Cyberbullying and Ohio Schools:

A Social Justice Framework to Understand and Create Change

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Abstract

In 2019, 36.5% of students, age 12-17, reported that they were cyberbullied at some point in their life. Cyberbullying is a growing problem within Ohio. Self-mutilation, attempted suicide, and death have been linked to victims of cyberbullying. Within Ohio, there are also legal implications for schools to consider. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework, different types of cyberbullies, bullying practices, and proposed solutions for cyberbullying can be addressed in a more comprehensive manner within the schools. Ultimately, schools can be the vanguards for social justice, creating the cultural shift to end cyberbullying and its devastating effects on victims.

Keywords: cyberbullying, school administration and faculty, adolescents, social justice, ecological model

Cyberbullying, also known as e-bullying or digital harassment, has grown from a technological possibility to a universal problem among communities of young people within the past two decades. Adolescent populations have both high rates of victimization and potentially severe consequences to their mental and physical health. Hinduja and Patchin (2019) indicated that 36.5% of adolescents ages 12 to 17 in the United States reported being cyberbullied at least once. Further, according to Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center (2019) only 33% of adolescent victims were willing to acknowledge their victimization. Despite unprecedented prevalence and serious symptoms, there is a dearth of research on cyberbullying and how to effectively address it. School administrators, teachers, parents, and school counselors need to be more informed about

what specifically underlies cyberbullying, its effects, and the consequences of letting it continue unopposed.

If school personnel consider only the symptoms and statistics regarding cyberbullying, then they may fail to consider that a greater need for social justice can only be served by making informed, systemic changes in the environments of their students. Bullies and victims are formed by the various layers of social systems surrounding them. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory models these systemic influences on cyberbullying in a way which can allow for comprehensive understanding and change. By attending to these layered systems, this article will attempt to show how Brofenbrenner's model can be applied to help schools reduce cyberbullying. First, this article provides background information on a social justice framework and an ecological model, definitions of cyberbullying, specific types of cyberbully behaviors, risk factors for potential victims, and the specific effects of cyberbullying on victims. This article will then propose strong measures against cyberbullying that school administrators should implement to alter the ecological environment of all students and raise awareness of, and adherence to, social justice.

Social Justice Framework

Social justice theory continues to emerge as increasingly integral to many disciplines within education and human services. Some argue that social justice ought to be the *fifth force* of counseling approaches, after psychodynamic, behavioral, humanistic, and multicultural paradigms (Ratts et al., 2004). The core principle of justice is that the world ought to operate justly and that each person has a role to play in carrying out this goal (Erford & Hays, 2018). It involves directly speaking against systems of oppression

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and a refusal to perpetuate systems of privilege. One of the keyways that justice is promoted is by equitable distribution of resources and opportunities for all people. Counselors and educators play a significant role in advocating for social justice in the lives of their students.

To understand social justice theory, one must also look at oppression. Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996) defined oppression as: "a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination, and resistance, where the dominating person or groups exercise their power by restricting access to material resources and by implanting in the subordinated persons or groups fear or self-deprecating views about themselves" (pp. 129-130). Oppression can either be activated by using force (actively inflicting physical or psychological pain) or by deprivation (passively hindering physical and psychological well-being) (Erford & Hays, 2018). Oppression by force often takes the form of abuse or harassment, both online and/or in person. Oppression by deprivation involves neglect or denial of basic needs, such as food and rest, or by being ignored or unrecognized for accomplishments.

In addition to these two modalities, oppression has three specific levels (Erford & Hays, 2018). Primary oppression involves overt and intentional actions against an individual. Secondary oppression is passive in nature. While the secondary oppressor may not be using physical or psychological mechanisms to exert dominance over another individual, they benefit from someone else's primary oppression, or choose to remain silent while observing it. Tertiary oppression occurs when those who are oppressed live as if the lies and propaganda that primary oppressors spread are true.

Cyberbullying

Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center (2019) defined cyberbullying as the use of digital technology that entails transmitting data that resembles harassment, harmful rumors, posts of personal information, demeaning materials, etc. Methods of transmitting the information could include: the internet, email, texting, instant messaging, or social media, with the use of a computer, tablet, or cell phone. Examples of digital harassment included: a post containing mean or hurtful comments or pictures, daring kids to commit suicide, or posing as someone else to extract personal information to be used against the victim. Adolescents could even create their own webpage as a vehicle for posting hateful comments, accusations, hear-say, and defacing images (Hinduja & Patchin, 2019). Per Statista (2020), the most popular social media sites used among U.S. students ($N = 8,000$) were Snapchat and Instagram. However, adolescent social media preferences shift quickly, so numerical data may be outdated within a few years.

