

## CYBERBULLYING

### Tip Sheet #6 MAY 2009

#### Rates of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is not yet at epidemic proportions.

It is estimated that 33% of teens in the USA have experienced cyberbullying. However, this is not yet the case in Australia.

Rates of face-to-face bullying are at this point greater than rates of cyberbullying.

#### Adolescents are building their identities partly in cyberspace

Young people's identities are being formed both online and offline.

Adults use terms such as *online* and *offline*, young people don't use those terms because there is no *offline*.

A big part of adolescent social life and social development is played out online.

#### Cyberbullying rarely occurs in a vacuum

There is quite a significant overlap between those young people who are experiencing cyberbullying behaviours and those experiencing face-to-face bullying behaviours.

The research to date indicates that the effects of experiencing cyberbullying behaviours are likely to exacerbate existing face-to-face bullying.

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"Confiscating technology is like removing a social limb for young people"

Dr. Julian Dooley, 2009

#### Debunking the cyberbullying myths

Cyberbullying can but does not always go hand-in-hand with self-harming behaviours, suicidal ideation or suicidal acts.

Despite a number of high profile and very tragic cases, we must recognize that cyberbullying is fundamentally bullying behaviour enacted using technology.

#### Collaborate with young people to deal with cyberbullying

For most young people the benefits of technology, especially as a social tool, outweigh the potential of being exposed to cyberbullying behaviours.

Avoid the knee-jerk reaction of removing the technology or access to technology due to fear.

Educate parents in what technology is all about and encourage them to talk with their children about: (i) their use technology, (ii) the importance of technology for them and the role it plays in their lives, and (iii) what's appropriate & inappropriate and what's acceptable & unacceptable.