THE ROLE OF A LIBRARIAN IN PREVENTING BULLYING BEHAVIOR

by

Sarah S. Alvarado

An Abstract of a research paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Library Science and Information Services in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development University of Central Missouri

July, 2012
ABSTRACT

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Bullying is becoming more common in schools. Students deal daily with torment and abuse from others with no escape, as bullying does not stop at school. Bullying has evolved into viral torment via cell phones, computers, social networks, and more. Bullying can include and lead to violence as students feel that adults will not be able to help or know how to stop the bullying. So how can a librarian help to curb bullying behavior?

The research provided to answer this question was limited to current peer-reviewed journals and studies. The results show that bullying is a factor in schools and that many times educators are unaware and unclear on how to help. The librarian can help curb bullying behavior by providing lessons, literature, and help in showing how to prevent bullying and how to react and respond to a bullying situation.
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INTRODUCTION

Bullying is becoming a common occurrence in schools across the country (Rayner 117). Many students are victims of bullying on a daily basis with educators being completely unaware that that behavior is occurring. Since the beginning of education, bullies have been in the system. Bullies are students who try to abuse and intimidate other students in order to gain or keep power or to cover up weaknesses. Bullies display predator-like behavior, which can lead to an imbalance of power (Barnard 33). Bullying appears in a variety of forms, from mean gossiping to physical attacks. Bullying can be seen in hazing and spying on others. In any case, bullying is a behavior that many students are not prepared to deal with, even though there are adults who believe that bullying is a part of life (Barnard 33).

Violence and bullying often are closely connected. Many educators and students understand that violence is a shocking part of bullying (Barron). Violence can come from the bully, and that may intimidate a victim enough to skip school by faking a sickness or other reasons to avoid the attacks (Baer 79). Some bystanders will ignore the bullying and some will join in; other bystanders will try and stop the bullying (Baer 80). In any case, a bystander is a powerful part of bullying and can increase the amount of bullying.

Educators, including the librarian, are needed to help curb the amount of bullying in schools as educators, teachers, and librarians are responsible for making the school environment safe for all students (Barron). Allowing bullying to occur without any action to stop it makes the school unsafe for students. However, by involving themselves in prevention, educators can help stop bullying. Librarians and teachers can create support groups or awareness plans that will help students feel comfortable about preventing their peers from bullying (Barron).

Along with bullying, cyberbullying has also become a widespread problem. Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of communication such as text messages, emails, and
social networks (Anderson 24). Cyberbullying is different from bullying as it can follow the victim away from school, into their home; cyberbullying also allows the bully to say things to a victim that they normally would not say in person (Diamanduros 36). Victims are left feeling anxious and alone, as they are not always aware who their bully is (Anderson 26).

Victims of cyberbullying are more prone to react to cyberbullies. Since cyberbullying occurs through technology, victims do not want to give up socially interacting with others by not using technology. Not being able to communicate through technology causes the victim to feel alone and alienated from friends (Anderson 26). Victims of cyberbullying often do not involve adults, as they see adults as being ineffective in helping (Anderson 26). In some cases, bullies use the retaliation of victims to make it seem like the bully is the victim (Anderson 25).

Librarians have a unique ability to help teachers and students in preventing bullying. Librarians and the library staff can be support for victims and for those who see bullying happening. With a variety of resources at their disposal, librarians can step in to show what teachers and students can do to prevent and stop bullying from continuing.

**Statement of Problem**

Some educators and adults see bullying as a way of school life. It is a belief that everyone was bullied at one point and everyone has to learn to deal with bullying; it helps shape a person. However, bullying is more than teasing or making jokes. Bullying is making another student’s life miserable by relentless teasing and sometimes physical violence. Bullying has changed in that it will follow the victim wherever he or she goes as bullying is being done through cell phones, email, social networks, and more. Bullying has invaded the privacy of the victim’s home through technology. Students who experience bullying often do not have the skills to react properly to bullying and to prevent it from happening again. Students do not think adults will be able to help as adults are even unaware the behavior is happening. Addressing this
issue from the perspective of the library is helpful as librarians are flexible in how they can help students and teachers. Librarians offer resources, literature, and lessons on how to curb bullying behavior; how to respond; and how to prevent the behavior from happening and escalating into school violence.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to review the literature about how the librarian can help in preventing bullying from occurring in the school community. Literature was reviewed regarding the types of bullying along with the definition and ways of cyberbullying. Literature about violence and bullying as well as the involvement of educators was also reviewed. Particular attention was paid to literature about how librarians prevent bullying through the use of books and other resources. Activities that incorporated literature and other performance type scenarios were reviewed. The results of this study demonstrate that librarians have a positive impact on curbing bullying in schools.

**Research Questions**

As school personnel face the challenge of curbing and preventing bullying behavior, it is clear that all members of the school community be involved for there to be any positive change in the amount of bullying. Librarians are in a special position, as they can positively impact and help curb the amount of bullying. This study examines how the librarian can prevent bullying by answering the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between school violence and bullying?
2. What is cyberbullying and how can it be prevented?
3. What could a librarian do to help prevent bullying and cyberbullying?
Limitations of the Study

When considering bullying and the different types of bullying along with cyberbullying, the research might have taken a variety of directions. Limits to the research needed to be set up as well as deciding on what information would not be included in the research study. The scale of the bullying issue provided many other things to consider such as school violence and Internet safety for children, but those were eliminated as they did not connect with the role of the librarian. The limitations of the study also include the limited amount of time given for this study. With a topic like bullying, much can be reviewed and researched; however, with a time frame of two to three semesters, much of that information had to be narrowed and at times discarded so that the study could have a focus. The results of this study provide the reader with an indication of bullying and its types along with a myriad of resources and activities librarians use to help a school community in curbing bullying behavior.

Definition of Terms

Assistant bystander – a bystander who joins in with the bully and helps the bully
Blog – a short journal organized by threads that can be shared by multiple people
Bully – one who behaves unpleasantly towards others to gain power or to intimidate
Bullying – tormenting others physically or through verbal abuse
Bystander - an individual who is not the bully but is a part of the bullying situation, intentionally or unintentionally
Cyberbullying – bullying done via a form of technology, i.e. cell phone, email, social network, etc.
Defender bystander – a bystander who tries to stop the bullying and soothes the victim
Formspring – a Web site that allows users to answer questions about other members
Hazing – a voluntary type of bullying where a group torments an individual in order for the individual to change or fit in

Instant message – an email style of communication done on the computer through short messages sent back and forth

Message board – a Web site where threads of comments are posted for other users or members to see

Oddball – a student who views the world differently and sees each day as a new adventure

Outsider bystander – a bystander who does not side with the bully or the victim but allows the bullying to happen

Process drama – the use of a young adult novel dealing with an issue such as bullying that can be used to create spontaneous responses

Reader’s theater – an original script to be acted out by students

Reinforcer bystander – a bystander who encourages the bully with feedback but does not attack the victim

Social network – a Web site where one can provide personal information, post information, and hold conversations with others

Text message – a short message sent from a cell phone

Twitter – a type of social network where one can post short updates

Research Design

The research study reviewed previously published information pertaining to bullies, school violence, and cyberbullying. No original research was conducted. Instead, existing literature related to the topic was collected and reviewed for the purpose of this study. At no time were there attempts to create new research or to examine existing data, privately or publicly held that would demand any type of permission.
Articles were retrieved from the following databases: *Library Literature and Information Science Full Text; ProQuest Central; Academic Search Complete; Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts; Education Research Complete;* and *ERIC.* The researcher also searched for blogs on bullying as well as news articles from *The New York Times* on bullying incidents. Search terms included: “bully,” “bullying,” “school violence,” “cyberbullying,” “bullying in schools,” “school libraries,” “librarian,” “library media specialists,” “school safety.”

