



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
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Bullying, cyberbullying and the sharing of youth- produced sexual imagery

Dr Mairéad Foody



friends



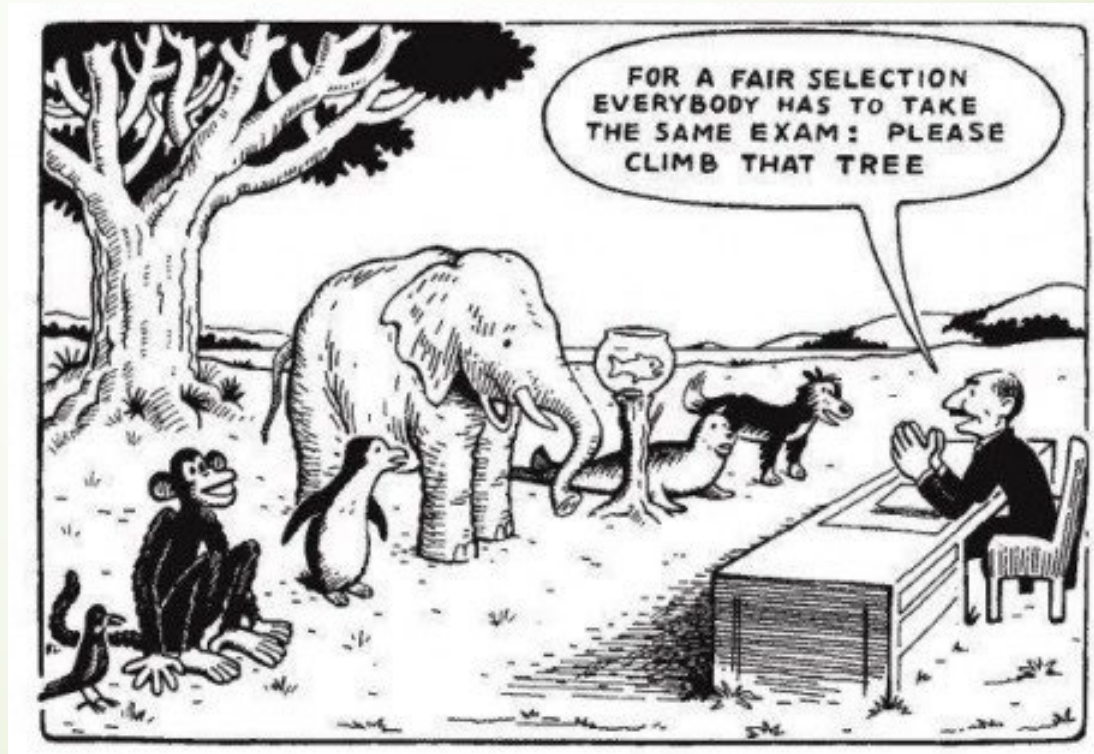
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair on Tackling Bullying in Schools
and Cyberspace through a Global Partnership
for Equality and Wellbeing with Dublin City University

Human Rights based approach to bullying and victimisation

- ▶ Anything that inhibits a child's educational opportunity is a human rights issue
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Violence
- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Social Class
- ▶ Religion
- ▶ **Bullying/Cyberbullying**
- ▶ **Online sexual violence**





Victimization and the UN Sustainable Goals

- ▶ **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- ▶ **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- ▶ **Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Bullying & Cyberbullying in Ireland

Prevalence Rates	School Type	
	Primary	Post-Primary
Overall Victims: Cyber & Traditional	22.4%	12.1%
Cyber & Bullying Perpetration	9.4%	6.1%
Bullying Victimization	26.1%	12.4%
Cyber Victimization	13.7%	9.6%
Bullying Perpetration	10.1%	6.9%
Cyber Perpetration	5.2%	3.9%

(Foody, Samara & O'Higgins Norman, 2017)



Study 1: Sharing of sexual images (‘sexting’)

- ▶ N= 848 students across 19 schools
- ▶ 15-18 years old
- ▶ 52.5% Female
- ▶ Pilot study of convenience

Co-authors: Derek Laffan and James O’Higgins Norman



Procedure

- ▶ Definition of sexting *'sending a sexually explicit text message, picture, or video of yourself to someone else using a mobile phone or the Internet'*
- ▶ **Sending questions:** (1) Have you *been asked* to send naked pictures of yourself (or a sext) through text, email or applications like that? and (2) Have you sent naked pictures of yourself through text, email or applications like that?
- ▶ **Receiving questions:** (1) Has someone sent a sexually explicit image of themselves to you when you have asked for them to? and (2) Have you ever received a sexually explicit image when you really didn't want to?
- ▶ Consent question: 'Has anyone ever shared sexual images of you online without your consent?'.



