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Laura Jeanette Franco

California State University - San Bernardino, jeanettevillalobos27@yahoo.com

Brenda Maria Miranda

California State University - San Bernardino

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WHAT SOCIAL WORKERS NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Laura Jeanette Franco
Brenda Maria Miranda
June 2015

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Approved by:

Dr. Herb Shon, Faculty Supervisor, Social Work
Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, M.S.W. Research Coordinator

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying (CB) has been a growing concern that has affected students, parents, and professionals in significant ways. One of the main professionals that have been affected by CB are school social workers. The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify what social workers need to know about CB. This study used a qualitative study design because we wanted to obtain an in-depth examination of CB views and beliefs. Data was gathered from 8 middle school teachers, a school principal and a school counselor from a public school in the western region of the United States. In the study participants were interviewed with ten questions focusing on CB.

This study's findings indicated 10 major themes which are the following: almost all participants were able to provide examples of CB occurring in the social networking website Facebook, more than half of all participants could not name any specific CB school policies or laws, the majority of all respondents had distinct views of the protocol for reporting CB, more than half of all the participants had different views of CB symptoms, the respondents were split in half on their beliefs of CB occurring more than traditional bullying, almost all participants believed that this public elementary and middle school took CB seriously, almost all of the teachers were uncertain whether CB was a problem at this public elementary and middle school, almost all of teachers had different ideas for preventing CB, almost all middle school teachers had different ideas for what helping professionals should know about

CB, almost all teachers suggested different ideas for social workers to prevent CB.

Future research should include training for school professionals on how to address CB as our results found that most participants were uncertain as to what to do and thus would be better able to provide suggestions for what social workers should know on CB.

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DEDICATION

Without God in my life, I Brenda could not conceive finishing this research project. He has given me guidance and support in difficult times and has helped me through this challenging process.

This research project is also is dedicated to my mother, Concepcion Miranda and father Francisco Miranda who have always believed and supported me through my educational journey. Thanks mom and dad, your unconditional love and encouragement have always been my best motivators. In addition, to my brother Javier Miranda, sister Monica Miranda, and Niece Yvette Castillo Miranda who I love and care for very much. I hope I can continue to be a good role model and someone to be proud of. I also want to dedicate this research project to all my teachers, mentors, and individuals who have helped me understand what it means to be an effective social work professional. Thank you all and God bless.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, bullying has existed. Bullying is usually seen as intended recurring threatening behavior that is meant to hurt another person (Simmons & Bynum, 2014). In current years, the expansion of technology has introduced us to a new form of bullying, cyberbullying (CB). CB consists of bullying through program technologies such as computers, cell phones, and websites (Belsey, 2004,). This kind of bullying can include online battles, aggravation, haunting, and rejection (Willard, 2007). CB is a growing issue that is touching students, parents, and professionals in extensive ways. One of the professions that has been affected in big ways is social work. A recent study has revealed that approximately half of school social workers feel incompetent to manage CB (Singer & Slovak, 2011). These results are devastating because school social workers are a significant part to school-based mental health services. In order to intervene and prevent CB, school social workers must feel capable to manage it.

Problem Statement

CB is a big concern throughout the world. It is reported that CB has affected nearly 29 percent of young internet consumers (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). CB has generally been seen as worse than regular bullying. This is because it has no control and can occur at any time of the day. Moreover, the

internet gives individuals a chance for anonymity. Anonymity makes it easier for a cyberbully to recurrently bully or attack the victim. CB has negative effects that include “loneliness, anxiety, depression, and somatic symptoms” (Nixon, 2014, p. 143). CB has also been correlated to suicide. One famous case is that of Phoebe Prince. Phoebe Prince was bullied and tormented by other students in person and on Facebook. The bullying and CB led her to commit suicide by hanging herself (Holladay, 2011). This current fatal incident demonstrates the significant devastation that CB is exposing.

Researching this study is important to social work because CB is a recent widespread concern among students, parents, and professionals such as school social workers. The prevalence and severity of CB makes this a significant subject for social workers to focus on at a prevention and intervention level. Although CB can take place at home, the consequences are generally seen at school and can affect a child’s academic performance. When a child is distressed about being cyberbullied, they cannot focus on their studies. Since school social workers provide a large element to mental health services at schools, it is their responsibility to intervene and prevent this issue from arising. The National Association of Social Workers, (NASW) calls social workers to be competent and improve their specialty knowledge (NASW, 2014). According to Singer and Slovaks’ (2011) recent study this is not happening. Currently, half of school social workers feel incompetent to manage CB (Singer & Slovak, 2011). These results are disastrous because

CB is affecting children's lives. If social workers are not competent, they are not adhering to the NASW code of ethics and being the very best social workers that they are called to be.

CB is such a serious issue that state and local legislators have taken steps to prevent it from growing. According to Hinduja and Patchin (2014), all states including the district of Colombia have bullying prevention laws that include electronic harassment (Hinduja&Patchin, 2014). State laws illustrate when cyberbullying is illegal. School personnel can be guided by policies. Nonetheless, a study conducted by Slovak and Singer (2011) demonstrates the opposite. This study has revealed that only "20percent of school social workers believed that their school district had an effective policy on CB" (Slovak & Singer, 2011, p. 3). This shows that school social workers did not find their school polices to be useful for CB.

In addition, there has to be a distinction between the interventions employed for regular bullying and CB. Unlike regular bullying, CB is more probable to happen outside of schools. It can be anonymous and involve thousands of individuals. This forms an unsafe environment where victims are more likely to get attacked. School social workers are taught to interfere in bullying after seeing or hearing about the bullying conduct (Slovak & Singer, 2011).This technique does not work in CB because adults are not around 24/7 to see a child's internet activity. Moreover, CB requires other necessary intervention skills that are not educated to experts in training. These skills

include “printing out text messages and changing social network privacy settings” (Slovak & Singer, 2011). If school social workers are not trained to deal with CB, they will not be able to effectively address and prevent it from happening. There is a need for CB training and accurate policies.

The social work practice issues for this topic are that school social workers do not assess all children for CB. School social workers need to conduct an assessment of all children to discover the frequency of CB. Through an assessment, school social workers can also choose proper prevention and response approaches. In addition, school social workers should always be the first to instruct students, school staff, and parents about cyberbullying (Snakenborg, Van Acker, & Gable, 2011)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify what social workers need to know about CB. We conducted this research because it is reported that approximately half of school social workers feel incompetent to manage CB (Singer & Slovak, 2011). In order to increase social workers understanding of CB we used middle school teachers as the experts because they are in constant contact with students and are knowledgeable of many factors related to this topic. School social workers are an important factor to school-based mental health services. In order to intervene and prevent this issue, social workers must feel competent to handle it. This study used an exploratory qualitative study design because we operated an in-depth examination of

cyberbullying from the views of middle school teachers. According to Grinnel and Unrau (2014), a “qualitative study is aimed at an in-depth understanding of a few cases, rather than a general understanding of a few cases” (p. 85).

In addition, we also chose a qualitative case design because we wanted to discover reality from the participants’ perspectives (Grinnel & Unrau, 2014). Middle school teachers deal with CB on a frequent basis and they are the best people we can ask regarding this issue. Moreover, a qualitative approach allowed us to get close and understand CB (Johnson & Christenson, 2004, p. 362). Qualitative research was the fitting choice because it is managed in a way to enlarge judgment and understanding of the world (Grinnel & Unrau, 2014).

The sample for our study was teachers, a school principal and school counselor from a public elementary and middle school in the western region of the United States. The middle school teachers that we used for this study taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. We used middle school teachers because research shows that CB is mostly seen in middle school (Nansel et al., 2001; Li, 2005; Mishna, Saini, & Solomon, 2009; Wang et al., 2009). We also used the school principal and school counselor because they are knowledgeable of CB. The school that we used for this study was a public elementary and middle school. This school was purposely selected because it had cases of CB events that had been brought into the school. Researching

this school gave us the opportunity to gain understanding of the teacher's, principal and counselors thoughts and concerns regarding CB.

There were ten participants that were chosen for this study. Eight middle school teachers, a principal and counselor. The eight middle school teachers were distinct in their subject areas and grade levels (Noah, 2012). This research used interviews to gather information about what social workers need to know about CB from a teachers, principal, and counselor perspective. Using interviews helped us provide a natural environment. Interviews provided an easier and more natural way for participants to respond to questions because they were at the school (Grinnel & Unrau, 2014). Moreover, interviews gave us flexibility and high response rates. Using interviews allowed more flexibility than using surveys. When interviewing participants we were able to analyze areas that were difficult in certain questions. Utilizing interviews also gave us higher response rates as opposed to using survey questionnaires. Interviewing the participants gave us the opportunity to make sure that each question was answered. It also provided us the ability to interpret the question if was needed (Grinnel & Unrau, 2014).

Significance of the Project for Social Work

CB is a new and harmful event worldwide. Research demonstrates that it is correlated to "loneliness, anxiety, depression, somatic symptoms" and even suicide (Nixon, 2014). CB's consequences are seen at school and can interfere with a child's academic performance. Since school social workers

provide the most mental health services at school it is their responsibility to intervene and prevent it from arising. The findings of this study provided social workers with information about CB. The results of this study allowed school social workers with more knowledge about CB and assisted them in developing effective interventions in dealing with preventing this problem. In gaining knowledge and developing effective interventions, social workers will be competent. As social workers, it is our duty to perform within our field of competence and to raise our insight (NASW, 2014). By being competent about CB, we increase our understanding and expertise and implement it in our practice. The findings of this study helped us follow the NASW code of ethics and assisted us in being competent social workers.

For our study we utilized the assessment and planning steps of the generalist intervention model. We used the assessment step because when interviewing teachers we wanted to collect knowledge on cyberbullying, what caused it, and what can be changed to resolve it. We used the planning step because the results allowed us to plan effective interventions and preventative measures for cyberbullying. What do social workers need to know about CB?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

For the first time in all of the human experience adolescents will develop and mature with social networking sites and digital communication devices. New technology has enabled adolescents to connect with large audiences and expose personal aspects of their everyday lives to the rest of the world. That which used to be private is no longer the norm. Adolescent online behavior has unfortunately been unsupervised by both parents and policy makers creating unintended consequences, such as cyberbullying (CB). The following literature review will define what cyberbullying is, what causes it, its prevalence, the effects, the schools role, and the prevention. This chapter provides contextual knowledge on cyberbullying and will help explain why the involvement of school administrators and social workers is essential for the well-being of adolescents. The theories guiding conceptualization are discussed to aid in the understanding of teacher's perceptions on CB and what teachers believe social workers should know about CB.

The Definition of Cyberbullying

According to Feinberg and Robey (2009), cyberbullying encompasses the use of telecommunications, such as the internet and cell phones to continuously send and post cruel messages about an individual or individuals.