Feinberg and Robey (2009) identified six categories of cyberbullying: flaming, harassment and stalking, denigration, impersonation, outing and trickery, and exclusion. The psychological pain inflicted directly by the oppressor in the first five categories utilized a modality of force. The sixth category, exclusion, showed how cyberbullying could also utilize a modality of deprivation. Hinduja and Patchin (2019) reported surveys which suggested that modalities of force were more common among reported cases of cyberbullying. In those surveys, U.S. adolescents ages 12–17 ($N = 4,972$) reported that they had been cyberbullied in their lifetime (36.5%), received mean comments online (24.9%), or were victimized by online rumors (22.2%). Within that sample, 38.7% of the victims cyberbullied in their lifetime were female versus 34.1% who were male; 24.9%

females versus 24.7% males received mean comments; and 24.8% females versus 19.4% males were victimized by online rumors.

Cyberbullies

Students have engaged in digital harassment for any number of reasons: jealousy of the victim, to make themselves more socially accepted with their peers, to feel dominant and powerful, a lack of empathy towards their victim, or because they were victims themselves (Robinson & Segal, 2019). Other reasons why adolescents cyberbullied included: vengeance, belief that the victim earned it, boredom, or perception of it as a norm (Gordan, 2019). Most adolescents preferred to hide their identity when e-bullying. Anonymity guaranteed that the perpetrator neither had to face the individual nor the consequences of being caught. Not witnessing the pain, they inflicted on their victim, the bully could minimize the damage by thinking their actions were humorous or believing they had done nothing wrong.

Wood (2018) identified ten types of cyberbullies, defined by their specific target or bullying practice: racist, body shaming, LGBTQ+, ableism, socioeconomic status, loser, overt, *trust me I am your friend*, sport or athlete, and *older*. The first five identified a particular characteristic of the victim which the cyberbully would try to emphasize and then denigrate. The next two described the cyberbully approaches reinforcing the insecurity of being *a loser* or using exaggerated aggressive language. The *Trust me, I am your friend* cyberbully built a false relationship with the victim, and then used that trust to systematically dismantle the victim's authentic friendships. The *sport or athlete* cyberbully exerted power over other athletes perceived to be weaker. The *older* cyberbully chose targets younger than themselves. Each type of bully exploited

differences their target had from the normative group in ways which caused emotional and physical distress (Wood, 2018). The cyberbully, as the primary oppressor, was attempting to exert dominance and superiority over the victim.

Despite their belief that they escaped their bullying without consequences, evidence pointed to long term adverse outcomes for e-bullies. Adolescent cyberbullies have shown greater risk for future patterns of substance abuse, destructive behaviors, property defacement and quitting school (Robinson & Segal, 2019). They were twice as likely to be convicted of a crime, four times more likely to be repeat offenders, and were at a higher risk to be abusive to their future partners or children. These findings provide an urgent need for a social justice approach to defeating cyberbullying: cultures of oppression are destructive for the oppressors and pursuing social justice is in the interest of both bullies and their victims.

Victims

Several factors could make the impact of cyberbullying on victims even more devastating than in-person school bullying. Unlimited posting online creates a broader audience (Feinberg & Robey, 2010). Further, screenshots could recirculate harmful posts, even after they have been removed. In addition, the target witnessed this circulating slander in real time yet had no control over it, thereby intensifying feelings of helplessness (Hinduja & Patchin, 2019).

Symptoms

While cyberbullying was often hidden by both the perpetrator and the victim, victims could experience its harmful effects through actual physical and/or emotional symptoms (Hurley, 2018). Physical symptoms could include stomach issues, headaches

that could elevate into migraines, feeling tired or lethargy, changes in food consumption, complaints that the victim does not feel well, and sleep disturbances. Emotional and social changes, such as feeling nervous, being easily provoked, exclaiming frequently, and feeling uneasy, could signal the onset of anxiety in the victim. Social changes could include disinterest in activities with friends and increased isolation. Additional behaviors could include a fear of going to school resulting high absenteeism record, unwillingness to participate in outdoor activities, anxiety, and perturbation while on the computer and afterward, as well as unwillingness to discuss their agitation, changes in weight, poor sleeping habits, and making passing statements about suicide (Hartung, 2018). The following signs of clinical depression could appear in a victim: uncontrollable crying spells, severe melancholy, feelings of emptiness and hopelessness, deteriorated self-worth, feelings of being a failure, low self-esteem, and belief that there is no end in sight (Mayo Clinic, 2019).