In reading these articles, the researcher collected and used additional keywords to search in the databases. The researcher read the articles and then used information to investigate other parts of the topic, which allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the topic. The researcher also used the keywords listed at the beginning of each article to help in searching for more information.

**Conclusion**

This study includes three chapters which together address how librarians can positively impact and prevent bullying in schools. Chapter 1 introduces the topic and provides a glossary of terms. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature related to the topic. Chapter 3 contains answers to the research questions presented in chapter 1.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Millions of students enter the doors of school buildings every day. Students have the expectation of feeling safe, secure, and free to be whom they want to be when they walk into school each day. However, more students than educators are aware of walk through the doors of their school bracing themselves for the physical and verbal taunts that come their way. Students from elementary to high school deal daily with the torment of bullies without other students, parents, and school officials realizing the behavior or coming to the aid of the victim (Barnard 33). It is the responsibility of the librarian to make a significant impact on curbing bullying in schools. A librarian can provide programs and literature for students and teachers on how to positively curb the extent of bullying in and out of schools. Many states and school districts have programs in place to deal with features of bullying. This research discusses what bullying is, including the types of bullying, and the relationship between violence and bullying.

First, literature that deals with the realities and challenges students face as victims, bullies, and bystanders of bullying are discussed. As technology becomes more prevalent, cyberbullying is expanding to be a major type of bullying amongst all students. The second section describes how librarians and teachers are learning what cyberbullying is, how to spot this type of bullying, and the laws against and actions to take to reduce the amount. Finally, the review presents ways librarians help students and school staff battle and prevent bullying.
School Violence and Bullying

Bullies and bullying have been a part of the school environment since the beginning of education. A bully behaves unpleasantly, usually with abuse, towards others by way of power and intimidation. A bully torments others physically or by means of verbal abuse (“Bully.” Def 1 and 2). Bullying occurs at all levels of education and at any time during the school day. When librarians are aware of the types of bullying, know what to look for and ways to mediate and help, they have a positive impact on reducing the amount of bullying. This section provides a definition of bullying and the types of bullying that are identified. Next, the relationship between violence and bullying is described including school violence and nonviolent bullying. Finally, this section discusses the need for educators to be involved and how that looks.

Definition

Bullying appears in a variety of forms. For example, physical violence, gossip, and taunts are forms of bullying. Merriam-Webster defines a bully as a person who intimidates, abuses, and coerces others through various forms of abuse and force (“Bully.” Def. 1 and 2). Bullying leads to predatory behavior, which creates a power imbalance (Barnard 33). Bullies might torment their victims in a subtle manner; many times this is done without witnesses and without adult witnesses (Barnard 33). Bullies make snide comments in passing; adults have no idea it is happening.

In 2009, roughly 160,000 kids per day skipped school because of fear of attack or intimidation from a bully, while 66% of 37 school shootings from 1974 to 2000 were led by a student who felt he or she was bullied (Barnard 33). Some of the main triggers for teen suicide include social rejection, teasing, and bullying. About 20% of high school students have thought of committing suicide within a 12 month span (Barnard 33-34). Bullying is becoming widespread in schools and considered an undesirable behavior (Rayner 117).
The definition of bullying also includes the effect it has on a child. Bullying is more than innocent teasing, as it has an increasing effect on a victim’s mind. Both the victim and the bully suffer lasting effects (Barnard 33). Children, especially teens, are not emotionally developed enough to figure out healthy solutions to bullying. Because of this immature development, teenagers need lessons on how to work out a resolution to bullying. These lessons come from the adults in the lives of the students, including the librarian. In his review of the book Bullying in Schools and What To Do About It, by K. Rigby, Stephen Rayner describes bullying as a weed that returns each year in the places that are neglected and badly managed (117). If it is removed one year, a year later it appears somewhere else and more work is required to prevent a significant return (Rayner 117).

Types of bullying

Bullying has become diverse enough to take on multiple varieties. “Bullying takes on many shapes and sizes” (Barnard 33). Bullying might be either a physical attack or mean gossiping. It is face-to-face tormenting or relentless cyberbullying (Barnard 33). One form of bullying is evident in the Tyler Clementi case, discussed in more depth later. Rutgers student, Dharun Ravi, set up his Web camera to record his roommate, Tyler Clementi and Clementi’s boyfriend. Ravi said he was keeping an eye on his belongings (““Times Topics””). However, Ravi set up the camera several more times along with sending out text messages and Twitter feeds commenting about watching when Clementi and his boyfriend were having sexual encounters. Ravi’s bullying lead to Clementi taking his life out of feeling abused because of his sexuality. Ravi was charged with 15 counts, including bias intimidation, which is a “hate crime that was based on the victim’s sexual orientation” (“Times Topics”). This case is discussed in more detail in the Nonviolent Bullying and Ways of Cyberbullying sections of this paper.
Bullying is also evident in other forms such as hazing, as seen in the Robert Champion case. Robert Champion, drum major at Florida A&M University, died of “hemorrhagic” shock after a hazing incident. Champion had willingly allowed his fellow band mates to ridicule him by beating him about the chest and abdomen. Champion collapsed on a bus parked at an Orlando hotel even though he had been healthy previously and had marched during a football game hours before (Schwartz A19). Hazing is seen as a ritual in groups such as college bands and Greek organizations. Hazing is voluntary; however, it is bullying in that it is physically intimidating another to act differently, to act the way the group prefers.

A significant goal in education is to teach students how to solve problems in the real world. It is believed that once students leave the world of education and enter the world outside of school, they have the knowledge of how to logically figure out solutions to their problems. In that regard, adults believe that bullying is just a way of life, a rite of passage (Barnard 33). Children grow up and learn how to figure out their own problems so that they become well-rounded adults. Everyone has been bullied in some fashion, and bullying is a part of life and school (Barnard 33). Because bullying appears to be a part of life, adults believe that bullying does not leave lasting effects; it is just teasing (Barnard 33). Because of the idea of fitting in socially, American culture educates children and teenagers not to tell on other children; therefore, if the victim of bullying or an adult does not report any type of bullying, then it is not considered important (Barnard 33).