The internet contains different mediums through which these threats are achieved, such as chat rooms, e-mails, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook and Twitter), gaming sites, and instant messaging. CB is manifested in many ways, such as stalking, harassing, impersonation, exclusion, teasing, and through the overall continual humiliation of an individual through the use of telecommunications (Feinberg & Robey, 2009). Holloday (2011) discusses that unlike traditional bullying, CB has a large audience which can also have a large number of bullies harassing and intimidating an individual at any one given time (Holloday, 2011). For example, when a student is riding the school bus, other students can post negative messages about that student on that same bus. Later, that individual views the messages when he or she inspects his email or Facebook account and consequently experiences CB on the bus. Patchin and Hinduja state that cyber-bullies also create online bulletin boards that are called “bash boards” and solicit other individuals to participate in creating hateful statements about certain individuals (Hoff, & Mitchell, 2009).

The Causes of Cyberbullying

New technology has made it tremendously challenging to control and detect CB, thus creating the perfect environment for bullies (Li, 2006). This freedom allows bullies to engage in this activity with high frequency and it gives them a sense of supremacy due to their anonymous identity (Milson & Chu, 2002). This anonymous identity allows for people to engage in CB where they might not have otherwise.

Hoff and Mitchell (2008) conducted a study that explored CB among young college students. They wanted to investigate the causes, effects, and some possible therapies. They surveyed 351 students and found that most CB arises from relationship problems and relationship envy. People who had broken up or had been rejected by someone they liked romantically became cyberbullies or cyberbullied. In their study, they also found 56% had experienced CB by an ex-boyfriend/girlfriend and 86% knew of a friend who had experienced it (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009).

The other cause these researchers found is that cyberbullies tend to be intolerant of others and are unable to empathize with those they hurt. Individuals who stated they had electronically bullied someone stated, they targeted individuals who were considered "different," such as homosexuals, those who are disabled, or were of a different religion and gender (Hoff, & Mitchell, 2009). The full scope of the causes of CB is still new and requires much research. Even though it appears that it has many similar characteristics and symptoms of traditional bullying, it is very different mainly due to the anonymity and the way it allows individuals to cope with their past relationships.

The Prevalence of Cyberbullying

Research by Van Rooij and Van den Eijnden illustrate that in western civilizations using the internet has grown into the most used leisure time activity for adolescents. Adolescents from the Netherlands were used in the

study. The results found that youngsters aged 11 to 15 use the internet for leisure activities on average of 11 to 15 hours a week. The researchers argue that adolescents regard the internet as the most important leisure time activity in their lives (Vermulst, Eijnden, Spijkerman, Engels, & Rooij, 2010). Online social life has become part of the lives of adolescents. Feinberg and Robey (2009) state that most schools have become aware of the phenomena and have taken initiatives to prevent online social networking activities to occur in schools by installing filtering software. However, they illustrate that there are limits to preventing youths from engaging in online social activities on campus. Schools are unable to block the internet use that is accessed through student cell phones. The other unintended consequence of online social networking is the electronic bullying or cyberbullying that is occurring both at home and in schools. It is reported that 45% of preteens and 30% of adolescents are cyberbullied while they are at school (Feinberg & Robey, 2009). Therefore, the awareness of CB is essential for social workers and other school employees.

Kowalski and Limber (2007), wanted to study the prevalence of CB among middle school students. They had 3,767 middle school students complete a questionnaire that was created from Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire and had 23 other questions developed by the researchers. These questions were intended to examine victims' and perpetrators' experiences with cyberbullying. Their results found that 11% of the students had been cyberbullied at least once in the preceding months, 7% specified

that they were victims/bully, 4% indicated they were a bully and had cyberbullied an individual once in the last couple months. The greatest cyberbullying was conducted with instant messaging, chat rooms, and e-mail. Results also indicated half of CB victims did not know the identity of their perpetrator. In this study, prevalence and incidence was lower than in previously mentioned studies. However, in their research they stated that they believed it was significant to be of concern (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). CB is a form of bullying that is gone without many consequences due to its nature, and therefore does have a high prevalence.

According to Kraft, CB has become a national and worldwide problem. This researcher studied the effects and trends of CB with adolescents from around the world. This researcher concluded that victimization reports varied between 10% to 42% and that in the United States most CB was done in the internet while in Australia and the United Kingdom it was through cell phone (as cited in Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012). It is clear that CB is a problem for social workers, especially those working with teens. A study conducted by fightcrime.org on 12 to 17 year old adolescents, found that teens had been cyberbullied at 36 % within the previous year. They studied the different means by which individuals could be cyberbullied such as instant messaging, text message, chat rooms, and website postings. "They found that 44% were bullied via instant messaging, 34% through e-mail, 30% through commentaries posted on Web sites, 19% through text messaging, 14% in chat

rooms, and 13% through the circulation of humiliating pictures that were posted without the consent of the individual” (as cited in Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012, p. 97). Overall, these findings indicate the severity of the issue and how it is becoming a growing trend among American adolescents.

Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel (2009), found that socio-demographic characteristics, such as race and age were important when determining the prevalence. Parental support and friends were also found to be relevant to determine the scope of CB. Their research found that boys were more likely to be involved in physical or verbal bullying and girls were more involved with relational bullying. The boys were likely to be cyberbullies and girls were cyber victims. African-American adolescents were involved in more CB and were less likely to be victim of it. They found that the more parental support teens had, the less involved they were in cyberbullying. Having more friends, also, was associated with lower levels of cyberbullying (Wang et al., 2009).

In addition, Eden, Heiman, and Olenik-Shemesh (2013) Researched teachers’ perceptions, views and concerns about CB. Their research found, “65% to 72 % of teachers indicated that CB is a problem in schools, 70% to 86 % strongly agreed schools should have strict policies and should discuss CB with parents, 65-68% stated they wanted more education on CB, and only 20% felt confident to identify CB” (p. 1043-1047). Their study also found half of the teachers reported that students do complain of CB and state they are being harassed through mobile phones and the internet. Overall, the results of

this study indicate that teachers recognize the seriousness of CB and want their schools to create policies and interventions that specifically address CB.

Moreover, Modecki and Minchin (2013) conducted a study of the prevalence rates of cyberbullying and traditional bullying and discovered that the percentages of cyberbullying is lesser than the ratios for traditional bullying. This shows that even though cyberbullying is on the rise, traditional bullying is still higher. However, the frequencies of CB can be more harmful than traditional bullying. (Modecki & Minchin, 2013)

Cyberbullying Effects

The effects of bullying have been researched for several decades and most recently a study by Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike, and Afen-Akpaيدا (2008) reviewed characteristics, extent, and overall effects of bullying. Their review on the effects of bullying focused on work done by Kerlikowske which suggested that children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed, suicidal, and have lower academic performance in school (Adeleke et al., 2008). Their review also focused on the consequences of engaging in bullying behavior. Research by Aluede and Wet proposed that bullying could have physical, academic, social and psychological problems on bullies which could also lead to criminal activities in the future, thus the effects of bullying are negative for both the victim and bully (as cited in Adeleke et al., 2008).

Patchin and Hinduja (2006) state that CB is a traumatic experience for the victim and it could lead to bodily, intellectual, emotional and social

consequences. Their research found that it was harmful because it occurred on and off school grounds and the aggressors had the opportunity to attack in large numbers. They stated that life in cyberspace is interwoven with real life. The name calling, rumors, and gossip that is spread in cyberspace affects an individual in their everyday life, such as in school where the embarrassment and harassment continues. Their study also found that 32% of teenagers reported that the harassment they had experienced online affected them at school (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). One could therefore suggest that victims of harassment would not want to attend school and might also avoid school. Hoff and Mitchell (2009) also found that CB had psychological effects on victims. Sufferers reported feelings of anger, powerlessness, sadness, anxiety, frustration and fear. Individuals also reported they had become less confident and had considered treatment for depression. Some of the participants reported that they had become more aggressive and had physically retaliated against known bullies (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). For educators, mental health professionals, and parents the effects experienced by students are detrimental. CB affects their overall wellbeing in life and at school.

Holloday, provides the example of Phoebe Prince who committed suicide because she was being cyberbullied by numerous classmates (Holloday, 2011). An article by the Scholastic Administrator (2010), discussed a California court decision which stated that they would not protect CB under the first amendment. The article mentions a lawsuit that was conducted in

California. In a decision of 2 to 1, the state of California concluded that genuine threats would no longer be protected under the first amendment and that they would continue the lawsuit against six students who harassed a boy until he decided to commit suicide. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, these students had made death threats and anti-gay commentary on the boy's website which ultimately led to his demise (Scholastic Administrator, 2010). Although these covert and violent behaviors do not occur face to face, CB is becoming a form of bullying and social cruelty. Bullies intentionally cause distress and verbal abuse to their victims. CB is verbal aggression manifested through telecommunication devices and it can cause psychological harm which could make adolescents predisposed and vulnerable to suicide. Research by Klomek, Sourander, and Gould (2011), argued that suicidal ideation is higher with adolescents associated with bullying behavior. Their study examined middle school and high school students and found that they displayed a higher risk for suicidal ideation when they were bullies or victims of bullies (Klomek et al., 2011). Hinduja and Patchin found that adolescents who experienced CB as either the victim or perpetrator had more suicidal feelings and were more likely to attempt suicide than those who have never encountered CB (as cited in Klomek et al. , 2011). Sabellaa, Patchinb, and Hindujac (2013) reviewed many other studies on CB and discussed some of the myths and realities to the topic. They stated that research is still too fresh to fully determine if CB causes suicide; however, they did mention that it does

appear to intensify feeling of sadness and hopelessness which could worsen an individual's emotional stability which could lead them to commit suicide (Sabellaa et al., 2013). Overall, their premise was that more research is needed.

The Schools Role in Cyberbullying

Simmons and Bynum (2014) provided six things administrators can do about CB. They suggest education is provided to parents and students. Students should be aware of the consequences and policies. Prevention should be integrated in the curriculum. School administrators should provide an environment where students feel safe and comfortable reporting CB. Teachers should also be educated on the policies. Overall, it appears the issue is new to everyone including social workers and more research is need to determine the best intervention and preventative strategies.

Reeckman and Cannard (2009),and Sahin (2012), suggested that creating empathy is important for helping professionals to be aware of when working with bullies and victims of CB. The author stated that because the perpetrators are not able to observe the victims emotional and behavior reactions to their bullying it creates an emotional disconnect and a detachment in the possible consequences that they will receive for engaging in these behaviors. Thus, the author's emphasized the significance of professionals creating empathy in students. It is important for social workers to learn more

about ways to help adolescents develop empathy. In doing so, they can prevent CB.

Chibbaro (2007), discusses what school counselors should do about cyberbullies and why training is important. This researcher states that once school policies are recognized in the school and the school has a protocol for reporting, school counselors can train school personnel, students, and other staff on the appropriate intervention strategies for cyberbullying. Chibbaro (2007), suggested that to develop as a specialist in CB teachers and counselors will have to learn how to teach students how to identify CB both at school and away from school, teaching students the reporting methods, and teaching school staff how to supervise students when they use technology at school. Training that will involve that debunking bullying myths, such as “boys will be boys” and “it’s part of life”, and myths about the causes, prevalence, and prevention. Getting all the facts of the severity of bullying and cyber bullying is important as a future professional to be able to detect, document, and intervene. As detailed in the NASW Code of Ethics, social workers need to know what resources, strategies, and services are effective for helping victims and perpetrators.