Other measures

- ▶ Gender, age and year group
- ▶ Depression (Moods and Feelings Questionnaire, MFQ; Angold & Costello, 1987)
- ▶ Self-Esteem (Rosenberg 1965, Self-Esteem Scale, SES)
- ▶ Peer Popularity Scale (Santor, Messervey & Kusumakar, 2000)
- ▶ Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ, Goodman, 1997; 2001)

Frequencies

	Never N(%)	Once N(%)	Frequently N(%)	Sig For gender (p)	Eta For gender
1. Have you been asked to send naked pictures of yourself (or a sext) through text, email or applications like snapchat?					
Overall	357 (43)	101 (28)	366 (29)	>.001	.21
Males (n/% of total)	200 (24.5)	48 (5.9)	125 (14.9)		
Females (n/% of total)	152 (18.6)	50 (6.1)	237 (28.8)		
2. Have you sent naked pictures of yourself (or a sext) through text, email or applications like that?					
Overall	617 (76)	55 (7)	138 (17)	>.001	.16
Males (n/% of total)	270 (33.3)	23 (2.8)	71 (8.7)		
Females (n/% of total)	337 (41.6)	32 (3.9)	64 (7.5)		
3. Has someone sent a naked picture (or sext) of themselves to you after you have asked for them?					
Overall	568 (69.4)	67 (8.1)	183 (22.6)	>.001	.31
Males (n/% of total)	201 (24.5)	40 (4.8)	128 (15.6)		
Females (n/% of total)	360 (44)	26 (3.1)	50 (6.1)		
4. Have you ever received a naked picture (or sext) when you really didn't want to?					
Overall	455 (55.9)	118 (14.5)	241 (29.6)	>.001	.30
Males (n/% of total)	268 (32.9)	43 (5.3)	62 (7.6)		
Females (n/% of total)	187 (23)	75 (9.2)	179 (22)		
5. Has anyone ever shared naked pictures (or sexts) of you without your consent?					
Overall	710 (86.9)	58 (7)	49 (5.9)	>.001	.020
Males (n/% of total)	320 (39.1)	24 (2.9)	23 (2.8)		
Females (n/% of total)	380 (46.5)	34 (4.1)	23 (2.8)		

With Who?

	Asked by N(%)	Sent to N(%)	Received with request N(%)	Shared without consent
My boyfriend/girlfriend	120 (25.9)	110 (54.2)	108(43)	16 (15.4)
Someone I had a crush on	40 (8.6)	27 (13.3)	32 (12.7)	7 (6.7)
Someone in my class	15 (3.2)	4 (2)	12 (4.8)	11 (10.6)
A close friend	18 (3.9)	13 (6.4)	19 (7.6)	25 (24)
Someone my own age	175 (37.7)	27 (13.3)	63 (25.1)	28 (26.9)
An adult I know	7 (1.5)	2 (1)	4 (1.6)	3 (2.9)
A stranger	59 (12.7)	7 (3.4)	13 (5.2)	14 (13.5)
Other	30 (6.5)	13 (6.4)	*	*

Did you tell anyone?