**Relationship between Violence and Bullying**

Violent bullying ranges from hardly noticeable to very serious. Violent bullying might be a threat to harm or might mean physically beating up another daily. Being violent while bullying is a way to intimidate the victim. Educators and students understand that violence is a grim reality of bullying (Barron). The response to bullying depends on the victim. Some victims of
bullying fear going to school; others fake an illness or make up a reason to avoid the attacks and taunts of bullies (Baer 79). However, some responses to bullying are violent. Violent responses to bullying include attacks by bullies, victims retaliating by hurting the bully or others, or victims hurting themselves. Even if the bullying is considered nonviolent, victims might resort to violence on themselves to feel more in control or to end the pain. In her article “Cyberbullying: From Playground to Computer,” Tara Anderson mentions that in the United Kingdom 16 children per year commit bullycide, suicide brought on by bullying (26).

Bullying seems to be a phenomenon that only happens in elementary, middle, or high school. Bullying is thought to end when students enter college or the workforce. College students, for example, are thought to be mature; however, hazing, used by college groups, marching bands, and social organizations, is considered a form of bullying. Merriam-Webster defines “to haze” as harassment in terms of demanding unnecessary work through ridicule or criticism (“Haze.” Def. 1a, 1b, and 2).

Stereotypically, bullies are seen as larger individuals picking on the small, frail kids; however, the violence of hazing shows a side of bullying that is not seen as often. Hazing shows bullying as way of fitting in (Ghatt). Young people are vulnerable to the group culture and often think bullying, in this case hazing, is something they are required to do to be a part of the group (Ghatt). Hazing is defined as a way to be a part of the group. However, it is bullying as it often involves physically harming another person.

**Violence and bystanders**

Bullying also is a group phenomenon. Members involved in bullying either are active participators or bystanders unable or unwilling to help or take an active role in the bullying (Baer 80). Bystanders are rarely viewed as participating in bullying. Many times, bystanders are referred to as blameless and are considered merely witnesses to violent acts of bullying (Baer
But bystanders have a specific role in school violence and bullying, and though they are not actively involved in a situation, bystanders are powerful agents of behavior (Baer 80).

According to Baer, there are four types of bystander. Assistant bystanders join in and assist the bully, where reinforcer bystanders do not actively attack but provide encouraging feedback to the bully (Baer 80). Outsider bystanders do not take sides and stay away but allow the bullying to continue through silent approval. Defender bystanders show anti-bullying behavior, placate the victim, and try to stop the bullying (Baer 80). Even though it seems that bystanders are often on the negative side of bullying, they are able to use their power positively. Administrators and other staff, librarians included, do not always know when bullying occurs, whereas bystanders are participants in the bullying. Even though bystanders are seen as negative, bystanders are able to use their power, as they are a large group, to positively stop bullying and influence the outcome (Baer 80).

**Nonviolent Bullying**

Nonviolent bullying is different from violent bullying in that it does no physical harm to the victim during the course of the bullying. Bullies make comments about another student’s appearance or behavior, which leads to that student having anxiety, self-loathing, or feeling alienated. Nonviolent bullying was evident in the case of Tyler Clementi. Clementi’s college roommate at Rutgers, Dharun Ravi, secretly used a Web camera to record and then stream live to fellow undergraduates a romantic and sexual encounter between Clementi and another man over the Internet (“Times Topics”). In March 2012, Ravi was found guilty for tampering with evidence, invasion of privacy, a cover-up, attempted invasion of privacy as he tried to use the Web camera a second time and announced it over Twitter (“Times Topics”). The prosecutors in the case argued that Ravi’s frequent messages about Clementi’s sexuality proved he was upset about having a gay roommate. The jury concluded that Clementi had reason to believe he had
been targeted because he was gay, and that Ravi had known Clementi would feel intimidated by Ravi’s actions (“Times Topics”). The nonviolent bullying did not stop at the use of the Web camera; it included text messages to friends encouraging them to watch the live stream from the Web camera and boasting through Twitter about using a Web camera to catch Clementi with another man (“Times Topics”). Ravi also used Twitter to vent about Clementi’s encounters, which Clementi checked often before his suicide (“Times Topics”). Nonviolent bullying appears to be innocent and perhaps unintentional; however, as this case illustrates, it is still unpleasant and threatening behavior.

**Involvement of Educators**

Educators wear many hats while creating a learning environment for students; one of those hats is to provide a safe environment in which to learn, where bullying does not exist. Educators are responsible to take every reasonable precaution to assure that students feel safe in school (Barron). Allowing bullying to happen is not providing students a safe environment for learning. Educators help students understand that, even as students, they make a difference and are important parts of a school safety program (Barron). Involving students in keeping schools safe empowers them to feel more comfortable in confronting bullies.

Educators can involve themselves by following simple ideas when it comes to children, bullying, and the violence that follows. Being aware of the behavior of students as well as talking with students allows educators to notice and pick up on signs of bullying or potential violence (Barron). Schools can create support groups prior to violent acts to learn intervention and support skills (Baer). Schools can create plans that involve all school members in awareness experiences related to elements of violence (Barron). Awareness experiences are situations that prepare students on what to do if there is a violent act while at school. Talks to students about having a real voice in school life can also help.
Many states create laws to combat bullying in schools. In January 2012, New Jersey enacted one of the nation’s toughest laws against bullying and harassment in schools (Pérez-Peña A18). The law spells out a list of requirements that include appointing specific people to run anti-bullying programs to training staff including teachers and administrators (Perez-Pena A18). Forty-five states have laws against bullying with New Jersey becoming the fifth state to implement a new one in 2012 (Perez-Pena A18).

**Cyberbullying**

As technology becomes more and more widespread and the forms of technology become more extensive, bullying does not stop once victims step away from the scene. Cyberbullying is a fast growing form of bullying (Cart 34). Cyberbullying offers no escapes; it spreads virally and chases victims. Bullies have the advantage of attacking their victims while in the privacy of their homes and bedrooms; bullies can reach victims anytime the victim is on his or her cell phone or on the computer. A report published by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children revealed a sample of teens and children who use the Internet and showed that 1 in 17 children felt they were threatened or harassed on the Internet (Oxley). Many threats involve intent to harm a child or his or her friends. Since cyberbullying is a continuous experience, society is beginning to move away from the idea that bullying is a part of life for children, as the profound damage of cyberbullying is being understood (Anderson 24). Cyberbullying is making educators aware that bullying is not just a phase. This section begins with a definition of cyberbullying and those involved in cyberbullying. Next, the ways of cyberbullying are described followed by the laws against cyberbullying.
Preventing Bullying

Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying requires the use of communication through technologies such as email, text messages, instant messaging, and Web sites to support repetitive, hostile, and purposeful behavior by one person or a group of people to hurt others (Anderson 24). Cyberbullying uses the Internet along with other mobile devices to post or send hurtful or cruel text and images to torment others (Frederick 44). Cyberbullying is considered a new form of bullying; it is emerging as children become much more proficient in computer and cell phone use (Anderson 24). Bullies take real or fabricated personal information and twist it to turn it against a victim, either by detailing a physical insufficiency or spreading a secret (Cyber-Bullying).

Cyberbullying is compelling because of its anonymity. Victims of cyberbullying are not always aware of their bully, especially if a group of people is bullying one person. Cyberbullying is practically impossible to avoid since it uses a variety of technological methods.