Diamanduros, Downs, and Jenkins (2008) discussed guidelines for school psychologists in addressing CB. School psychologists play an important role in the prevention and detection of CB as they have access to the prevalence and severity. They are also the ones that create or help

implement the helpful strategies for handling incidents of bullying or CB. The overall purpose of this article was to provide instruction for school psychologists and other school professionals when addressing CB. This study also states the role of school psychologists in connection with CB. They state that a school psychologist should do the following: promote awareness, assess for CB, have a prevention plan, intervention plan, and promote policies that help address cyberbullying. Their article is a review of literature that supports their proposal.

Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson (2013) conducted a CB review study of current international research and its application to policy and practice. In this study they studied several cyberbullying themes. Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson (2013) explained the significance of policy and practice. These researchers believed that there is a need for clear school policies to address cyberbullying. Many schools do not include an apparent anti-bullying policy that lists which behaviors are appropriate and which are not. These policies need to include the consequences for CB behaviors that happen at and off school grounds. In addition, these researchers believe that existing anti-bullying policies need to be rationalized to include checking wrong behaviors.

Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, and Ferrin (2012) conducted a study in where they examined high school teacher's perceptions of CB prevention and intervention strategies. This study found that more than half of teachers

believed that CB does not have detrimental consequences for students. Most of this teachers in this study believed that CB was something that equipped children for life. This study also indicated that even though teachers are prone to react to CB, they may be uncertain as to how they should take action. This is because majority of school do not have set cyberbullying policies or procedures.

In addition, Berne, Frisé, Schultze-Krumbholz, Scheithauer, Naruskov, Luik, and Zukauskienė (2013) administrated a study that can assist professionals in in schools. This study was about the different CB assessment instruments that there is available. The focus of this study was to give the audience knowledge about the many CB assessment instruments that there is. The researchers detail 44 instruments that can be used to measure the severity of CB. Some of these include the CB and online aggression survey and the cyberbullying student survey.

Cyberbullying Prevention

Toshack and Colmar (2012) conducted a study to test a CB intervention program that was created specifically for young school children. The program addressed the nature of CB and the safety strategies that children could implement while using the internet or other electronic devices. It was expected that after the students participated in this program they would have a better understanding on what CB was and the second goal was to teach them safety strategies when dealing with CB. The final aim was to encourage students to

participate in the creation of school policies aimed at stopping CB and to play an important role in the overall management of CB. This program used sixth grade participants. They were five females from a school in New South Wales, Australia. Their average age was 11 years old. Participants were selected by need of CB education. Teachers selected students who had been a victim of CB and believed they would benefit from program. Students were asked to provide a definition of CB and after the program it was expected that they would have a better understanding of the strategies and what CB was. This program modeled another used program called "The Click Off" program. At the end of the program students were provided a certificate of completion. Results found that participants felt better prepared to identify CB and felt they had benefited from program.

Sek-yum Ngai, Cheung, and Ngai (2011); Salmivalli (2010) found that youth experiencing emotional and behavioral problems highly benefit from mutual aid groups. In addition, they found that adolescents are well suited to help one another when experiencing emotional problems related to the adolescent transitions and difficulties. These researchers stated that mutual aid groups for adolescents experiencing emotional and behavioral problems should consist of a strong leader who has the ability to facilitate trust and exchange between its members. Social worker input is the "most important component for a mutual aid group aimed at ameliorating emotional and behavioral problems" (p. 269). "Social worker input" refers to the social

workers capacity to recognize the power of its members and a social worker who allows growth for its members. In the early stages the social worker should focus on assuring members feel a sense of “cohesiveness” and “sense of belonging” so that members can feel connected. They state that social workers who effectively achieve this goal will keep members and thus helping them in the recovery process. This study is significant because it states the importance having a social worker understand his or her role and the importance of setting the right climate in the beginning stages of mutual aid groups (Sek-yum Ngai et al., 2011; Salmivalli, 2010).

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Research suggests that CB is a rising concern. Slovak and Singer (2011), argued that school social workers are not prepared for the management of CB. For obvious reasons, those perceptions are understandable and one could assume other mental health professionals also lack knowledge on CB. Menesini and Nocentini argue that even among researchers there is variability in how CB is defined (as cited in Sabella et al., 2013). The purpose of our study was to examine what school educators believe social workers should know about CB. As Cassidy, Brown and Jackson (2012) suggest educators play a vital role in preventing CB. From this perception our study will use educators as the experts to learn what social workers need to know about CB.

One of the main theories guiding conceptualization was the theory of reasoned action. Heath (2005), states that “theory of reasoned action contributes to the understanding of persuasion theory and human motivation by explaining how actions are the product of behavioral intentions to act in one way rather than some other” (p. 1). The theory of reasoned action assumes that behavioral intent to behave one way or another is the consequence of two elements. Number one is an individual’s attitude toward the behavior. The second is the held view of the individual and what he or she believes others would want him or her to do. Thus our study, states that teachers who already have negative attitudes towards CB and have beliefs about what they believe school administrators would expect them to do will react when they encounter CB. Consequently, this makes them a reliable source when providing suggestions as to what social workers should know. Teacher’s attitudes about CB will encompass their concern, confidence to manage it, and suggestions they have on what social workers should know about it. The psychodynamic theory was also used to assess if a teacher’s empathy affects how he or she reacts and their attitudes about CB.

Teachers constantly manage their students’ learning environment and peer interactions. This gives them an understanding of the conflicts that adolescents face and how to manage them. The next theory that guided the conceptualization is the systems theory which examines how individuals (teachers) interact with their environment and how they affect the functioning

of the whole environment. With using this theory we examined how teachers were directly involved in creating solutions to CB and how they might provide an understanding of the CB phenomena to social workers.

In this chapter, some of the most current literature on CB was reviewed. An emphasis on the cause, frequency, effect, schools role, and prevention was discussed. In addition, the theories that guided conceptualization were discussed. While the approximate rate of CB continues to vary, considerable percentages suggest that CB is a problem among today's youth. Hoff and Mitchell (2008), study stated that 56% of first year college students experienced CB by an ex-boyfriend or girlfriend and 86% knew of a friend who had experienced it (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Other studies pertaining specifically to adolescents suggest 11% of the students had been cyberbullied at least once in the previous two months, 7% specified that they were victims or bullies, and 4% indicated they had been cyberbullied by an individual at least once in the last two to three months. These percentages were conducted with 3,767 middle school students (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Some of the biggest researchers conducting continuous research on the topic have stated that CB is a painful and stressful experience that could lead to physical, intellectual, emotional and social problems (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). The true severity of CB is just becoming known and can continue to expand as technology reaches more adolescents around the world. It is essential for social workers and other mental health professionals to be aware

of the problem and creating interventions to address it. In this study, teachers' beliefs on what social workers should know about CB were examined. At the end of this chapter, theories guiding conceptualization were also discussed to provide a framework on the types of responses that teachers can provide.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

The following chapter will cover an outline of the research methods employed in this study concerning what social workers need to know about CB. The subjects that will be addressed include the study's design, sampling, data collection, procedures, protection of human subjects, and data analysis.

Study Design

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to identify what social workers need to know about CB. The exploratory qualitative case study was selected because we wanted to gain insight on a social issue through examination (Creswell, 1998; Denzin, 2007; Lincoln, 2008; Lichman, 2010). Moreover, a qualitative study enabled us to get close to an incident, use our own knowledge, and pursue awareness of an event. Qualitative research was the fitting choice because it is managed in a way that allowed us to enlarge judgment and understanding of the world (Grinnel & Unrau, 2014). As researchers, our aim was to expand knowledge and understanding of CB. The qualitative approach allowed us to do this. In addition, a qualitative study required exploration, need for features, and participants should be researched in their common surroundings (Creswell, 1998). Our research study design allowed us to accomplish this. The practical methodological implications and

limitations included developing an instrument that exactly assessed what social workers need to know about CB. Since there were no instruments pertaining to this topic, one had to be developed. We created our instrument after a detailed review of the research by Slovak and Singer (2011); and Noah (2012). Another limitation was that teachers may not provide an accurate interpretation of their attitudes and might report things they believe they should know on the topic and not what they are actually doing. In our research, we wanted to know what social workers need to know about CB to learn about the dangers and what social workers can do to alleviate the problem.

Sampling

The sample for our study was middle school teachers, a principal and a counselor from a public school in the western region of the United States. The middle school teachers that were used for this study taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. We used middle school teachers because research shows that CB is mostly seen in middle school (Nansel et al., 2001; Li, 2005; Mishna, Saini, & Solomon, 2009; Wang et al., 2009). The school that we used for this study was a public elementary and middle school. This school was purposely selected because it had cases of CB events that had been brought into the school. Researching this school gave us the chance to gain understanding of the middle school teacher's, principal, and counselor's views of CB.

There were eight middle school teachers, a principal, and a counselor that were interviewed for this study. The only criterion for the teachers was

that they were a sixth, seventh or eighth grade teacher. There was no criterion for the principal and counselor. They just had to be willing to participate in the study. The gender, age, and years of experience were factors that varied among the participants. We chose middle school teachers because they deal with CB on a frequent basis and they were good people we can ask regarding this issue. We selected a principal and counselor because they are knowledgeable of CB and the many factors related to it. Middle school teachers, the principal, and counselors had the answers to what social workers need to know about cyberbullying.

It was anticipated that it would not be difficult to gather our sample because we had an authorization release form signed by the school's principal. In addition, one of the researchers currently interns at this public elementary and middle school. This made the school accessible for interviews to occur on site. This allowed us to have sufficient time and resources to gather our sample.

Data Collection and Instruments

On October 2014 the principal of this school was notified of the study and asked for the schools participation. After he agreed, we created interview questions. These questions were established after a detailed review of the research by Slovak and Singer (2011); and Noah (2012). Many of our questions were developed based on these studies. In addition, Dr. Davis, our professor at California State University, San Bernardino, helped us with the

creating and restructuring of some of the interview questions. There were ten interview questions that were asked to the middle school teachers, principal and counselor. These questions were aimed at figuring out what social workers need to know about CB. The first question was “Can you give me a case example of CB that has occurred at your school?” The second question was, “What are some CB school policies or laws? The third question was, “If a parent suspects that their child is being cyberbullied, what they should do?” The fourth question was, “What are some symptoms of a student that is being cyberbullied?” The fifth question was, “Do you think CB occurs more than traditional bullying? The sixth question was, “Do you think your school takes CB seriously?” The seventh question was, “Do you believe that CB is a problem at your school?” The eighth question was, “What are the types of ideas that you have for preventing cyberbullying? “ The ninth question was, “What are some things that helping professionals need to know about CB?” The last question was, “What do you think social workers need to know to prevent cyberbullying?” One of the limitations with our instrument was that we created it after a detailed review of the dissertation by Noah (2012) and Slovak and Singer (2011). One of the strengths of our instrument was that the questions are fixed on our research question and allowed participants to let us know the severity of CB and what social workers need to know about it.