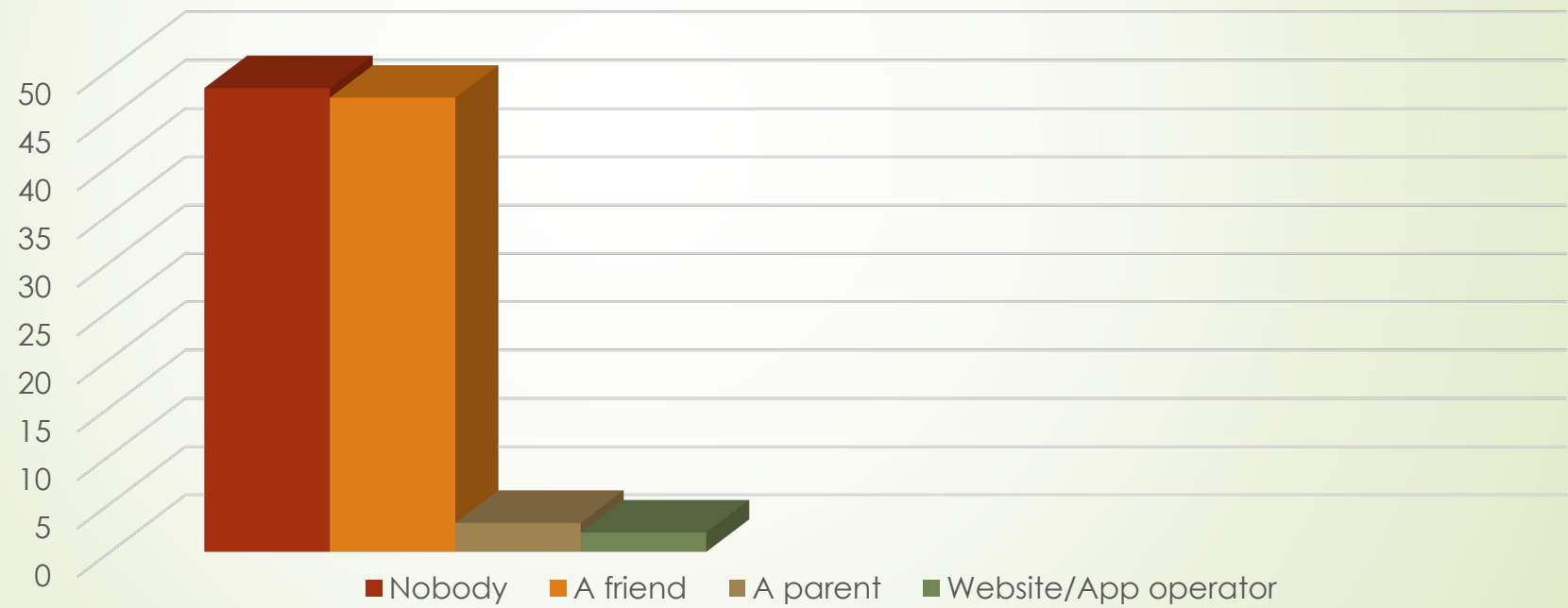


Table 3

Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) outcome scores across outcomes

	Receiver Only M (SD)	Send Only M (SD)	Send and Receive M (SD)	Neutral M (SD)
MFQ	5.9 (5.5)	10 (7)	9.2 (7.5)	6.8 (5.9)
Self-Esteem	19.7 (5)	23.8 (4.9)	21.8 (6)	20.9 (5.2)
Popularity	22.2 (8.2)	25.3 (9.6)	25.3** (9.7)	21.1 (7.8)
Emotional Problems (SDQ)	8.5 (2.7)	10.2 (2.3)	9.6 (3)	9.4 (2.6)
Conduct Problems (SDQ)	8.2* (2.2)	7.5 (1.5)	8.6** (2)	7.1 (1.6)
Hyperactivity (SDQ)	9.7 (2.4)	9.7 (2.4)	10.5 (2.3)	9.1 (2.3)
Peer Problems (SDQ)	7.1 (1.8)	7.3 (1.7)	7.4 (2)	7.2 (1.8)
Prosocial Behaviour (SDQ)	11.9 (2.2)	12.9 (1.7)	12 (2.2)	12.7 (1.9)
Total Difficulties (SDQ)	33.34 (6.2)	34.5 (5)	36.1** (6.5)	32.8 (5.5)

*p < 0.01 against the neutral group

** p < 0.001 against the neutral group



Conclusions



- ▶ Sexting is pretty common (24%) in Irish teenagers aged 15-18years
- ▶ Young people are mostly sending sexual images to people their own age and as part of relationships
- ▶ Friendship appears to be an important element where young people are discussing this only with people their own age
- ▶ They are not talking to us about it when something goes wrong!!



Study 2: Teacher's attribution of blame and feelings of responsibility

- ▶ Do pre-service teachers attribute more blame to females (compared to males) when they suffered online sexual harassment?
- ▶ How important was the actual event (sharing of images) and would different scenarios make pre-service teachers attribute more or less blame and feel more or less responsible?