Risk of Suicide

Cyberbullied students may engage in self-harm, think about suicide, or even attempt suicide. Indicators of suicide should always be taken seriously by those responsible for the well-being of adolescents. While non-suicidal adolescents might joke about suicide from time to time, it has also been common for adolescents to veil their suicidal thoughts or ideations with jokes. Their joking may be a disguised cry for help against some hidden turmoil, such as cyberbullying. Suicide attempts ranged between 5% and 8% for U.S. adolescents, making it one of the highest causes of worldwide adolescent death (Gould, Greenberg, Velting, & Shaffer, 2003). Resources for identifying suicide

risk among adolescents may be obtained from the American Association of Suicidology (American Association of Suicidology, 2020).

Empirical research confirmed that cyberbullying may lead to destructive behaviors among its victims. A meta-analysis of 34 case studies found consistent evidence for peer victimization resulting from cyberbullying to be a strong risk factor for suicidal behavior (Van Geel et al., 2014). The Megan Meier Foundation (2020) reported that 18% of cyberbully victims engaged in self-mutilation (1 in 4 girls; 1 in 10 boys) and were twice as likely to attempt suicide than adolescents who did not report being cyberbullied. Further, Cook (2020) noted that among students who are cyberbullied, males are more likely to complete suicide than females. This aligns with the national findings, not controlled for cyberbullying, that males tend to complete suicide at a higher rate than females; the National Institute for Mental Health (2020) reports 22.7 male completions compared to 5.8 female completions for every 100,000 persons ages 15-24. However, female high school students are more likely to attempt suicide than males, with one study finding the rates at 11% and 6.6% respectively (Ivey-Stephenson et.al., 2020). These gender differences in suicide attempts versus completions has been attributed to the typically more violent and lethal manner and means males use.

## Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems: Understanding Cyberbullying and Creating Change

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) well-known ecological systems theory and ecological approach to examining persons in relationship to their environmental systems has provided a deeper understanding of problems in both education and human services settings. Having presented the problem of cyberbullying, in its varied and common

expression among today's school age persons, we present Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological systems theory as a model to further understand how the individual student, their various relationships, and oppression, work throughout their ecosystems. We will also offer suggestions for how cyberbullying can be addressed within each system, mindful of the influencers and forces within each system that shape the student. Figure 1 below illustrates an ecological look at a hypothetical adolescent, using Bronfenbrenner's five systems. Examples of various forces and groups in an adolescent's life have been assigned to their respective systems. A child is most readily impacted by their microsystem, meaning the face-to-face interactions they have with immediate family and events. As illustrated, this may include these four microsystems: home life, peers, the media, and their teachers and counselors. The mesosystem is how those microsystems interact with one another. The exosystem, or the child's community that indirectly impacts them, may contain school administrators, the policies they make, the Department of Education, law enforcement, and community services. The macrosystem, which encompasses societal and cultural values, involves legal precedence, cultural values, and discrimination and oppression in the culture. Finally, the chronosystem is a conceptual awareness of the fact that growth and change could occur over time rather than all at once. At each level, the culture of oppression with cyberbullying should be challenged and defeated by knowledge and direct action.