The data collection included interviews with middle school teachers, the principal, and the counselor. After the principal agreed to be in the study,

we asked him for approval to disseminate flyers about our research to the teachers. These flyers were placed in all the middle school teachers' mail boxes and in the staff lounge. The flyers discussed the purpose of the study, the duration, compensation, and our contact information if they decided to participate in our research. The interviews took place at this public elementary and middle school in room 100. They were on Fridays and they lasted 20 minutes. They were conducted by Laura Franco and Brenda Miranda. We conducted them on Fridays because Fridays were minimum days at this school. With the teachers getting out earlier than usual, we had more time to conduct the research. We did not plan on interviewing ten participants all on one Friday. We planned to interview at least two participants every Friday until we reached our desired sample size.

Procedures

This was a qualitative research study that gathered data through the use of semi-structured interviews. This method allowed participants to answer open ended interview questions that were designed to explore teachers, principals and counselors beliefs and attitudes on CB. The responses participants provided brought forth new ideas, themes, and concepts on CB, such as knowledge on CB, their experiences managing CB, what social workers should be aware of, and the overall concern with CB in the school environment.

Permission to conduct the study was petitioned through a letter of access that the middle school's principal signed and approved. Participation was solicited with flyers that were placed in the middle school teachers' lounge and in the teacher's mail boxes. The flyers included the purpose of the study, a description of data collection method, contact information, and the reward incentive. Interviews were conducted at this public elementary and middle school in the social worker intern's office. Both researchers (Brenda Miranda & Laura Franco) of this study collected data. There was a total of 8 teachers, 1 principal, and 1 counselor interviewed. Each of the interviews lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Researchers protected the participant's privacy and took notes on the responses provided. Researchers anticipated a four month window to sufficiently collect and analyze data for this study.

Protection of Human Subjects

The confidentiality of those who participated in the study was protected. Interviews were conducted behind closed doors and the data collected will be secured in a locked box. Participant's identity remains anonymous as names of teachers and school principals will be coded with numbers that protect their identity. All participants were provided with an informed consent and a debriefing statement.

Data Analysis

This study explored people, places, things and ideas as revealed in a thematic qualitative cluster. Thoughts, behaviors, meanings, and attitudes from the recorded interviews were transcribed into codes that were analyzed through SPSS software and relationships were found. The theory that guided the conceptualization is the Theory of Reasoned Action, which explains that actions are the product of attitudes and personal views. Thus, in our study, we found relationships between teachers, principals, and counselor's attitudes and incidents in addressing CB as they have previous knowledge and experiences with the topic. The knowledge of CB was analyzed with responses related to perceived impact on students, awareness, and current actions on CB. Motivation and actions to respond to CB were analyzed with responses related to actions and preventions undertaken to address and prevent CB. Participants who claim no experiences dealing with CB also provided patterns for the understanding of CB, such as possible reasons why it is not understood and perceived as a problem. Overall, all responses assisted the researchers in the understanding of CB and what the social work profession needs to know. Responses were analyzed holistically as it was assumed intuition and specific emotions towards CB are also important in understanding what social workers should be aware of. This is because CB is a relevantly new research topic being explored in both the research world and

in schools. The data analysis also made conclusions on possible strategies for addressing CB and for the implementation of CB programs.

From the positivist interpretation view, we assumed participants would be able to articulate feelings and emotions when they were asked to speak about them and that these individuals had knowledge on CB, which we used to extract concepts and patterns. We expected that teachers, a principal and a counselor were qualified candidates to which information on CB can be extracted from and then the theory of reasons action informed us that past actions, such as addressing CB, would be guided by the teacher's attitudes and views towards CB. This theory allowed the researchers to analyze how attitudes and views had an impact on how CB was being addressed and some possible strategies for what social workers can do to also address the problem.

The other theory that guided conceptualization is the Systems Theory which examines how other factors, such as the environment has an impact on an individual. Using this theory allowed us to examine some of the factors affecting how the teachers, principal, and counselor created their beliefs, attitudes, and how they reacted to CB when they were confronted with it in the classroom.

Analyzing the data consisted of coding as mentioned before where researches looked for patterns in the responses provided. Attitude questions were coded through a hierarchy chart contained high and low priority of CB.

Throughout the data analysis, researchers also considered ethical issues concerning the participant's identity and knowledge on CB. A cluster diagram was drawn to find the themes and categories related to CB attitudes. The types of constructs that emerged are the following: lack of awareness of CB, teachers considered CB as concern, the need for training, teachers with social network accounts had more knowledgeable, tools used for CB, prevalence, causes, and the overall impact on middle school students and classroom environment.

The methodological limitations to our study was that people did not provide an accurate interpretation of their attitudes and reported things they believed they should know on the topic and not what they were actually doing. Other limitations that the teachers might have include not being informed or trained on what CB is and how to address it. Our study's analysis and interpretation involved intuition, recognizing patterns, and making connections, which were all based on past experiences and knowledge on the topic which was a limitation because the school professionals did not have adequate knowledge on the topic. However, this problem was alleviated to a certain degree by the researchers (Brenda and Laura) educating themselves on CB enough to recognize patterns and meanings in the recorded data from the interviews.

Once the data has been transcribed, we created a hypothesis and stated the premises on what social workers need to know about CB.

Summary

This chapter delivered a comprehensive explanation of the methodology for this study, which used a qualitative approach to examine middle school teachers, principals, and counselor's knowledge, experiences, and attitudes towards CB to learn what social workers need to know about CB. Concerns, managing, and preventions of CB were also analyzed and helped to create themes and concepts for this study. This data was collected from teachers, a principal and a counselor. The instrument was 15 questions based on research from Slovak and Singer (2011), Noah (2012), and Dr. Davis, our professor at CSUSB who helped with the creation and restriction of some of the interview questions. The interviews lasted 15 to 20 minutes long, and it was expected that 8 teachers, one principal and a counselor would be interviewed. The Theory of Reasoned Action and Systems Theory was utilized to acquire constructs and themes related to CB which was then be analyzed through SPSS software.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of this study's findings of what social workers need to know about cyberbullying (CB). First the demographics of the school are presented. Next, a description of the respondents. Following an explanation of the qualitative thematic findings based on each interview question. This chapter ends with a summary of the main findings.

School Demographics

This research study gathered data from a public elementary and middle school in the western region of the United States. This school serves students in grades kindergarten through the eighth grade. In order for a child to be accepted into this school they must meet attendance, behavioral, and academic measures. Children may be placed on a waiting list if there are not any openings available. For the 2014-2015 school years, this school had a whole enrollment of 887 students. There are 99 kindergarteners, 96 first graders, 100 second graders, 100 third graders, 93 fourth graders, 94 fifth graders, 95 sixth graders, 111 seventh graders, and 99 eighth graders (California Department of Education, 2015).

The student population at this school is predominately Hispanic. For the 2014-2015 school year, the school enrollment by ethnicity was 782 Hispanics,

3 American Indian or Alaska native, 4 Asian, 6 Pacific Islander, 3 Filipino, 53 African American, 24 White, 7 two or more races and 5 are not reported. In addition, there is a total of 46% English learners, 91% students are socioeconomically disadvantaged and 4% are students with disabilities (California Department of Education, 2015).

This school has a normal educational achievement within the school district. For the 2013-2014 school years it has a California Academic Performance Index (API) of 770 and a state rank of 3. This school met the school wide growth target but not all the student groups met the target (California Department of Education, 2015).

This school staff consists of a total of 38 teachers, 13 Hispanic, 1 African American, and 24 White (California Department of Education, 2015). For the 2011-2012 school years the average class size was 27 students (California Department of Education, 2015).

Description of Respondents

For this study eight middle school teachers, the school principal, and the school counselor were interviewed. Interviews were conducted at this school and lasted 15 to 20 minutes. Out of the ten participants, nine were females. Six out of the ten respondents were white. The teachers were diverse in terms of the grade ranks and subjects that they instructed. They also all had different years of teaching experience (See Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender (N=10)		
Male	1	10.0
Female	9	90.0
Ethnicity (N=10)		
African-American	1	10.0
Hispanic	3	30.0
Caucasian	6	60.0
Teaching Level (N=8)		
6 th Grade	3	30.0
7 th Grade	2	20.0
8 th Grade	3	30.0
Professional Experience (N=10)		
1-5	3	30.0
5-10	3	30.0
10-15	4	40.0
Usage of Social Networking Websites (N=10)		
Yes	10	100.0
No	0	

Research Question One Results

The first question for this study was “Can you give me a case example of cyberbullying that has occurred at your school?” After analyzing all of the respondents’ answers we found one common theme emerge from the data (See table 2). The theme that appeared was that almost all participants were able to provide examples of CB occurring in the social networking website Facebook. Respondent two which was a 7th grade teacher related CB to a case

that involved Facebook. The respondent stated that “last year there was a student suspended for writing things something on Facebook something about yea we should kick her butt, named the student. It was a conversation between a couple girls here in the school” (Survey Interview, February 2015). The next participant which was a 6th grade teacher also gave her example of CB related to Facebook. This 6th grade teacher stated “last year I heard a couple of six grade student girls who were involved, it was mostly through Facebook from what I understand. They were friends on Face Book but one person said something negative about the other one and it streamed a conversation of other kids going on in it too” (Participant 3, Survey Interview, February 2015).

Participant seven, a sixth grade teacher, mentioned that CB was happening on Facebook. This sixth grade teacher stated that “there were some students that were saying things about kids on Facebook so we did have a few issues. It was mainly girls centered on Facebook saying mean things” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Respondent four, an eighth grade teacher also believed that CB was happening on Facebook. This participant stated “we have multiple students that now have cellphones, snap chats, those different accesses that they go to and we have had issues with boys and girls going on and making comments on their Facebook pages to other students”(Survey Interview, February 2015). Respondent nine, another eighth grade teacher also linked CB to Facebook. This respondent stated that “there

was an issue with some of the girls posting negative comments on Facebook, taking screen shots pictures of what was said, posting mean things about people. It is becoming an issue” (Survey Interview, March 2015).