Co-authors: Angela Mazzone, Beatrice Sciacca and James O'Higgins Norman



Procedure



- ▶ N=92 (out of 188) pre-service teachers attending the first and second year of the teacher training programme (75% females)
- ▶ Completed the study after a lecture using a link to an online survey
- ▶ Required to read vignettes and answer questions



Vignettes (Wolak and Finkelhor, 2011)

- (1) aggravated incident, adult involved (i.e., when an adult asks a sexual picture from a minor)
- (2) aggravated incident, youth with intent to harm (i.e., when a minor spreads a sexual photo of a peer (or threats to do it) as an extortion or as vengeance for an interpersonal conflict)
- (3) aggravated incident, youth reckless misuse (i.e., when a minor's photo is taken and shared by another youth without consent but with no intent to harm)
- (4) experimental incident, romantic (i.e. when the picture is consensually shared between two people who are in a relationship together)
- (5) experimental incident, attention seeking (i.e. when a sexual photo is sent to create (romantic) interest outside an ongoing relationship)



Vignettes

(example of aggravated incident, youth with intent to harm)

Imagine the following blog was written by a girl/boy at your school.

'I recently found out that another student in my class created a Facebook profile about me and sent friend requests to all of my classmates. In the profile, there are pictures of my face photo-shopped onto embarrassing pictures and everyone has been posting mean and hurtful comments. Since I found out about the profile a couple of weeks ago, I cannot sleep because I cannot stop thinking about it and I am scared everyone is turning against me'



Attribution of blame and perceived responsibility

- ▶ Following each vignette, participants were asked to express their agreement with seven statements concerning the attribution of blame (four items; e.g., *"I think the girl/boy should feel ashamed"*) and their perceived responsibility (three items; e.g., *"I think it is my responsibility to deal with this incident, even though it happened outside the school"*).
- ▶ The answers were given on a Likert scale ranging from 1 = *disagree strongly* to 5 = *agree strongly*.



Results

- ▶ Results found no differences for blame or responsibility when the main characters were male or female.
- ▶ We then use a series of dependent t-tests to determine differences between total blame and total responsibility across the scenarios. There were differences for the scenarios.



Attribution of blame

- ▶ Teacher's attributed the most blame in the experimental incident, attention seeking (i.e. when a sexual photo is sent to create (romantic) interest outside an ongoing relationship) significantly more so than the other scenarios

'One of the students in your class posted semi-nude pictures of herself on a social networking site. The website operator eventually took down the photos, but by then the other students and the teachers had already seen them'

Attribution of blame

- Aggravated incident, adult involved (i.e., when an adult asks a sexual picture from a minor) had the least attribution of blame (significantly less than the others)

'One of your students met an older person online who he likes and who he feels really gets him. The other day this person asked your student to send them a picture where he was semi-nude. He didn't mind because loads of people are doing it and he trusted them to keep it safe. He was really shocked when this person completely changed after that. They told him he needed to send more images or they would send the first one to his family and friends. They said that if he doesn't send more they will make sure that his first picture is everywhere and everyone will know what he did'



Responsibility

Significantly higher sense of responsibility for (1) aggravated incident, adult involved; (2) aggravated incident, youth with intent to harm and (3) aggravated incident, youth reckless misuse

compared to

(4) experimental incident, romantic and (5) experimental incident, attention seeking



Interventions

- ▶ We may need two strands of interventions that work together and even overlap.
- ▶ 1. Around online sexual harassment and protecting victims from online abuse as well as reducing the actions and negative outcomes
- ▶ 2. Around online safety. These could deal specifically with issues related to cases of romantic 'mistakes' and attention seeking.
- ▶ We need to start listening to our young people and asking them to guide us to the best solutions and interventions



Email:

Mairead.foody@dcu.ie



Exercise

- ▶ I will present a statement. Take a minute to consider and then go to the location in the room that best describes your opinion on it.
- ▶ I agree
- ▶ I disagree
- ▶ I both agree and disagree
- ▶ I think something else



Statement 1

School staff are **responsible** for dealing with cases of non-consensual sharing of sexual imagery that arise for their students





Statement 2

School staff **have** the
necessary resources to deal
with these cases





Questions to consider

- ▶ Should it be illegal to sext?
- ▶ What type of research is needed in this area?
- ▶ Are there existing interventions already out there?