Figure 1

Ecological Typology of Adolescents and Cyberbullying
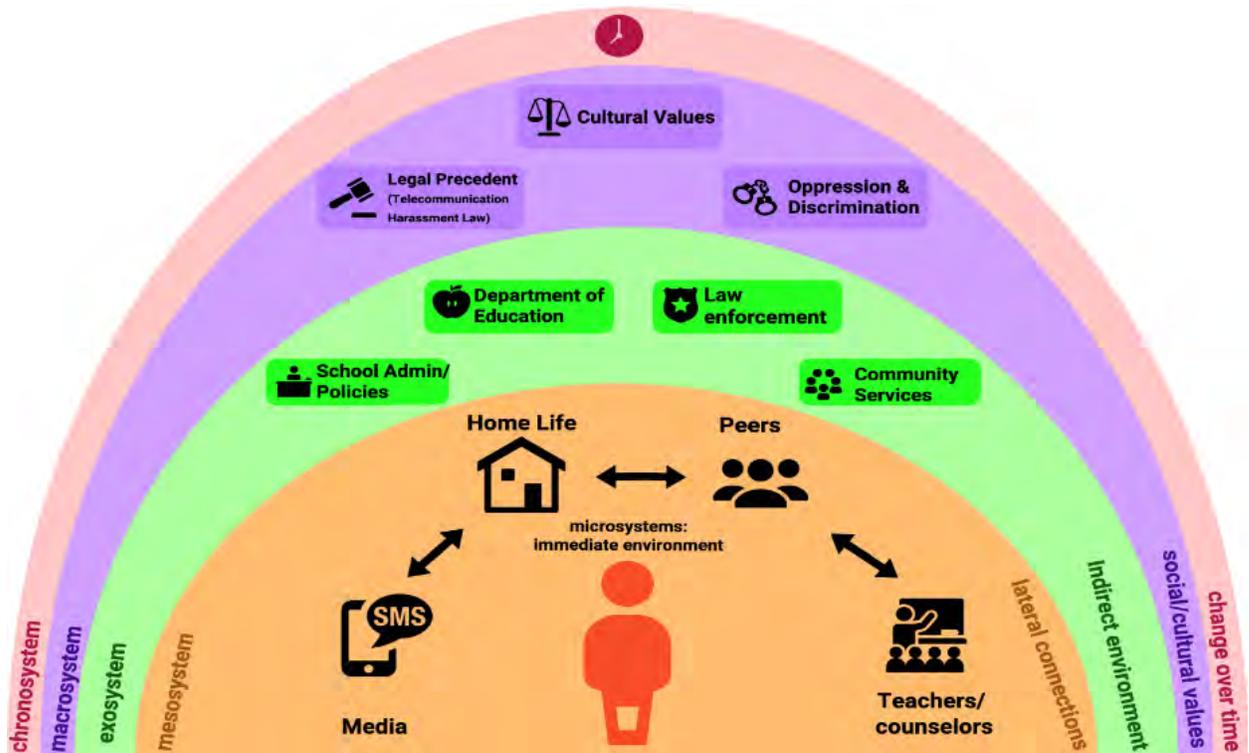
Note. Examples listed above are based on factors commonly associated with cyberbullying, yet do not necessarily represent every adolescent's unique ecosystem. Figure created by authors.

Microsystem

Students can be educated and empowered to change their own microsystems. By learning new behaviors and developing resilience, adolescents with one or more dysfunctional microsystems can work through their experiences in a healthy way. Parents, educators, school counselors, and bystanders all have direct influence on the adolescent and can provide the direct assistance and advocacy needed to end bullying. An individual student's microsystem is not directly controlled by school administrators or policies.

Parents

As the primary caregivers, parents play a vital role in protecting and educating their children whether they are victims or perpetrators. While some adolescents may view it as an invasion of privacy, parents can help to prevent cyberbullying by monitoring their child's online presence through checking the browser's cache, monitoring cellphone apps, adjusting privacy settings, friending their child on social media, and knowing all their usernames and passwords (Stop Bullying, 2019).

Parents of cyberbullies can also assist in identifying when their child may be a perpetrator. In 2019, Stomp Out Bullying recommended seven questions parents could ask in order to identify whether digital harassment was occurring:

1) Does your child have a record of bullying or been a victim themselves?

2) Does she or he avoid talking about their use of their electronic devices?

3) Does the child possess multiple online accounts?

4) Does she or he close-down windows on the computer when you are present?

5) Do they overindulge in the use of their computer, tablet, or cell phone?

6) Do they become upset if they are not allowed to use their electronic devices?

7) Do they become hostile when restrictions are put in place on the longevity of usage?

There may be other causes or explanations for any one of these behaviors. However, if a student practices several on a recurring basis, a parent/guardian should seriously question whether that student is practicing cyberbullying.

Educators

Hinduja and Patchin (2018) provided ten guidelines that educators and school counselors can follow in order to prevent e-bullying:

1) Strictly evaluate the problems students are experiencing using formal interviewing and questionnaires. Then implement strategies for educating the students.

2) Inform students that cyberbullying will not be tolerated either on or off school grounds, especially when it creates a harmful school environment. Students need to know that every student has the right to feel safe at school.