Research Question Two Results

The second research question for this study was “What are some cyberbullying school policies or laws?” The theme that appeared after we analyzed our data was that more than half of all respondents were not aware of any CB laws or polices (See table 2). The first participant which was a sixth grade teacher stated, “I’m embarrassed to say that I don’t know them on top of my head, I know its discouraged and it’s not supposed to happen” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant 5, an eighth grade teacher stated “I know at my last district CB you could be suspended and that includes teacher and an incidence of where a student took a picture of the teacher and posted it on the internet and they suspended both. I don’t know of the exact laws” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant six, a sixth grade teacher declared, “I just know that it’s not tolerated, I know that there is consequences that can happen at the school level. We do instructions on the risks during our PBS lessons. When we do conversations about bullying in general I don’t know specific laws” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Respondent nine, another eighth grade teacher stated “I don’t really know any of the laws, I’m assuming the schools have policies against bullying in general. I would assume middle schools and high schools would have a policy’ (Survey Interview, March

2015). Participant three, the school principal stated, “I don’t think we have a school policy on cyberbullying. The Ed code that we refer to, there’s an Ed code where we can suspend students and one of them is for bullying but it does include bullying by electronic means and that is the one that we use to encompass cyberbullying” (Survey Interview, February 2015).

Research Question Three Results

The third question for this study was “If a parent suspects that their child is being cyberbullied, what should they do?” We found one common theme arise from this question. The theme was that the majority of all respondents had distinct views of the protocol for reporting CB (See table 2).

The school principal stated:

we have a bullying and harassment form that students or parents can fill out. If they fill it out we can conduct an investigation to see what has happened, that is what parents can do. What we encourage parents not to do is to try to handle it on their own by confronting the student or other family by their nature. It’s good that they report it and we do what we can to address the issue here at school within our legal authority to do so. Sometimes parents are not happy with the result of that that they have said that they want to go to the police to file a complaint and they have every right to do so. (Participant 3, Survey Interview, February 2015)

Participant one a sixth grade teacher stated, “well that would be the same thing as with bullying, they present it to the teacher and we follow through with it. Of course then it goes to administration and if that doesn’t help then we will still have to follow that chain” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Respondent four, an eighth grade teacher stated “first they should go on and look at the facebook page at something they might want to make a copy for documentation and if it’s something that is going on with several kids then they need to bring it up to administration” (Survey Interview, February 2015).

Research Question Four Results

The fourth question for this study was “What are some symptoms of a student that is being cyberbullied?” After examining the data we discovered that more than half of all the participants had different views of CB symptoms (See table 2). Participant one, a sixth grade teacher stated, “The kids don’t want to come to school, feel inferior, scared, start to shut down” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant four, an eighth grade teacher stated “Depression, all of a sudden closing off from their friends, no concentration in school, tears, not eating, sleepy, being up all night, lack of focus looking dirty sometimes not on top of it anymore” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Respondent seven, a sixth grade teacher stated, “I would say depression. Being a bully themselves. They are being bullied online and they start treating others the same way. Being isolated and not wanting to talk about it” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Participant ten, a seventh grade teacher declared,

“They come to class crying for no reason and they won’t tell you why. Also you will hear them chatting in the corner by themselves and you have no idea what they’re talking about. Yeah, those are the main ones” (Survey Interview, March 2015).

Research Question Five Results

The fifth question for this study was “Do you think cyberbullying occurs more than traditional bullying?” We found that the respondents were split on whether CB occurs more than traditional bullying (See table 2). Participant three, the school principal believed that CB happens more than traditional bullying. The school principal stated,

I do, but I would say it’s with students that have access to technology.

Once they reached a certain age and their parents have given them cell phones or they are allowed to create social media accounts then probably we don’t have issues with our damnatory issues as with middle school students. I would say it probably does only because people feel more comfortable posting these things and it would be something they would not have the courage to say to someone’s face.

(Participant 3, Survey Interview, February 2015)

Respondent four, an eighth grade teacher also believed that CB occurs more than traditional bullying. This teacher stated “Yes absolutely. Nowadays students don’t know how to communicate face to face and we have a lot of instances where I tell the kids if you take that moment to talk rather than text,

you would see that misinterpretation occur” (Survey Interview, February 2015).

Participant nine, an eighth grade teacher believed that CB does not occur more than traditional bullying. This teacher stated:

I don't think so. I think from what I have seen it's positive, there fun pictures. The kids don't realize calling kids names is a form of bullying. It just becomes a common place in passing that I think it's definitely on the rise and it's definitely an issue but I still think traditional bullying happens more frequently during the day. (Survey Interview, March 2015)

Participant six, a sixth grade teacher expressed some uncertainty on whether CB occurs more than traditional bullying. This participant stated, “I don't know, with our students and population not everyone has internet. With our six graders they are not on social media as much. I don't know if it would happen more depending on population” (Survey Interview, February 2015).

Research Question Six Results

Research question six was “Do you think your school takes cyberbullying seriously? After examining all of the responses from participants the following common theme emerged, almost all teachers believed that their school took CB seriously (See table 2). Participant 6 who is who is a six grade teacher stated, “Absolutely, yes” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant one who was another six grade teacher reported, “I would think so. Thinking of that one case we just finished, parents were brought in and students were

talked to. The other student was moved from the class, there was a suspension of one week” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Interviewee two who was a 7th grade teacher reported, “Yes I do. I think some of the teachers are good in following up. Teachers that have close relationships with kids. They stay on top of it. I would say we are pretty in tuned compared to other schools” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant five who was an 8th grade teacher reported, “I haven’t been here long. But as teachers, we take bullying seriously. CB is just a form of bullying” (Survey Interview, February 2015).

Research Question Seven Results

Research question seven was “Do you believe that cyberbullying is a problem at your school?” Due to the majority of the respondents repeating that they were uncertain the following theme was developed: almost all of the participants were uncertain whether CB was a problem at their school (See table 2). Participant three stated the following:

It’s hard to say. I don’t see it as a huge problem, but maybe it is but I’m not aware of it maybe the students keep it to themselves and don’t show their parents or report it so it’s really hard to say from my perspective, I probably see CB cases maybe one or two times a year.

(Survey Interview, February 2015)

Participant 9 who was an 8th grade teacher provided the following verbatim text: “I don’t think it’s an overall problem. The teachers are fairly close to the

kids. If it was happening on a regular basis it would come to our attention and I don't hear it happening that often. I don't think it's a huge issue here" (Survey Interview, March 2015). Participant 7 who was a six grade teacher stated, "I don't know if I would say it's a problem" (Survey Interview, March 2015).

Participant 4 who was an eighth grade teacher reported an alternative response stating:

Absolutely. It's not just in middle school, if kids have phones they don't know how to properly communicate. Don't have phone etiquette. They go on do things because they think it's funny and don't realize the effects it has, not just middle school it's a problem way down. It's just a parents giving them a phone and them not explaining to them how to use it or monitor it. (Survey Interview, February 2015)

Research Question Eight Results

Research question eight was "What are the types of ideas that you have for preventing cyberbullying?" the majority of respondents were able to articulate ideas for preventing CB and thus the thematic theme emerged, almost all of teachers had different ideas for preventing CB (See table 2). Participant one who was a six grade teacher had an understanding of notions on how CB could be prevented through the uses of education and stated:

We have the whole positive behavior support program every day for the first ten minutes. I supposed that when there is this anti-bullying part

that it's where we would fit the whole cyberbullying and just be part of the training that we give the kids, so that they learn about it and why it's wrong. Same thing with bullying. (Survey Interview, February 2015)

Participant 4 who was an 8th grade teacher stated,

Its awareness. Talking to kids and showing them. We model writing, but we don't model how to interact with one another. And letting them be informed because they might not know. So, if we could do those things they can be informed and aware of what's right or wrong. A lot of times we discipline, but we don't talk to them. If we took time they would understand. (Survey Interview, February 2015)

Participant six suggested being more informed on social media and stated

A lot of it is education on social media and educating parents. Parents want to give kids privacy but so much is happening that they are not even aware of. With so many different apps it destroys the path that you have sent out. Its really scary so parents need to be updated with what's out there and to know passwords and how to log in to them. And just keeping an open communication. (Survey Interview, March 2015)

Research Question Nine Results

Research question nine was "What are some things that helping professionals need to know about cyberbullying?" All participants were able to articulate different notions for helping professionals should to be aware of.

After analyzing the data the following theme emerged, almost all participants

had different ideas for what helping professionals should know about CB (See table 2). Participant 3 stated,

I would say it's a learning process. Trying to remain current because something that was popular last year or 2 years ago. I remember when I was a teacher people used Myspace now it doesn't exist anymore so people in the field need to be update on what are the current social media that students are using whether its Facebook. Even Facebook a lot of kids are not using it anymore, they are using other media outlets out there whether it's snap chat or other things like that. (Survey Interview, February 2015)

Overall, this participant suggested staying current with social media trends.

Participant Five who teachers 8th grade stated,

Learning more about CB, what it is, recognize symptoms of being bullied, so that we can send them to the counselor". Participant 10 stated, "It is serious and it can be dealt with and that it is worth the time to deal with it. When your kids are distracted they aren't going to learn. (Survey Interview, February 2015)

Research Question Ten Results

Research question ten was "What do you think social workers need to know to prevent cyberbullying?" The following theme materialized among respondents, almost all participants suggested different ideas for social workers to prevent CB (See table 2). Participant 4 stated,

Knowing the apps. It's not just FB nowadays. Now there's Snapchat, can be a picture. There are something every day that we don't know about and we are just assuming it's just one and it's not. If we were more tech savvy it would help alleviate some problems because they are far ahead of us. Kids can have fake Facebooks and be anonymous.

(Survey Interview, February 2015)

Overall, this participant suggested that social workers should have knowledge on apps and social media networks. Participants eight and ten stated the importance of creating a questioner that asks students directly if they are being cyberbullied and stated the importance of being able to identify CB. For example, participant eight stated, "You need to know that it is happening a lot. Come up with a questionnaire, so that when you meet with students you can ask are you being CB" (Survey Interview, March 2015) and participant ten stated, "it would be important to know what sort of behaviors are a symptom of bullying or CB so that when you are talking to students and you see these things you know to start asking questions about has anybody said anything about you" (Survey Interview, March 2015).

Table 2. Interview Questions and Common Themes

Interview Questions:	Common Themes:
1. Can you give me a case example of cyberbullying that has occurred at your school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all participants were able to provide examples of CB occurring in the social networking website Facebook.

Interview Questions:	Common Themes:
2. What are some cyberbullying school policies or laws?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than half of all participants could not name any specific CB school policies or laws.
3. If a parent suspects that their child is being cyberbullied, what should they do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of all respondents had distinct views of the protocol for reporting CB.
4. What are some symptoms of a student that is being cyberbullied?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than half of all the participants had different views of CB symptoms.
5. Do you think cyberbullying occurs more than traditional bullying?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents were split on whether CB occurs more than traditional bullying.
6. Do you think your school takes cyberbullying seriously?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all participants believed that their school took CB seriously.
7. Do you believe that cyberbullying is a problem at your school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all of the teachers were uncertain whether CB was a problem at their school.
8. What are the types of ideas that you have for preventing cyberbullying?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all of teachers had different ideas for preventing cyberbullying.
9. What are some things that helping professionals need to know about cyberbullying?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all middle school teachers had different ideas for what helping professionals should know about CB.
10. What do you think social workers need to know to prevent cyberbullying?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all teachers suggested different ideas for social workers to prevent CB.