With the anonymity of the Internet, bullies say things to a person they might not say when in physical proximity to the victim (Diamanduros 36). Cyberbully is ambiguous; victims are unaware if their bully is a friend or a stranger or if there are multiple bullies (Anderson 26). Not being sure of who is bullying them, victims feel suspicious of others and confused; threats made anonymously can be more frightening for a child than those made in person. Because cyberbullying does not physically harm a child, is not face-to-face, and does not rely on physical size, some skeptics believe that it is not as harmful or damaging. However, what people do not see is that cyberbullying damages victims psychologically. Cyberbullying occurs any time of the day, tormenting victims without reprieve (Frederick 44). In 2010, a few estimates stated that eighty-five percent of middle school children have been cyberbullied (Diamanduros 36). Aggressive online actions are as hurtful as physical altercations because victims might
experience anxiety, low self-esteem, and hopelessness (Anderson 26). There are instances, as in the Clementi case, where cyberbullying has consequences like suicide and physical violence.

Face-to-face bullying has a boundary because the bully and the victim are in physical proximity to each other, which is not the case with cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has the added effect of not ending when the victim and bully are not near each other; it reaches into the privacy of the victim’s home (Anderson 26). One way victims combat against cyberbullying is by staying offline for a while or changing their email address or screen names. Technology is becoming an important and vital part of teens’ lives. Teens strive for social acceptance and not being able to communicate with friends through email, text messages, and social networks make teens feel alienated (Anderson 26). Parents have the comfort of being able to call a child on a cell phone, but this allows bullying to be a constant threat (Anderson 26). Those comments, posts, and pictures that bullies make are always around. Students often forget, or do not care that comments and images made online are viewable by hundreds and thousands (Oxley). Children do not understand that when something is posted, it is online longer than it took to post that image or comment.

Cyberbullying seems different from traditional bullying; however, it is similar in that it is relentless and unwanted (Media Awareness Network). Victims avoid telling parents and teachers, fearing this won’t stop the abuse (Anderson 26). Victims see parents and school staff as ineffective because it is becoming more common for children to know more about technology than adults. Bullies feel invincible since authority figures are not able to trace them or stop the torment (Anderson 26). Without the security or knowledge that cyberbullying can be stopped, victims feel more alone and vulnerable. The Internet is a perfect tool for harassing others as it is widely distributed. When more people are involved, the likelier a bystander is to join in the bullying; this increases the volume of the bullying (Media Awareness Network). If the bullying
is public for others to see, other students insert themselves to join in the bullying because they want to feel a part of something. Those comments and posts made by the bullying were meant primarily for the victim but instead create a larger bullying situation.

**Cyberbullying Participants**

Children of all ages experience bullying or teasing of some kind, however, not all children experience cyberbullying. The largest group to experience cyberbullying consists of older children and teens who are left alone at the computer more often than younger kids. Also many younger children do not know how to use services like chat programs and email (Anderson 25). Teens are more concerned with privacy; they want to be their own person. Teen also may have communication that they do not want adults to see. Parents try to respect that privacy in terms of email and text messages (Anderson 25). Not only do teens want to be respected when it comes to their privacy, they also have a desire to be accepted socially. Teens begin to shift from focusing on their family to focusing on their friends, which means they are less able to resist responding to mean messages from bullies (Anderson 25). Teens respond to cyberbullying or join in cyberbullying from fear of being excluded socially. Because of the concern of being socially accepted by others, teens are more vulnerable to cyberbullying, especially since they rely on technology for that social acceptance (Anderson 25).

Because of the increase of technology in homes and in the hands of children, cyberbullying can happen to anyone. In cyberbullying, often the victim and the bully are both quiet and clever about the abuse when it happens. Adults are unaware any tormenting is happening in the lives of their children (Anderson 25). In a few cases, the bully is clever enough to convince teachers and adults that he or she is the victim, which puts the real victim in trouble (Anderson 25). When a victim retaliates with words or actions, the bully turns those behaviors
around to make it appear as if the bully is the one attacked. This makes the victim look more like a bully and protects the real bully.

The targets of bullies might be honest, intelligent, respectful people who believe in fair play and integrity and desire to avoid violence (Anderson 25). These types of children are targets more because their response is to talk to a bully fairly; the bully uses this to exploit the victim negatively (Anderson 25). Bullies believe that they are stronger than their victims. Bullies use any piece of vulnerable information against their victims to make them feel weaker (Anderson 25). Some people believe that bullies act aggressively to overcompensate for low self-esteem and weakness. However, many times bullies are already socially dominant and use their bullying to protect their power (Anderson 25). By identifying those involved in bullying, educators, librarians included, are able to be more aware of bullying and have more of an impact in curbing it.

Ways of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying provides multiple ways of attacking victims. Instant messaging combines instant communication with the style of email; this type provides a breeding ground for mean and obscene messages to be sent (Anderson 24-25). Bullies also insert derogatory remarks on social networks for anyone to read. They create false profiles to insult victims (Anderson 25). Text messaging creates a mobile method for bullies to attack other children. Bullies just need a phone number to send a threat at anytime (Anderson 25). Email bullying seems to be an easy way to cyberbully as it is often difficult to prove who wrote the message (Anderson 25). Even though it is easy to trace an IP address, finding out who actually wrote the email may prove more difficult. Bullies create false email accounts in order to remain ambiguous; more than one bully is able to use that account so that the victim is unaware of the true bully.
Cyberbullying in groups has also become a prevalent issue. This type of cyberbullying is seen through Web sites and message boards. Bullies create a free Web site or message board that is completely devoted to the harassment of another student (Anderson 25). This type of bullying is group bullying. A message board or Web site is set up as a club against the victim. Members can take turns posting comments about the victim where the “club” members, along with the victim, can see. Through the use of a Web site or message board, the feeling of bullying in a group is created which allows a multitude of students to post harmful thoughts or gang up against another child (Anderson 25). A link to the Web site or message board is sent anonymously to the victim as well as other children, which encourages them to visit the site. Similar to creating lists and groups to ridicule students, blogs allow a bully to write belittling thoughts about a victim (Anderson 25). Bullies use victims’ blogs against them by posting rude comments or taking a victim’s comment out of context or quoting the victim’s thoughts and comments on a bully’s Web site or message board (Anderson 25).