3) Promote a positive school environment for all students.

4) Publicize clear rules and specific standards that will be upheld by the school district regarding electronic devices (i.e., cell phones, computers, tablets). Clearly display rules and consequences on signs and posters.

5) Contact the school district attorney prior to an incident to ensure the school is taking proper action with its prevention and safety efforts.

6) Create an inclusive formal agreement in the school policy manual, including examples of various cyberbullying incidents.

7) Instruct students on how to master appropriate social and emotional skills, which will help their self-awareness, self-regulation, and with interpersonal conflict.

8) Use older students or peer supporters to share experiences and guide younger students.

9) Assign a "Cyberbully-Master" who is responsible to educate themselves on current issues and research in order to educate students.

10) Educate the community which includes parents, guardians, students, and school staff, and raise awareness (p.1).

School Counselors

While counselors may not be able to prevent every instance of cyberbullying, they can teach students about appropriate online communication. First, instruct them to be polite, encourage them never to post anything that they do not want their peers to see, and remind them to never share their passwords (Robinson & Segal, 2019). School counselors can run sessions, targeted at the students' developmental level, that assist with growing capacity and skills for resilience in the face of cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). This curriculum can be implemented by a school counselor, other school staff, and responsive services. Responsive services entail prevention and/or intervention campaigns with a specific focus on cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). Resources and tools available to school counselors for preventing cyberbullying include counseling sessions, parent meetings, educator consultations, referrals within the school or community, peer assistance, psychoeducation, and advocacy (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012).

Bystanders

Bystanders, or spectators, could have the opportunity to either break or perpetuate the cycle of destructive cyberbullying. Bystanders do nothing when they see "what is happening to the victim, but believe someone else will report it, stand-up for the victim, or report it to an adult" (Academy 4SC, 2020, p. 1). Since they have a peer relationship to the victim, their actions often carry more weight than those of adults (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). By doing nothing, they empower the bully, leaving the victim to feel abandoned (ICDL Arabia, 2016) and become participants in secondary oppression. However,

bystanders can greatly assist in ending cyberbullying by posting positive content and reporting to adults when they see cyberbullying occur. As they lead by example, more students will report incidences of cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012).

Mesosystem

Often, the most productive work to cultivate change in an adolescent's situation occurs when microsystems work in conjunction with one another at the mesosystem level. For example, the resiliency skills curriculum used by school counselors can also be integrated into the classroom and/or used to empower parents at home (Hinduja & Patchin, 2020).

Exosystem

Since most online harassment takes place off school grounds, educators are limited with their schools' anti-bullying policies. However, school administrators and school policies form an important part of a student's exosystem. The student may never interact with or even read these policies directly, but they form the rules and expectations for student conduct at school. Carefully crafted policy, with clear expectations and consequences, is a necessary part of creating a socially just culture which promotes the inherent value of its students. Unexpected recent events, such as COVID-19, have undoubtably changed the nature of the classroom, peer interaction, and classroom management; therefore, protecting students online is paramount for the law and policy makers.

School Policies and Administrators

School administrators play a pivotal role in shaping the culture of their schools. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are four factors

that school administrators should consider when seeking to create a culture of connectedness: adult support, belonging to a positive peer group, commitment to education, and the school environment (CDC, 2019). A focus on respectful peer relations cultivates a safer and healthier environment: physically, emotionally, and socially (Laursen, 2014). When making policies for the school, administrators should reflect on how the policies shape the culture of the school. Does this policy enable or stifle oppression? Does this policy create a spirit of cohesion or deepen relational divides? What does this policy say about how we treat and think about one another? According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, one must consider the entirety of an adolescent's systems when seeking to make change.

The Anti-Defamation League made recommendations to include the following in a prevention plan for cyberbullying:

1) Define clear guidelines for Internet use.

2) Teach students about ethical and legal standards for online activities.

3) Update policies to include guidelines for internet and cell phone use, and consequences for cyberbullying and online cruelty.

4) Make reporting of cyberbullying and online hate incidents a requirement.

5) Establish confidential reporting mechanisms.

6) Devise supervision and monitoring practices of students' Internet use on school computers.

7) Educate students about cyberbullying and discuss strategies for reacting to cyberbullying as targets and as bystanders.

8) Promote empathy, ethical decision-making skills, and respect among students.

9) Increase awareness of Internet safety strategies among students and their families (Johnson, 2011, p. 4).