Summary

The results section contained of a display of the frequency distribution among demographic characteristic of the respondents and a presentation of the most significant data found in this research study. The research study

utilized a qualitative design that examined what social workers need to know about cyberbullying. The population sample was 8 middle school teachers, a school principal, and a school counselor. All of the participant's responses were gathered from ten interview questions. Results implied that almost all respondents were able to provide examples of CB occurring in the social media website Facebook, more than half of all participants could not name any specific cyberbullying school policies or laws, majority of all respondents had distinct views of the protocol for reporting cyberbullying, more than half of all the participants had different views of CB symptoms, participants were split on whether CB occurs more than traditional bullying, nearly all participants believed that their school took CB seriously, practically all of the teachers were uncertain whether CB is a problem at their school, nearly all of teachers had different ideas for preventing CB, almost all middle school teachers had different ideas for what helping professionals should know about CB, and lastly, almost all teachers suggested different ideas for social workers to prevent CB, thus suggesting that the teachers, school principle, and the school counselor have some beliefs and attitudes about what social workers need to know about CB and that they differed in their responses.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, we will bring our attention to the study's results. The purpose is to learn about the meaning of what social workers need to know about cyberbullying (CB). We will further discuss how the literature review relates to this research study. This chapter will also discuss the limitations of the study, recommendations, for social work practice, policy and research and the conclusions.

Discussion of Results for Research Question One

The first theme that arose with research question one was that almost all participants were able to provide examples of CB occurring on the social media website Facebook. Respondent two which was a 7th grade stated "last year there was a student suspended for writing things something on Facebook something about yea we should kick her butt, named the student" (Survey Interview, February 2015). The next participant which was a 6th grade teacher also gave her example of cyberbullying related to facebook. This 6th grade teacher stated "last year I heard a couple of six grade student girls who were involved, it was mostly through Facebook from what I understand. They were friends on Facebook but one person said something negative about the other one and it streamed a conversation of other kids going on in it too" (Participant

3, Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant seven, a sixth grade teacher, mentioned that CB was happening on Facebook. This sixth grade teacher stated that “there were some students that were saying things about kids on Facebook so we did have a few issues. It was mainly girls centered around Facebook saying mean things” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Respondent nine, another eighth grade teacher also linked cyberbullying to Facebook. This respondent stated that “there was an issue with some of the girls posting negative comments on Facebook. Taking screen shots pictures of what was said. Posting mean things about people. It is becoming an issue” (Survey Interview, March 2015).

These findings indicate that eight of the ten participants were aware of what CB is and that it is occurring on the social networking website Facebook. In the literature review, Feinberg and Robey (2009), stated that CB encompasses the use of telecommunications, such as the internet and cell phones to continuously send and post cruel messages about an individual or individuals. Feinberg and Robey (2009), also stated that CB is occurring in chat rooms, e-mails, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook and Twitter), gaming sites, and instant messaging. The findings from this question indicate that participants are aware of what CB is and that it is primarily occurring on Facebook. This can also mean that Facebook may be the most popular social networking site used by students at this school. In addition, Facebook can be a social networking site where cyberbullying can be happening.

Discussion of Results for Research Question Two

The second theme that emerged with research question two was that more than half of all participants could not name any specific CB school policies or laws. The first participant which was a sixth grade teacher stated, "I'm embarrassed to say that I don't know them on top of my head." Participant 5, an eighth grade teacher stated "I know at my last district CB you could be suspended and that includes teacher and an incidence of where a student took a picture of the teacher and posted it on the internet and they suspended both. I don't know of the exact laws" (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant six, a sixth grade teacher declared, "I just know that it's not tolerated, I know that there is consequences that can happen at the school level. I don't know specific laws" (Survey Interview, March 2015). Respondent nine, another eighth grade teacher stated "I don't really know any of the laws, I'm assuming the schools have policies against bullying in general" (Survey Interview, March 2015). Participant three, the school principal stated,

I don't think we have a school policy on cyberbullying. The Ed code that we refer to, there's an Ed code where we can suspend students and one of them is for bullying but it does include bullying by electronic means and that is the one that we use to encompass cyberbullying. (Survey Interview, February 2015)

These findings indicated that five out of ten respondents lacked knowledge in naming any CB policies and laws. Many participants were aware

that school policies or laws existed but they could not name them. The school principal made it clear that this school does not have their own school policy on CB and that the school follows the California Education Handbook. The school principal was the only participant that mentioned the California Education Handbook. This shows that many of the participants are not aware of this Handbook that lists the California Laws related to CB. This also demonstrates that this school does not have its own school policy on cyberbullying.

If this school had their own policy in cyberbullying more participants would be aware of it. According to Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson (2013) there is a recognized need for the development of clear school policies focusing on cyber bullying. Schools should have thorough policies that explain what online actions are and are not tolerated. The fact that majority of participants did not know of any cyberbullying policies or laws demonstrated that this school needs a school cyberbullying policy. Even though there are current laws that deal with CB, most of the participants lacked knowledge in naming any. Even though there are current laws that deal with CB, most of the participants lacked knowledge in naming any. A vital requirement for CB intervention strategies is knowledge. Schools need to implement their own CB policy and educate their employees on it. In doing so, teachers will be knowledgeable of CB policies.

Discussion of Results for Research Question Three

The third theme that emerged with research question three was that the majority of all respondents had distinct views of the protocol for reporting CB. The school principal stated “we have a bullying and harassment form those students or parents can fill out. If they fill it out we can conduct an investigation to see what has happened” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant one a sixth grade teacher stated, “well that would be the same thing as with bullying, they present it to the teacher and we follow through with it. Of course then it goes to administration and if that doesn’t help then we will still have to follow that chain”(Survey Interview, February 2015). Respondent four, an eighth grade teacher stated “first they should go on and look at the Facebook page at something they might want to make a copy for documentation and if it’s something that is going on with several kids then they need to bring it up to administration” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant seven, a sixth grade teacher stated, “I would say if a parent in any way suspects they need to find out who is involved and where it’s happening and other parents need to get involved so that all parties are aware and there be can consequences” (Survey Interview, March 2015).

The main finding for this research question indicated that the principal and teachers at this school handle cyberbullying in different ways. The school principal believed that CB should be managed using a bullying and harassment form. A sixth grade teacher believed that it is handled in the same

manner as with bullying and should be presented to the teacher and administration. An eighth grade teacher believed that parents need to go on the Facebook page and make a copy of it for documentation. Another sixth grade teacher believed that parents need to find out who is involved and where it is happening and then bring it to administration. These findings also demonstrated that this school does not have a set procedure for managing CB. If this school does not a protocol for handling CB, the school staff is not going to know how to properly react to it. Teachers and staff are not going to know how to intervene and direct parents if there is not a set CB procedure in place. Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, and Ferrin (2012) found that even though teachers are prone to react to cyberbullying, they may be uncertain as to how they should take action. As stated above, this school needs to implement their own CB policies and procedures and educate their school staff on it. In doing so, teachers will come to a mutual understanding of how to intervene and manage CB.

Discussion of Results for Research Question Four

The fourth theme that emerged with research question four was that more than half of all the participants had different views of CB symptoms. Participant one, a sixth grade teacher stated, "The kids don't want to come to school, feel inferior, scared, start to shut down" (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant four, an eighth grade teacher stated "Depression, all of a sudden closing off from their friends, no concentration in school, tears, not

eating, sleepy, being up all night, lack of focus, looking dirty sometimes not on top of it anymore” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Respondent seven, a sixth grade teacher stated, “I would say depression, being a bully themselves. Being isolated and not wanting to talk about it” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Respondent eight the school counselor stated “I have noticed kids who get cyberbullied get depression. They become more self-conscious. They lose friends and gain enemies. Kids commit suicide if they are being bullied. It can cause severe depression” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Respondent nine a eighth grade teacher stated,

I would think you might see their grades decline. They might be coming to school depressed. They might be missing a lot of school that perhaps something’s going on that they don’t what to be here to deal with it. Be very away from there group of friends you can see it ripple through the students. (Survey Interview, March 2015)

Participant ten, a seventh grade teacher declared, “They come to class crying for no reason and they won’t tell you why. Also you will hear them chatting in the corner by themselves and you have no idea what they’re talking about” (Survey Interview, March 2015).

The key findings for this research question indicate that eight of the ten participants vary in regards to their beliefs of CB symptoms. Eight of the ten respondents look for different signs in victims of CB. The literature review indicates that children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed,

suicidal, and have lower academic performance in school (Adeleke et al., 2008). Hoff and Mitchell (2009) also found that cyberbullying had psychological effects on victims. Sufferers reported feelings of anger, powerlessness, sadness, anxiety, frustration and fear. Individuals also reported they had become less confident and had considered treatment for depression. Three of the ten respondents believed that depression was a symptom of a child that was being cyberbullied. One participant mentioned that a child may be suicidal if he or she or he is being cyberbullied. Two out of the ten participants believed that children who are being cyberbullied have lower academic performance in school. In relation to the literature review, no participants mentioned anger, powerlessness, confidence or frustration.

Discussion of Results for Research Question Five

The fifth theme that emerged with research question five was that the respondents were split in half on their beliefs of CB occurring more than traditional bullying. Participant three, the school principal believed that CB happens more than traditional bullying. The school principal stated,

I do, but I would say it's with students that have access to technology.

Once they reached a certain age and their parents have given them cell phones or they are allowed to create social media accounts then probably we don't have issues with our damnatory issues as with middle school students. (Survey Interview, February 2015)

Respondent four, an eighth grade teacher also believed that cyberbullying occurs more than traditional bullying. This teacher stated “Yes absolutely. Nowadays students don’t know how to communicate face to face and we have a lot of instances where I tell the kids if you take that moment to talk rather than text, you would see that misinterpretation occur” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant nine, an eighth grade teacher believed that CB does not occur more than traditional bullying. This teacher stated,

I don’t think so. I think from what I have seen it’s positive, there fun pictures. The kids don’t realize calling kids names is a form of bullying. It just becomes a common place in passing that I think it’s definitely on the rise and it’s definitely an issue but I still think traditional bullying happens more frequently during the day. (Survey Interview, March 2015)

Participant ten, a seventh grade teacher also believed that CB does not occur more than traditional bullying. This teacher stated “No, I think CB to some extent you can turn it off but you can’t really because the people are saying things behind your back so you can’t really. Bullying is so prevalent kids can be so mean” (Survey Interview, March 2015).