Social network sites can easily be traced. In Tyler Clementi’s case, much of the convincing evidence for the jury came from the “pixilated paper trail” that followed Dharun Ravi (Halbfinger A18). Ravi’s online actions and bullying against Clementi helped to prove his guilt. Even Clementi’s own complaints online and online behavior helped convince the jury of Ravi’s guilt. Ravi’s jury members hope others understand that tweets and text messages are never gone (Halbfinger A18). Tweets, blogs, online comments are seen as bullying when it causes harm to another person. In the Tyler Clementi case, defendant Dharun Ravi was convicted of the invasion of privacy. Ravi faced a possibility of 10 years in prison because he was convicted of a hate crime, bias intimidation, made worse by Clementi’s suicide (Bazelon A27). As of March 2012, Ravi was convicted of all 15 charges and received 30 days in jail (Zernike A22). In May 2012, the judge of Ravi’s case also sentenced him to “300 hours of community service, three years’
Social networks were created as an outlet for young adults to build their lives socially; however, social networks, like Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, have also become avenues for bullies to abuse and attack their victims. However, bullies do not realize the effect words have on their victims (Donovan 28). Social network sites are beginning to realize the bullying that is happening; many are introducing anti-bullying tools. Facebook improved their safety center, which includes more tools to report bullying (Vu). Vu states that Facebook is popular with bullies because they can create groups to target individuals or other groups. The changes made to Facebook to report bullying behavior provide more options for victims. Formspring, a site that allows users to answer anonymous questions, is also popular for aggressive and bullying behavior (Vu). Formspring is an application used through Facebook where members can ask friends and others questions and learn more about them. This site has a safety section, which also includes links on how to deal with bullying along with safety advice and tools. Social networks are taking actions to combat bullying. By taking these steps, it is showing the world that bullying behavior is not acceptable.

**Actions and Laws against Cyberbullying**

Laws are created to protect people in a society; without laws schools and victims are helpless to fight cyberbullying. There are no federal laws that discuss cyberbullying; states have their own laws that deal with the issue (*Cyber-Bullying*). School personnel feel like they cannot do anything because the abuse is happening off of school property or outside of school hours (Anderson 26). However, some states instituted legislation against cyberbullying, which holds
school personnel responsible for creating safe learning environments. This learning environment extends to the cyber world and the dangers of this medium (Mason 66). Georgia’s House Bill 927 (2009) expands the definition of bullying to include cyberbullying and permits schools to separate the bully from the victim by placing the bully in a school outside of the attendance area (Diamanduros 36). Georgia’s House Bill 310 (2011) defines acts that use computers and electronics as forms of bullying even if the acts did not originate on school property or with school computers, as long as the bullying is directed toward a student or school personnel (Diamanduros 36-37). Georgia is not the only state to create cyberbullying laws. Arkansas created Arkansas’ ACT 115, An Act to Define Bullying and to Include Cyberbullying in Public School District Anti-bullying Policies (Diamanduros 37). This law allows schools to address cyberbullying that starts off school property (Diamanduros 37). Laws are created for bullying to support schools in all bullying situations.

If there is no state law, schools have steps they can take against cyberbullying at the district level. This starts with an Acceptable Use Policy. In this policy, schools make sure there are statements requiring students not to post information about other students, especially if the information is hurtful or false (Frederick 44). This policy often includes a restriction on posting personal information. Including in a school policy that Internet use is supervised and monitored and searches are done of online activity helps deter students from bullying (Willard 55). Most schools have a policy on using the Internet and the actions that are taken if that use is violated. However, a policy that protects students from dangerous online practices maximizes access to safe use of online tools in the classroom and library (Jansen 51). Schools also have policies on harassment and bullying in student handbooks, which might also specify punishments (Cyber-Bullying). With these policies in place, there is a connection between the school and the bullying; the school has the ability to interfere (Mason 67). However, some schools decide to
move the responsibility away from the school. Schools create extensive parental permission methods to move the accountability for inappropriate Web use from the school to the student and the parent (Hamilton 28). Schools push this responsibility to parents and students to keep from having to deal with the issue.

Students are not always aware of the policies that are set. In order to make sure everyone is aware of the policies, it is recommended that policies and procedures be posted on school Web sites, on library Web sites, at computers, and on bulletin boards in the library (McPherson). Librarians are not always prepared for how to deal with bullying either in person or by hearing about it. Creating a library policy and guidelines on bullying is a tool to deal with incidents and their consequences (McPherson).

**Actions to Take to Prevent Cyberbullying**

It is easy to tell children to ignore a bully, even a cyberbully. Teachers, parents, and other adults believe that children are able to control the cyber world (Mason 68). Simply turning off the computer or phone stops the bullying, but that deprives victims of their social network and makes them feel alienated (Anderson 26). It is not easy to stop using these technologies as young adults are constantly around technology in the form of a phone or computer. Teens are becoming more technology-savvy as it is more prevalent in their lives than it has been in the past. However, technology makes cyberbullying easier to document as victims can take screen shots of text messages on phones or a posting on a social network. Some steps are easy to follow for victims to protect themselves. Children learn that only certain people are allowed to know their phone number or email (Media Awareness Network). Victims are instructed to take the time to document all communication made by the bully, as documentation is used later when presenting evidence of the bullying to school officials or law enforcement (Anderson 26).
Saving chat histories, printing out messages, and doing screen captures on chat activity is crucial in making a case against a bully (*Cyber-Bullying*).

Children do have the ability to take steps to protect themselves. Victims block users on chat programs or change email addresses, along with controlling who receives new information (Anderson 26). Children are able to block numbers on cell phones and remove text messaging. Victims of bullying need resources such as lessons from the librarian on how to protect themselves while using technology, to make good choices online, and to have the spirit to respond to those who try to hurt them (Frederick 45).

 Victims do not always believe adults understand their problems. However, telling a trusted adult about a cyberbullying problem is a step in stopping the behavior (Media Awareness Network). Librarians are available to teach students steps to take to be actively involved in curbing bullying. Steps are available to victims so that they fight against being victims of cyberbullying, which a librarian is qualified to present to students. Children are discouraged from responding to cyberbullies since bullies crave attention (*Cyber-Bullying*).

There are ways to identify a cyberbully. Authorities such as police or a school technology coordinator are able to identify a person through an Internet service provider, which then allows the victim to file complaints (*Cyber-Bullying*). School districts also have a responsibility to intervene, especially if the bullying is happening through a school district network. Even if there are no policies in place, it is important for school administrators to be aware of the problem (*Cyber-Bullying*). Other adults to consider making aware of a problem are the cyberbully’s parents, who have the ability to intervene. Librarians are available to encourage these steps. Parents and teachers, along with the librarian, help reduce the danger by monitoring online behavior of children as well as looking for sudden changes in children’s attitude towards the Internet (Anderson 26).
School officials might use a checklist that focuses on issues related to cyberbullying in order to evaluate curriculum and school climate. Drs. Justin Patchin and Sameer Hinduja created the report card that they use in their workshops about cyberbullying. The report card has six sections and a section titled “Other Areas” for school officials, such as principals, to fill in (Hinduja). The sections on the report card are: General Assessment, School Climate/Culture, Curriculum and Education, Cyberbullying Response, Policies, and Technology. Each section has statements that school principals and other school authorities address to check if they are prepared for cyberbullying concerns. School officials answer each question with a “yes,” “no,” or “don’t know;” if they check the “no” or “don’t know,” they know they have work to do (Hinduja). By using this type of report card, librarians, along with other members of the school staff, have a straightforward way to check the school climate and work towards ending bullying.

