTING AND RESPONDING FRAMEWORK\*

## Computer management

- Be careful about posting or forwarding content when you cannot verify accuracy

- Beware of phishing

- Safeguard your computer

Security software

Virus Detector

Backup files

- Use password on all devices



# PERSONAL MANAGEMENT



- Be cautious about what you post
- Take time to think before posting or commenting
- Avoid insulting or embarrassing or humiliating anyone
- Do not post private information
  - Address
  - Birthdate
  - Family names
- Do NOT share passwords
- Do not leave devices unattended

# Zits

by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

For You  
Wednesday October 22, 2008



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# INTERPERSONAL MANAGEMENT

- Be careful about connecting with people on social media
  - Do you know them?
  - Does a person you respect know them?
  - Do you share an interest with the person?





# USEFUL RESOURCES



- Childnet.com ([www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com))
  - *Let's Fight it Together* video
- Common sense media ([www.commonsense.org](http://www.commonsense.org))
- Stopbullying.gov
- Cyberbullying Research Center (<https://cyberbullying.org/about-us>)

# KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- There is no magic bullet to eradicate cyberbullying
  - Education is essential for harm reduction
- Have clear policies and publicize them
- Educate kids early (hands-on)
- Educate teachers and staff
- Involve parents
- Involve students in designing prevention strategies



THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION



QUESTIONS?



SHERIB@ARIZONA.EDU



# REFERENCES

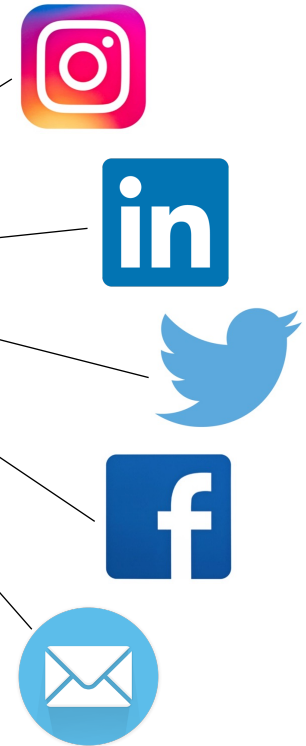
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THANK YOU!



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