The central findings for this question indicates that five out of the ten participants believed that CB was occurring more than traditional bullying while the other five believed that CB was not occurring more than traditional bullying. Kowalski and Limber (2007), found that 11% of middle school

students had been cyberbullied at least once in the preceding months, 7% specified that they were victims/bully, 4% indicated they were a bully and had cyberbullied an individual once in the last couple months. In this study the researchers stated that they believed cyberbullying was significant to be of concern (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). The findings of this research propose that CB is occurring. In comparison to CB and traditional bullying, Modecki and Minchin (2013) discovered that the percentages of CB is less than the ratios for traditional bullying. This is interesting because it shows that traditional bullying is more prevalent than CB. Although CB is happening, studies still demonstrate that traditional bullying outnumbers CB. Our participants were split in half on their beliefs of CB and traditional bullying. Even though more than half of participants were able to provide examples of CB, they were unsure of its prevalence in compared to traditional bullying. Their difference in opinions may be linked to their different experiences of CB and traditional bullying. These findings also show that respondents are aware that CB and traditional bullying are distinct and therefore may need different prevention and intervention strategies.

Discussion of Results for Research Question Six

This qualitative study indicated that almost all participants (7 out of 10 respondents) believed that this school took CB seriously. Participant one, a sixth grade teacher reported, "I would think so. Thinking of that one case we just finished, parents were brought in and students were talked to. The other

student was moved from the class, there was a suspension of one week” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Participant 8 stated, “I think we do take it seriously, if a student is threatening some or harassing someone” (Survey Interview, March 2015) in contrast participants that did not believe that their school took CB seriously stated “I think it’s difficult in our district” Participant nine stated “they don’t realize the extent of how bad thing can get for the middle school children” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Overall, this study found that respondents believed their schools address CB when it occurs. As a result, it can be assumed school professionals acknowledge that CB is an issue and should be addressed accordingly (Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2013). Other respondents illustrated this theme with statements, such as “we take bullying seriously, CB is just a form of bullying.” Eden et al., (2013) illustrates this point well, their study found teachers reported CB being a major problem at their school and suggested the following prevention and intervention strategies: “policy making, enhancing awareness of the school team and coping strategies for parents” (p. 1043). It was interesting that all participants believed that this school took CB seriously let in our study found that approximately all participants could not name any specific CB laws. It appears school professionals are aware CB should be taken seriously as some participants were able to provide personal experiences with CB, but it appears they assume of the responsibility to the school administration when CB occurs. Slovak and Singer (2011) were used in this study to formulate the

questions that were asked. In their study, they asked social workers “I believe that CB is actively addressed at my school” and 48.2 % disagreed with this statement (Slovak & Singer, 2011). Their findings and our research findings indicate that there is a discrepancy in beliefs about how “seriously” schools are addressing CB.

Discussion of Results for Research Question Seven

This study discovered that almost all of the teachers were uncertain whether CB was a problem at this school. This is interesting and significant because one could assume that due to CB being a new occurrence within school environments teachers and other school personnel are unsure whether it is a problem at this school. Participant six reported that CB is a problem at this school, “There have been instances with our middle school” “it hasn’t been a lot, but it’s definitely there” (Survey Interview, March 2015), participant ten stated, “absolutely, yeah kids are mean” (Survey Interview, March 2015). I’m sure it happens often, while participant eight stated, “it’s hard to tell sometimes, kids don’t tell you” (Survey Interview, March 2015) and participant nine stated “I don’t think it’s an overall problem” (Survey Interview, February 2015). More research continues to be need in the investigation of determining the actual prevalence of CB, however research that has been conducted suggest internet use has become common in the lives of adolescents and has become part of the adolescent experience (Vermulst et al., 2009). Research conducted in 2006 report that 45% of preteens and 30% of adolescents are

cyberbullied while they are at school (Feinberg & Robey, 2009, p. 26). It is interesting to find that school professionals are uncertain if CB is a problem at their school when research suggests otherwise. It appears CB has a high prevalence among preteens and older adolescents, yet our research suggests students are not communicating harassment with school professionals, thus confusing school professionals on how widespread it actually might be in their school. Mishna et al. (2010) examined CB through a cross-sectional survey of students who were in the 6th, 7th, 10th, and 11th grade. The authors found "half of the students (49.5%) specified that they had been bullied online in the former 3 months and (33.7%) of participants reported they had engaged in bullying behaviors online" (p. 364-365). Overall, researchers argued students know their bully and it occurs through their social relationships online. The finding that almost all teachers were uncertain whether CB is a problem at this school highlights the importance of establishing policies and improving school personnel awareness on CB and thus providing trainings to help prevent and intervene when CB occurs as one could argue it is occurring in the lives of adolescents today, but school teachers are unsure of the prevalence and thus could be unskilled to deal with it. The purpose of this research was to investigate what social workers need to know about CB and results have demonstrated school staff are not sure of the prevalence, but believe they do take CB seriously which is interesting because there are no established preventative policies and procedures on how to address it. The literature

review suggest CB is a problem. Slovak and Singer, 2011, asked social work participants “I believe CB is a problem at our school (s)” and 46.7% stated it is. In comparison to our study which asked “if CB was a problem at this school” almost all stated they were uncertain which is interesting one could imply teachers are not aware of the prevalence of CB while helping professional are.

Discussion of Results for Research Question Eight

Interpretation of question eight suggest, almost all of participants had different ideas for preventing cyberbullying. Although some participant’s responses were similar they were varied. We asked questions to obtain direct and indirect information about their attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs on how CB can be prevented. The following were the examples of the responses provided by the respondents, participant one who is a six grade teacher stated, “I supposed that when there is this anti-bullying part that it’s where we would fit the whole cyberbullying and just be part of the training that we give the kids, so that they learn about it and why it’s wrong. Same thing with bullying” (Survey Interview, February 2015). This particular participant reported knowledge on an effective bullying program and expressed using that same theoretical system for a CB program. The research revealed that many of the preventative programs could be used a sample for the creation of CB. Interventions through the use of education appears to be successful with primary aged students and participants also appeared to believe some form of education could be effective. Each participant had their own strategy, but

participant 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 (7 out of 10) reported “education on social media” “educating parents” “educating students” “lesson on empathy” “open communication” for CB prevention however, responses were still varied in what they believed would prevent CB. Toshack and Colmar (2012) used the program model called “The Click Off” which assesses and educates students on CB. The results revealed that programs that made students think critically on their ideas on CB and come up with their own strategies to combat CB were significantly related to students having appropriate social interactions online. In this research only students who had been victims were educated on CB and this particular participant reported that adding a CB element to their bullying program might be beneficial to all students. Results from this literature review also discovered that elementary students were able to identify and benefited from the program, thus it could suggest applying the “The Click Off” program would be beneficial for elementary students who have experienced CB. The research study found that participants had different ideas for preventing CB. It is interesting that none of the participants mentioned using school psychologists, social workers and counselors as a means to prevent CB. Diamanduros et al. 2008, argue that school psychologists play a significant role in the prevention and identification of CB as they have access to students experiencing CB and are aware of the severity within the school. Helping professionals also have knowledge of possible effective interventions and could help promote policies to manage CB within schools. Participants varied

in their ideas because others stated that spreading “awareness” “talking to students” (participant 4, Survey Interview, February 2015) “creating safe atmospheres” “using uniforms” (participant 3, Survey Interview, February 2015). Slovak and Singer (2011) argue that social workers and other helping professionals should address CB, but that most social workers are uncertain as to how to address it (Slovak & Singer, 2011). In this study participants overwhelmingly expressed concern for CB, but had no concrete ideas for prevention and their responses varied meaning that schools should assess their roles in protecting children against CB and how they plan to respond when it does occur as the literature review of this study concluded CB is a problem.

Discussion of Results for Research Question Nine

The theme for research question six was that almost all participants had different ideas for what helping professionals should know about CB.

Slovak and Singer (2011), found 43.6% of social workers agreed that they “felt equipped to deal with CB” while only 11.5 strongly agreed meaning that half of social workers do not feel they can manage cyberbullying. In our studies findings, we found that participants had different ideas for what helping professionals should know about CB this is interesting because one could imply that participants who are mostly teachers are not communicating with school social workers as they had different ideas for what social workers should know and half of social workers feel they cannot manage CB. The responses could also suggest teachers like social workers are unsure on what

they should know about CB. However, the majority of the respondents were able to articulate ideas for what helping professionals should know about CB. Participant six stated, “nobody can avoid it, if your are on any social media you are susceptible, “ participant eight reported, “they need to know it is a problem,” (Survey Interview, March 2015) participant nine, “there’s now apps that you can post about people, it’s a burn book,” (Survey Interview, March 2015) participant onereported, “I wouldn’t even know,” andparticipant one, “having some kind of private form that can be filled out and pull kids out one on one” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Sek-yum Ngai et al., (2011); Salmivalli, (2010) stated that adolescents experiencing emotional and behavioral problems highly benefit from mutual aid groups in addition they found that it is appropriate for youth to help one another when experiencing emotional problems especially those related to the adolescent experience, such as bullying. This school did not appear to know what social workers should know about CB, but the literature review suggest mutual aid groups would be appropriate services for youth experiencing CB and could be an intervention clinical social workers could use with clients experiencing CB. This schools responses are not different from the literature found in Menesini and Nocentini who suggest that even among researchers there is inconsistency for how they define CB and even more variability for what helping professional should know about it (as cited in Sabella et al., 2013).

Discussion of Results for Research Question Ten

The theme for research question nine almost all participants suggested different ideas for social workers to prevent CB. Participants predominantly reported education was an important way of preventing CB. Participant nine reported, “we can educate the kids” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Teachers believed that in order to prevent CB social workers needed to be educated on social media. Participant seven, “It’s important to understand what some of the issues they are going through” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Being specifically educated on the types of symptoms experienced in CB was particularly stressed. Participant ten stated, “It seems like it would be important to know what sort of behaviors are a symptom” (Survey Interview, March 2015). However, all ideas were different and varied because participant eight stated, “come up with a questioner” (Survey Interview, March 2015). Participant two stated, “Being up on technology and seeing what kids are using” (Survey Interview, February 2015). Being aware of risk factors was also mentioned, thus creating our theme that participants suggested different ideas for social workers to prevent CB. After analyzing responses answers provided suggest that this school is similar to the literature review found in this study. Reeckman and Cannard (2009); Sahin (2012), suggest educating students on empathy as a means of managing CB. Simmons and Bynum (2014) suggest that more research is needed to determine what the best interventions schools can implement for CB prevention. The researchers provide six suggestions on

what school administrators should do about CB. Two of the researcher's suggestions were similar to the responses that participants in this study suggested. Both this school's professionals and literature suggested providing education to parents and students and creating a safe and comfortable reporting form where CB could be reported (Simmons & Bynum, 2014).

This study's results illustrate that school professionals are uncertain on the symptoms, laws, prevention, intervention, and overall what social workers should know about CB. This school did not seem different from other schools which is alarming considering the literature that suggests that CB is highly spread in schools and part of the lives of adolescents today. The findings demonstrate the importance of conducting this study and the significance to school social workers. The study did find that participants had some general knowledge on the topic, but it appears there is no set policy within the school for cyberbullying. The ten interviews illustrate the need for further research

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knowledge on the topic, but it appears there is no set policy within the school for cyberbullying. The ten interviews illustrate the need for further research.