**Librarians Prevent Bullying**

The role of a librarian changes day to day. Librarians are teachers, guides, and experts, so there is more to the librarian’s job than weeding out unnecessary books, keeping the library clean, and creating wikis and Web sites. Librarians have the unique role in schools to allow students to be who they want, and to encourage students to not tolerate bullying. A librarian spends time with students in an environment that is different than the classrooms and hallways (Jones 81). Librarians are not necessarily limited to getting through a lesson or curriculum. Librarians have the flexibility to be open to students and their needs as they interact with students when they search for information on topics of their choice. As librarians observe students while in the library, those observations help in giving the librarian an idea on what is going on with the student (Adams 34). If librarians increase the understanding of the problem of bullying, that is an initial step in building a better management of the behavior (Rayner 117). As discussed next, librarians are expected to collaborate with teachers to improve student
achievement and to reverse bullying behavior through the integration of lessons on the proper
use of technology and through providing access to quality collections (Jones 78). Next in the
section is a discussion of how books lead to conversation and conversation can lead to action on
bullying. For example, by suggesting a book to read to combat bullying encourages
communication on the issue (Jones 81). Finally, ways that librarians fight bullying using student
performances and videos are also discussed.

**Lessons to Prevent Cyberbullying**

Librarians are the information experts for their schools. Librarians have the job of
teaching students and teachers about the ethical and correct way of finding, using, and presenting
information. It is the responsibility of librarians to mentor children in socially beneficial ways
(Anderson 27). Having librarians involved in addressing cyberbullying is essential. Students
normally engage in casual Internet use when in the library with librarian supervision (Willard
56). While in the library, librarians are able to detect cyberbullying incidents on library
computers if they occur. Librarians can then inform teachers, administrators, and parents on
issues regarding the Web if necessary (Willard 56). Including other adults is necessary to help
combat bullying in any situation. Librarians are seen as advocates in fighting cyberbullying.
They work with teachers to teach about what cyberbullying is and what to do about it (Frederick
45).

Students often do not feel comfortable reporting when being bullied, so it is important to
show them ways to not only feel more comfortable reporting bullying. Through library lessons
students learn how to combat cyberbullying. Students do not have the experience to evaluate
how to act or respond to bullying issues that come up (Patton 3). Librarians use a variety of
approaches to help prevent inappropriate situations. For example, librarians start conversations
with students about the ethical use of the tools in a digital world (Patton 3). Other approaches
include physically monitoring students working on library computers, conducting lessons on the ethical use of the Internet, including include links and information on cyberbullying on the library media center Web site, and letting students know they are trusted to do the right thing (Jansen 49-50).

If the district has an Acceptable Use Policy in place, librarians are able to review it with students, explaining it, and having students sign it. If there is no policy for cyberbullying, librarians have the resources to develop a policy. Starting a search at the state level creates a springboard for creating an up-to-date cyberbullying policy (Diamanduros 37). Cyberbullying policies have key components to consider such as definitions, complaint procedures, consequences of behavior, and steps to take after an incident has occurred. A library policy serves to remind students that the Internet at the school is for instruction and not for personal use (Willard 55).

Librarians use Web 2.0 tools to promote awareness of cyberbullying. Video clips and public service announcements show the power of words and engage students in discussions about cyberbullying (Diamanduros 37). Developing projects through wikis or blogs promote awareness as well. These tools provide students a voice in discussing how negative comments and spreading rumors is inappropriate and degrading, and there are consequences to such actions (Diamanduros 37).

Librarians are in unique positions; they are able to teach how to use the Internet along with dangers to anticipate (Panter 33). Librarians do not always come into contact with every student in the school building, but working and collaborating on lessons with teachers is an effective way of making all students and teachers aware of cyberbullying (Diamanduros 37). Teachers working with librarians create a deeper awareness, as these two groups are share what they know about the impact of cyberbullying and how to respond to it (Diamanduros 37).
Teaching parents is another way librarians are active in preventing cyberbullying. Librarians teach parents lessons about Internet safety and how to establish rules and a code of conduct for Internet use at home (Diamanduros 38). A code of conduct includes information about appropriate online behavior, limiting online socializing, and communication on cyberbullying incidents (Diamanduros 38).

Technology is not to blame for cyberbullying; librarians and other adults have the knowledge and experience to help students place their online experiences and actions in a real world context (Media Awareness Network). If librarians are responsible for instructing students on Internet safety and Internet use, creating workshops on online behavior and cyberbullying is important (Willard 56). Librarians are the information professionals and understand the power that comes with information. It is their responsibility to keep students safe online (Hamilton 28). It is wise for students to learn the ethical ways of Internet use, from learning that they need an adult with them while using the computer in kindergarten, to understanding the dangers of cyberbullying in late elementary to middle school and into high school. Librarians raise awareness of staying safe while using the Internet (Panter 32). They constantly stress the importance of students carefully protecting themselves while using technology and guarding against providing too much information online. Anything that is posted on the Internet has a life of its own and winds up in unexpected places (Patton 3). As librarians plan lessons on technology, it is wise to include information on how to treat other students with respect. Many times respect is lost in the shuffle when online exchanges become heated and intense (Patton 3). Words have power, and the effect of words lasts longer to the person on the other side of the screen (Patton 3).

Using Books to Prevent Bullying
As librarians become more involved in curbing the amount of bullying in schools, they are going to need tools. One powerful tool at the disposal of librarians is literature. By bringing literature to the forefront, librarians are able to enrich lessons by discussing the perspectives on bullying the stories provide for readers (Baer 79). Works written about bullies for young adults either reinforce the bully or defend the victim. Both are useful to provide lessons to readers and help them understand they are in a position to stop bullying and violence (Baer 80). Literature that discusses violence is needed, as books can address the issues honestly and realistically. Literature gives readers the experience of compassion and sympathy (Cart 33). Books create a world for readers that normally are not available. Books take readers into the intimate lives of characters and show what is happening to the characters. More importantly, books show the characters’ feelings (Cart 33). Students learn through literature that they are not alone in their feelings and problems (Kolencik 28). Students see themselves in other characters or see their friends in the characters. Literature helps students empathize and find ways to deal with or combat their problems (Kolencik 28).

At times, librarians are asked to suggest books for students by teachers who witness disturbing student behavior. Librarians suggest literature which focuses on self-reliance and skills those students use during trying times, like when being bullied (Kolencik 28). These books become catalysts for expanding students’ resiliency to the realities they are facing while at the same time encouraging reading skills (Kolencik 28). Using books can help students deal with sensitive and challenging issues. Victims of bullying and bystanders use books to find ways of dealing with a bully as well as to give them encouragement on getting through the tough situation of bullying. Reading books provide situations that victims are experiencing and showing them how not to behave. Bullies do not always identify themselves as a bully; however, a librarian may suggest a book for a classroom if bullying is suspected in the classroom.
Reading a book about bullying, especially from the point of view of a victim, could lead a bully to changing behavior. By using books that discuss bullying, peer acceptance, and school violence, libraries are transformed into communities that encourage students to be empathetic and self-confident (Kolencik 28). Books allow students to learn about themselves whether they are dealing with bullying or see bullying, so they learn how to positively deal with it.