With the pervasiveness of cyberbullying, no prevention plan will be foolproof. When instances do occur, Hinduja and Patchin (2012) recommended a seven-step intervention:

1) Have an educational discussion with the cyberbully and with the cyber-bystander.

2) Immediately inform cyberbullies and cyber-bystanders about the consequences for bullying or cyberbullying in school.

3) Be sure that a victim has a Safety and Comfort Plan.

4) Inform all relevant adults – teachers, coaches, counselors, and bus drivers – about the situation between all the children involved.

5) Have a plan for less structured areas, such as buses and lunchrooms.

6) Follow-up with parents, especially parents of victims.

7) Consider creating a "response team" to implement all these responses (pp. 150-152).

School Police Officers

Though there are usually police officers on school premises, there is little awareness on how to handle cyberbullying. When surveyed in 2010, more than 80% of school-based officers admitted to lacking training on how to handle cyberbullying (Patchin, 2014). About one-quarter of law enforcement officers were not fully educated on what state laws existed regarding cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). There is no indication that officer education has changed in any substantial way since these

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surveys. If an officer is on the premises, it is crucial that they be aware of student lingo, the school's policy, and the laws that are established by the state regarding cyberbullying. When a staff member, school counselor, or principal is informed of off campus harassment, and they fail to act, the school can be held accountable. If the harassment occurs via the use of a school computer, the school needs to enforce their anti-bullying rules (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). According to Steiner (2020), Ohio law mandates that all schools have anti-bullying-policies, which also includes cyberbullying. The regulation is outlined in Ohio Revised Code (2012) 3313.666: *District policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying required*. Further, the Electronic Act defines cyberbullying in terms of activity performed via the use of a cellular telephone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or other electronic communication device, which may result in physical or mental harm. This regulation is applied when students are on school grounds or any school sponsored event (Steiner, 2020).

Macrosystem

Broad cultural beliefs funnel themselves into both policy and behavior. Legal precedents in the U.S. constitute the most relevant aspect of the macrosystem. While these laws provide tools for fighting oppression, their immediate impact must reach the local school system.

Legal Consequences

Though there is no federal law in place concerning cyberbullying, nearly every U. S. state has anti-bullying laws which at least require school districts to prohibit bullying, including cyberbullying (Union of Professionals, 2011). However, Cyberbully Research Center (n.d.) concluded that only fourteen states' statutes denote *cyberbullying* or *online*

harassment, and include specific legal criteria, such as criminal sanction for cyberbullying or electronic harassment, school sanction for cyberbullying, and school policy that includes off-campus accountability (p. 1). Considering Ohio is not yet among these fourteen states (AR, CA, CT, FL, IL, LA, MA, NJ, NY, PA, SD, TN, TX, VT) cyberbullying continues to be addressed in school policies and/or applied to the existing general criminal statutes (i.e., Telecommunication Harassment and Menacing and Stalking laws).

Administrators should inform parents of the potential legal consequences if their child practices cyberbullying. "Negligent supervision" is a legal principle which holds parents or guardians responsible for the neglectful or intentional behavior or actions of their adolescent (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). Electronic correspondence leaves a trail which can provide the victimized adolescent with ample evidence. The instigating student can be prosecuted under a civil action lawsuit and criminal charges can also be implemented. In a civil action lawsuit if the cyberbully is found guilty the parents will be responsible for monetary damages. Informing a parent or guardian that they are financially obligated to pay restitution could provide leverage to a school district when educating parents about their student's unwarranted activities.

In Ohio, communities became desperate for lawmakers to make cyberbullies legally accountable after several suicides by cyberbully victims in 2014 (Steiner, 2020). Further, according to Steiner, cyberbullying can now be prosecuted and charged under the Ohio's Telecommunication Harassment Law and Menacing and Stalking Law. Under the Telecommunication Harassment Law, a first-time offense is considered a misdemeanor, in which the perpetrator can be charged a up to $1000 in fines and up to

six months in jail or both. If there is a second offense, the offense is considered a lower-level felony with fines of up to $2500, jail time of six months to a year, or both the fine and jail time. The Menacing and Stalking Law punishment is more severe. This law considers the first offense a misdemeanor but can escalate to a felony with fines up to $5000 and/or six to eighteen months in prison. Both parents and adolescents in the state of Ohio need to know there are specific laws and penalties for cyberbullying.