Limitations

This qualitative research study faced several limitations. One limitation of this study was that there was no evidence that demonstrated that CB was an issue at the school. This school was purposely selected because it had cases of CB events that had been brought into the school. We choose to conduct research in this school because a recent study has revealed that approximately half of school social workers feel unskilled to handle CB (Singer & Slovak, 2011). We had hopes that this school had a high prevalence of CB and therefore we could gain knowledge. However, participants were unsure whether cyberbullying was an issue at the school. Moreover, participants lacked knowledge in policies and laws and all had different beliefs for the protocol for CB. Moreover, when respondents gave there examples of CB majority of them linked them to cases that had occurred last year. This can indicate that CB was not a current problem at this school.

The next limitation has to do with sample size. At this school there are a total of eleven middle school teachers. Our initial intent was to interview ten middle school teachers. However, only eight teachers, the school principal and school counselor chose to participate. Another limitation was that our study had nine female participants and only one male. This is due to the fact that this

schools middle school teachers are mostly females. This indicates that this study was primarily based from the perspective of females.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

The topic of CB is extremely crucial for social work practice because it is one the main challenges that school social workers face. According to Singer and Slovaks' (2011) recent study half of school social workers feel incompetent to manage CB (Singer & Slovak, 2011).The National Association of Social Workers, (NASW) calls social workers to be competent and improve their specialty knowledge (2014).If social workers are not competent, they are not adhering to the NASW code of ethics and being the very best social workers that they are called to be.

This study's results suggest several recommendations. The first recommendation is for school social workers to assess all children for cyberbullying. School social workers need to conduct an assessment of all children to discover the frequency of cyberbullying. Through an assessment, school social workers can also choose proper prevention and response approaches. In addition, school social workers should always be the first to instruct students, school staff, and parents about cyberbullying (Snakenborg, Van Acker, & Gable, 2011).

The second recommendation would be for this school to perform a school assessment to measure the frequency of CB. In our study, we see that

participants were uncertain if CB was a problem in their campus. This shows that they do not have knowledge of the occurrence of CB in their campus. A very well-known tool to assess the frequency of CB is the CB and online aggression instrument (Berne, Frisén, Schultze-Krumbholz, Scheithauer, Naruskov, Luik, & ... Zukauskienė, 2013). This tool consists of 32 questions that are aimed at assessing for cyberbullying. If this school would use this instrument, they would be aware of the prevalence of cyberbullying in their campus.

The next recommendations would be for the school to have a clear CB policy. This is in agreement with our findings that more than half of all participants could not name any specific CB school policies or laws. The school principal made it clear that this school does not have their own school policy on CB. Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson, (2013) recommend establishing clear CB school policies in schools. This school needs to have their own CB policy in order to better equip teachers in managing cyberbullying incidences.

Another recommendation would be for this school to have a clear CB procedure. This addresses the finding that majority of all respondents had distinct views of the protocol for reporting CB. The school principal was the only participant that mentioned a bullying and harassment form. Every other participant stated a different procedure for handling CB. Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, and Ferrin (2012) support the fact that many teachers do not know how to take action in CB incidences. The results of this study indicate that this

school does not have a set protocol in place. This school needs a clear outline of what students, teachers, administrators, and the school counselor can do in the case of CB. This procedure should be well known to every school staff member.

The last recommendation would be for this school to have ongoing professional development for school staff members such as teachers, principals, counselors. This addresses the finding that all participants had different views of CB symptoms and that CB is primarily happening on Facebook. According to Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson (2013) professional development about CB is vital. Professionals need to be aware about the warning signs to look for in cyberbullies and victims. The trainings of professionals should be based on explaining the technologies of cyberbullying. As stated in the literature, technology such as the internet and cellphones has made it possible for children to cyberbully (Feinberg & Robey, 2009). The internet contains different mediums through which these threats are achieved, such as chat rooms, e-mails, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook and Twitter), gaming sites, and instant messaging. If professionals are not familiar with these mediums they will not know how to appropriately intervene in CB incidences. This study's findings indicated that CB is primarily occurring on Facebook. Although Facebook was the main social networking site where CB is occurring, there could be more websites that teachers are not aware of. It is important for all professionals to be current with all social media.

Recommendations for Research

Participants provided reassuring responses that were very similar to the literature review and all were able to provide responses to the interview questions. We actually began the interview by reassuring and cautioning participants that they should feel comfortable disclosing attitudes, beliefs, and views on CB as it is a new phenomenon and knowledge is limited. In future research participants should also be advised and encouraged to disclose their beliefs even though few laws exist within schools because it is a strategy for formulating ideas for prevention and what social workers should be aware of when it comes to CB. For future studies, researchers could use a public school with more availability for participants as our research only utilized ten participants. Another suggestion would be to ask more demographic questions. Future research should include training for school professional on how to address CB as our results found most were uncertain as to what to do and thus would be better able to provide suggestions for what social workers should know on cyberbullying. Chibbaro (2007) suggest school counselors are better suited to provide training on CB, thus future research could include interviewing only school counselors for what social workers should know on CB.

Conclusions

The significance of this qualitative study was to identify what school social workers need to know about CB. We conducted this research because it

is reported that approximately half of school social workers feel they do not have the skills need to manage CB (Singer & Slovak, 2011). Our study used middle school teachers, a principle, and a counselor to assess their perceptions and beliefs on what social workers should know for CB. This population was selected because adolescents spend most of their day interacting with school professionals. The study included 10 participants that responded to 10 interview questions. CB has been labeled by literature as new and a harmful event in the lives of adolescents. Research has shown that it is correlated with anxiety, depression, and even suicide symptoms. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) state that CB is a traumatic experience for the victim and it could lead to bodily, intellectual, emotional and social consequences, thus indicating the importance of social workers having knowledge on what CB is, its effects, prevalence, and its prevention. This research findings indicate almost all participants were able to provide examples of cyberbullying occurring in the social networking website Facebook, more than half of all participants could not name any specific CB school policies or laws, majority of all respondents had distinct views of the protocol for reporting CB, more than half of all the participants had different views of CB symptoms, the respondents were split in half on their beliefs of CB occurring more than traditional bullying, almost all participants believed that their school took CB seriously, almost all of the participants were uncertain whether CB was a problem at their school, almost all of participants had different ideas for

preventing CB, almost all participants had different ideas for what helping professionals should know about CB, and almost all participants suggested different ideas for social workers to prevent CB. In chapter five we presented the themes derived from the 10 qualitative questions and made references to previous and relevant research findings to provide additional perspectives and meanings to our findings. Overall, this study's results illustrate that school professionals are uncertain on the symptoms, laws, prevention, intervention, and overall what social workers should know about cyberbullying. This study had many limitations that could have affected results, such as low participants. Findings indicated that this school staff was able to provide articulate responses, but all had different suggestions for what social workers should know about CB. It is our hope that this study will contribute to future research and discussion regarding what social workers should know about CB.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEWQUESTIONS

Participant Form

What Social Workers Need to Know About Cyberbullying

1. Can you give me a case example of cyberbullying that has occurred at your school?
2. What are some cyberbullying school policies or laws?
3. If a parent suspects that their child is being cyberbullied, what should they do?
4. What are some symptoms of a student that is being cyberbullied?
5. Do you think cyberbullying occurs more than traditional bullying?
6. Do you think your school takes cyberbullying seriously?
7. Do you believe that cyberbullying is a problem at your school?
8. What are the types of ideas that you have for preventing cyberbullying?
9. What are some things that helping professionals need to know about cyberbullying?
10. What do you think social workers need to know to prevent cyberbullying?

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to recognize what social workers need to know about cyberbullying. The study is being conducted by Laura Franco and Brenda Miranda, MSW students at California State University, San Bernardino under the supervision of assistant professor Herb Shon at CSUSB. The study has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the CSUSB Institutional Review Board.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to identify what social workers need to know about cyberbullying. We are particularly interested in what teachers believe social workers should know about cyberbullying.

DESCRIPTION: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked questions by the interviewer for 20 minutes. The informed consent form must be signed if you wish to participate in the study.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is absolutely voluntary. If you feel overwhelmed during the study you may conclude at any time. You may skip questions that you do not wish to answer.

CONFIDENTIAL: Any information that you give will be kept confidential. Your information will not be used for any purposes outside of this research study. No information that could identify you will be used. Participants' confidentiality will be protected. All information will be kept in a locked cabinet and destroyed after 3 years.

DURATION: The interviews are expected to last no more than 20 minutes.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to taking part in this study.

BENEFITS: The study will help social workers and administrators better understand cyberbullying.

COMPENSATION: All participants will receive \$10.00 for participating.

CONTACT: If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please contact Dr. Shon at (909) 537-5532.

RESULTS: The results will be available at the Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino.

I have read the information above and agree to participate in your study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Study of “What Social Workers Need to Know About Cyberbullying”
Debriefing Statement

This study you have just completed was designed to investigate what social workers (SWs) need to know about cyberbullying. Previous studies have found that SWs are not informed of the psychological harm cyberbullying causes and they accept that it needs to be addressed, however feel unprepared to handle this issue, therefore your beliefs about what they should be aware of were assessed. In this study, you were asked questions regarding your beliefs on cyberbullying and what SW’s should be aware of. All participants were interviewed with the same questions.

It is important for SWs to learn about cyberbullying from teachers because teachers have the advantage of interacting with students who have been cyberbullied and thus are aware of the strategies SW’s can use when dealing with cyberbullied individuals.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of the interview questions with other teachers. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Laura Franco and Brenda Miranda at FranL304@coyote.csusb.edu and mirab303@coyote.csusb.edu. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact Professor Herb Shon, Ph.D., LCSW at (909)537-5532 at the end of Spring Quarter of 2015.

APPENDIX D

FLYER

Middle School Teachers Needed To Participate in a Research Study

My name is Laura Franco and I am the MSW intern. I am writing to you because my colleague Brenda Miranda and I want to invite you to participate in our research study. Both of us are MSW students from California State University, San Bernardino.

The purpose of this study is to identify what social workers need to know about cyberbullying. If you would like to participate in this study, you will be interviewed for 15- 20 minutes on your attitudes towards cyberbullying. This study will begin in February 2015 and end March 2015.

If you are interested in participating, please email my partner or me your confirmation with your name and contact number to FranL304@coyote.csusb.edu or mirab303@coyote.csusb.edu. This study will be taking place here in the public school and will be on Fridays. If you agree to be in this study, you will **automatically receive \$10 dollars.**

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me here at the school or by email.

Thank you very much.
Laura Franco, MSW Intern
Brenda Miranda, MSW

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:
Team Effort: Laura Franco and Brenda Miranda
2. Data Entry and Analysis:
Team Effort: Laura Franco and Brenda Miranda
3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:
 - a. Introduction and Literature
Team Effort: Laura Franco and Brenda Miranda
 - b. Methods
Team Effort: Laura Franco and Brenda Miranda
 - c. Results
Team Effort: Laura Franco and Brenda Miranda
 - d. Discussion
Team Effort: Laura Franco and Brenda Miranda