Oddballs are those students that see the world with a different view and approach each day with a sense of adventure. These students are often the targets of bullying. Students who are inventive and improvisers are oblivious to the mainstream and seem out of turn with their peers (Zingher). Oddball students are true to themselves and different, and that rubs their peers the wrong way. Other students find peers like these oddball students to be peculiar. Gary Zingher describes two picture book protagonists in his essay “Oddball Kids,” Velvet from *Odd Velvet* and Wesley from *Westlandia*. Velvet’s classmates find her odd; it bothers them that she wears an old, ordinary dress on the first day of school and that she brings her lunch in a paper bag rather than in a colorful lunchbox. Velvet does not have the need to be more than who she is. Velvet’s words are rich and poetic; and through her imagery she begins to connect with her classmates (Zingher). His peers antagonize Wesley because he does not conform, dress like them, or eat what they eat. As a summer project, Wesley decides to create his own food coop. He also creates a civilization where he creates an original alphabet and number system (Zingher). His tormentors are curious and wonder what this weird guy is up to. He teaches his classmates games that require agility and balance. When Wesley returns to school, he returns as a leader with kids following him in Wesley style robes and hats (Zingher). His tormentors try to emulate him. Kids like Velvet and Wesley do not always have happy endings. Other kids who do not get to know them and their gifts ignore them. Oddball kids are targeted and teased, or, hopefully, tolerated (Zingher).
At some point, many children think of themselves as different, even those students that appear to be normal and popular. Children have weaknesses and awkward moments; self-esteem is always on the line (Zingher). These troubling feelings are triggered by many reasons such as being new to school, not learning a skill properly, stuttering, being ashamed of a family member, divorce, and much more (Zingher). If a child feels self-conscious, this can cause him or her to be rejected by peers, and the child knows this. Reading about offbeat kids encourages students to accept them, support them, treat them well and fairly, and allows them to be quirky and eccentric themselves (Zingher).

**Using Performance to Prevent Bullying**

Students do not like to be talked down to or preached to. They prefer a straightforward and sometimes active approach in dealing with social issues, like bullying. Librarians with the help of teachers can incorporate process drama, reader’s theater, and videos to spur conversations on bullying, techniques in dealing with bullying, and how to prevent bullying. These are discussed in this section. Process drama works directly with young adult novels about school violence. Process drama participants read the novel and then create unscripted responses to the situations from the book. Students take on multiple perspectives such as students, parents, principals, and respond to the problem. Students then devise an action plan to prevent those types of bullying and violent acts. Librarians can suggest videos to use in classrooms or as a starter to a lesson to get students’ attention and generate discussion. A reader’s theater can be used in a unit on bullying. Reader’s theater is an original piece that acts out a bullying situation that occurs in the library. Each student is given a role such as teacher, bully, victim, bystander, student who helps, and other students. After the librarian discusses what happened and why and how the bullying can be prevented.
Process drama and Reader’s Theatre

Process drama uses young adult novels to involve students in problem solving and role play activity, which encourages spontaneous and imaginary scenes (Baer 83). It can be used to create an understanding of bullying and meaningful ways of teaching how to curb it. In process drama, students take on roles to solve problems. This empowers them to think and act effectively and combat bullying (Baer 79). Process drama can also be used to promote understanding and deal directly with bullying issues. Process drama involves the student participants working directly with a young adult novel with students, taking on different perspectives from the novel (Baer 83). Process drama also includes active thinking strategies. Students make text-to-self and text-to-world connections while being involved in active visualizations (Baer 83).

Using process drama creates a safe place for children to learn about the roles involved in bullying. The situation allows for open dialogue and development of multiple outlooks (Baer 83). Discussion during the process drama uncovers students’ simple yet stereotypical views of what is involved in creating change in schools (Baer 84). Librarians can incorporate process drama into library activities and lessons to help students understand how to think constructively about bullying and its impact on theirs and others’ lives.

Chris Gustafson, a librarian at a middle school in Washington, wrote and produced an original reader’s theater play to promote a series of discussions on bullying (Gustafson 20). Reader’s theater is a performance where participants are given a script to follow created and written by the librarian or classroom teacher. Gustafson based the reader’s theater on observations she made in the library, such as spreading rumors, accusing students doing inappropriate things, and taking students’ property (20). In her reader’s theater, there are six characters: a librarian and five students. One character, Jennifer, is the bully and likes the power she has over others. D’Angelo is a bystander and is adding to the bullying (Gustafson 20). One
character is avoiding the situation and not intervening. Gabe is the victim who knows he needs to assert himself. Dameetra is actively trying to help Gabe (Gustafson 20). After the reader’s theater was complete, Gustafson used a list of discussion questions based on the performance. She finished with the students rating bullying at their school (Gustafson 20).

Videos

When students seem tired of hearing about issues like drugs, bullying, and school violence, they might prefer a simple, tell-it-like-it-is approach to social issues (Wilson 51). One way of doing this is by using videos and documentaries to spur conversations. However, as students use more technology, play more video games, and watch more TV, the videos that librarians suggest and use that are more effective are those that are well produced and polished. Quality videos have the same production values as the music videos and games students watch and play on a regular basis (Wilson 51). Wilson discusses two 20-minute videos about bullying. Instead of having steps on how to respond to bullies, one video turns the tables on two bullies. This video puts two bullies in the shoes of their victims (Wilson 51). These bullies attend another school; they are given nerdy clothes to wear. While at the school, the bullies are teased mercilessly. However, they began to commiserate with students who are normally bullied and who, in the video, mention they have thought of revenge and suicide (Wilson 51). The second video on bullying uses expert advice and real life knowledge and discusses steps students take to positively stop and respond to bullying (Wilson 51). These straightforward videos demonstrate plainly to students that bullying is not accepted. Librarians can use them as introductions to books on bullying and other resources aimed at curbing bullying behavior.

Conclusion

Librarians have a distinctive position to provide the support needed for students and teachers in limiting the amount of bullying seen in schools. This can be done through lessons
taught, books read, process dramas and reader’s theatre, and videos watched. With so many resources and techniques, librarians can step in to demonstrate what schools are able to do to prevent bullying.
CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Education is more than books, projects, and tests. Education also involves learning how to operate in everyday life. Many students learn these operating techniques while in social situations, such as bullying. Bullying in any form shapes students, whether as the bully or the victim. Students learn how to hide and blend in or students learn how to try and dominate over others. Bullying is a phenomenon that is becoming more prevalent and dangerous, and educators are often left not knowing how to help. The librarian is in a position to make a significant, positive impact on preventing and stopping bullying. With this come questions: What is the relationship between school violence and bullying? What is cyberbullying and how can it be prevented? What could a librarian do to help prevent bullying and cyberbullying?

Bullying and School Violence

Bullying takes on different forms such as physically harming another, spreading rumors, or taunting another student via social networks or text messages. Bullying leads to one student having power over another and using that power to intimidate, abuse, and terrorize the victim. Victims of bullying go to extremes to avoid the bully; students will skip school as much as possible to keep away. Victims have also committed suicide to end the torment. Students who are not prepared to handle a bully require lessons on how to behave towards the bully so that the bullying stops. The types of bullying are not limited to physically hurting another person or gossiping and spreading false information. Bullying also includes making another feel insignificant or tormented, which can happen through social media networks, texting, email, and Web cameras. At times, bullying can also be hazing where the person being hazed choses to have this behavior done to them. Victims of bullying let the taunts and teasing go as they feel adults are not capable of helping. Adults see bullying as a way of life as everyone at some point in their life was bullied.
Some types of bullying involve violence. Bullies use violence to intimidate and threaten their victims. Victims use violence as a way of retaliation against bullies and those who let bullying happen. Victims also use violence on themselves to end the suffering. Some students who are bullies will commit bullycide, the suicide of their victim brought on by bullying. Even though nonviolent bullying does not include violence in the bullying process, violence can be a result. Nonviolent bullying includes actions that do not physically harm a victim but do invade privacy and make day-to-day life miserable.

Bullying can be a group phenomenon. Bystanders, those who stand on the sidelines of bullying situations, become a part of the bullying situation whether that was the intention or not. Bystanders have power in a bullying situation. They can encourage the bully, who increases the amount of torment and terror on the victim. Even if bystanders say nothing, it allows the bullying to continue without rest. Bystanders who try to step in and stop the bullying do not have the power to always stop it.

Educators are seen as responsible for making the school a safe environment. Educators can help students understand they can still make a difference and be heard. Being more aware of the type of behavior that is exhibited in bullying allows educators and students to help curb bullying. With students’ help, school officials can create plans that involve all members of the school. These can teach students how to react when there are acts of violence at school and what to look for so that those acts of violence will not happen.

**Preventing Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying has changed the face of bullying. Bullying is not limited to the victim and bully being face-to-face. Cyberbullying provides bullies the advantage of following their victim virally and in the privacy of the victim’s home. Any time the victim is on the computer or a cell phone, the bully can reach the victim. Victims of cyberbullying may not always know who their
bully is. Since cyberbullying is more anonymous and ambiguous, victims are left feeling confused and suspicious, creating anxiety. Cyberbullying requires the use of technology to send or post false, hurtful, or cruel images and messages to harm and terrorize another person. Bullies can use information against the victim; bullies can take real or made-up information and twist it against the victim by spreading rumors or pointing out a flaw in the victim. Even though cyberbullying is not in person, these online actions are just as hurtful, as they cause low self-esteem and hopelessness in the victims.

Older children are more prone to be victims of cyberbullying. Older children are more likely to be left alone with the computer or phone as parents are trying to provide them with more privacy. Because cyberbullying happens through technological avenues, victims are more likely to respond, as not responding could mean a decrease in social status, and technology is the way to be socially accepted. Cyberbullying can happen to anyone; usually both the victim and the bully are secretive about the abuse. Adults are usually unaware that any bullying is happening. Occasionally, the bully makes it seem like he or she is the victim, using the victim’s retaliation as evidence. The victims are not the stereotypical bullying victims; cyberbullying victims are usually respectful and honest and believe in fair play. These types of students are targeted as they try and respond to bullies fairly, which the bully uses against them. Cyberbullies are not always covering up for a weakness, as believed; they may already be socially dominant and want to protect that dominance.

Bullying can happen at any time the victim has a cell phone on. Text messages and instant messages provide immediate communication while on the move. Bullying through email is also an easy way to torment, as victims are not always clear who sent the message. Email bullying episodes could be put together by a group rather than one person, with the bullies creating false email accounts for that purpose. Cyberbullying can also happen in groups through
a message board, blog, or Web site. A bully will set up a Web site or message board that allows access for multiple users, including the victim, and then proceed to post hurtful things against the victim. Bullies also use a victims’ own Web sites or blogs against them by posting mean comments or taking something out of context and twisting it to be hurtful. Social networks, like Facebook, are also becoming avenues of cyberbullying. Bullies post rude comments on victim’s walls and send messages that are hurtful and mean.

Preventing cyberbullying can happen through laws or actions of the school. Laws have been created to fight against cyberbullying at the state level, as there is no federal law. Some states have created laws to hold schools responsible for cyberbullying. State legislation is also created so that schools have a way to fight against cyberbullying. If states do not have laws, schools can still create policies. In these policies, school officials can protect students, as well as themselves, by allowing the officials to step in. Students are required to sign the policy. Policies need to be posted on the school and library Web sites and other areas in the school so that students know what is expected of them.

It might seem hard to prevent cyberbullying, as technology is becoming more a part of students’ lives each day. Asking students to not use phones or computers is not always acceptable, as older children use technology as a social network. Having the victims document any bullying done through technology can prevent cyberbullying. This can be done through screen captures and by backing up chat and email messages. Also students can be taught to recognize when it is appropriate to share personal information such as a phone number or email address. Victims can also block users from their Facebook or email as way to prevent the bullying from continuing. Saving documentation of chats, screen captures, and messages, along with being careful when giving out personal information, can help victims prevent bullying.
Students are often hesitant to report cyberbullying incidents to adults, as they are afraid of sharing other communication they do not want adults to see, as well as being afraid that adults might not be able to help in any way. Involving adults, however, provides a first step in stopping cyberbullying, as adults know more on how to stop the behavior and protect the victim. School officials can also use a checklist to identify if there is a problem in their schools with cyberbullying.

**Solutions from the Library**

Librarians have a unique position to interact with students. They suggest resources for students based on their needs and interests. Librarians also inform students on issues regarding the Web that they may not know. For example, librarians can offer lessons on ways to prevent inappropriate situations caused by posting tasteless comments. One lesson a librarian could provide is on the school’s Internet policy and why it is important to sign and follow. Librarians teach students how to properly use the Internet and the dangers the Internet holds. Along with teaching students, librarians can also teach the parents about Internet safety and how to establish rules at home that keep their children safe.

Librarians can also use books to enrich lessons as well as help students understand how to stop bullying. Books help show students the issues realistically, which helps them experience compassion for those who deal with bullying daily as victims. Books create a world that is not always available for students; those students that do not experience bullying or know that it is going on can see that world through a book. For victims, books can show how to deal with bullying situations and that, as a victim, there are others who experience this problem. Librarians suggest literature that not only helps students deal with bullying but also teaches skills students need, such as how to cope with issues and responses to bullying. Librarians encourage reading, which allows students to accept others and treat them fairly.
Performance in a variety of forms is another tool librarians can use to discuss bullying and teach tools to prevent it. Librarians can incorporate performances during lessons on preventing bullying. These can be a start to conversations. One type of performance is called process drama. Students read a novel that has a topic of school violence brought on by bullying. Students work with this novel and then create imaginary scenes in response to the novel in order to problem solve and promote understanding. During and after the process drama, students create meaningful ways to prevent bullying, which helps them to think and act differently. Process drama creates a safe place for students to learn how to stop bullying.

Another type of performance that librarians use is reader’s theater. Reader’s theater uses an original script created by a librarian or a teacher and performed by students. In reader’s theater, students are able to act out bullying situations that may happen. After reader’s theater, students along with the librarian hold a discussion based on the performance in which they create ways they can stop bullying and consider what to do if they are found in a bullying situation.

The last type of performance that librarians use involves watching videos. Videos could be an initial step in starting the conversations on preventing bullying. Using videos is a simple and time saving approach if they show bullying situations that are realistic. Videos that show student’s bullying situations can also show how to respond to bullying.
Works Cited