Ethical and Legal Duties of Schools

It is critical that school administrators and staff take cyberbully claims or complaints seriously. According to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, there are obligations by which a school must abide with regards to bullying (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) and the American School Counselor Association proclaims that faculty and administration have an ethical duty to fight cyberbullying and its harms. Hinduja and Patchin (2012) noted:

> School officials must also be mindful of potential liability for failure to respond to situations involving cyberbullying. Although there are no cases that have specifically addressed situations involving the harmful impact of the combination of off- and on-campus harmful actions, these situations clearly can result in the creation of a hostile environment at school for the student who has been targeted. If these interactions have created a hostile environment for a student, there appears to be a potential for district liability (p. 47).

If anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying policies are not completely followed, it could result in a violation of the victim's civil rights and a lawsuit. A student and parent can sue a school for negligence and request a full investigation.

While ethically bound and legally obligated to act against cyberbullying, school administrators must remain aware and respectful of all their students' rights to include protection from unjustified search and seizure and freedom of speech. School administrators must be clear on what is considered a warranted search and seizure. Based on the rights in the Fourth Amendment, search of desks and lockers is permissible, but there are greater stipulations on searching the content of students' electronic devices. (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). In cases where there is probable cause, school administrators and law enforcement officers may obtain a search warrant to conduct search and seizure of any personal or district owned devices. To respect U.S. First Amendment rights, it is always best to get a parent's consent form on file before searching and seizing their adolescent's electronic device, or administrators can relay to the student that their privacy is restricted while on school grounds. Even with these in mind, the school district can potentially be held liable.

Recommendations to School Administration and Staff

Ultimately, we believe schools can be vanguards for social justice, creating the cultural shift to end cyberbullying and its devastating effects on victims. In addition to the guidelines already cited by other sources in this article, we recommend the following for Ohio's schools:

1) Support Teachers: Schools can encourage venues, such as teacher conferences, workshops, and guest speakers. Additionally, an online competency course could test teacher and school counselor knowledge to ensure that all the staff are familiar with state laws, school district policy, student civil rights, and potential penalties.

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2) Support Students: The school curriculum can address proper etiquette that the student body should be using while they are online. Support groups could be offered to any student. For students identified as high risk (students of color, LGBTQ+, etc.) develop approaches to meet their specific needs.

3) Dialogue with Parents: Education for parents/guardians can occur at parent-teacher conferences or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) awareness meetings. Request that the parent/guardian sign a consent form indicating they have read and understand the school's anti-cyberbullying policies, as well as their responsibilities therein; include the consent/option to allow search and seizure of a student's cell phone or computer usage history. Include a second consent form for students to sign also.

4) Share Resources: School networks should share available resources for helping administrators, parents, and students. Reinforce that when in doubt, dial 911. Table 1, *Cyberbullying Helplines,* lists available helplines to contact in situations involving cyberbullying, suicide, and LGBTQ+ issues. Table 2, *Cyberbullying Online Resources,* lists and describes specific organizations which advocate for ending cyberbullying and other related forms of oppression.

Table 1

Cyberbullying Helplines

Resource	Contact Information
Teen Line	1-855-201-2121; 741741 (Text)
National Suicide Prevention	800-273-TALK; 1-888-628-9454
Hotlines	(En Espanol)
The Trevor Project	866-4-U-TREVOR (488-7386)
HelpChat, LGBT National	1-800-246-PRIDE (1-800-246-
Youth Talkline	7743)

Table 2

Cyberbullying Online Resources

Organization	Description	URL
Stomp Out Bullying	National nonprofit committed to ending bullying culture.	www.stompout bullying.org
Teens Against Bullying	Website created by teens for teens needing support against bullying.	https://pacerteens againstbullying.org/
Organization for Social Media Safety	Consumer protection organization making social media safer.	https://ofsms.org/
StopBullying.gov	Provides government agency information on bullying and cyberbullying.	https://www.stop bullying.gov/
Cyberbullying Research Center	Research organization supplying up-to date information on cyberbullying.	https://cyberbullying.org /
Anti-Defamation League	Organization fighting against oppression and discrimination.	http://www.adl.org
Parental Phone App	Provides the National Suicide hotline phone number along with other resources for parent reference.	

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| OEA Lobby Day | The OEA hosts an annual opportunity for educators to advocate personally with their state representatives and senators. | https://www.ohea.org/get-involved/oea-lobby-day/ |

5) School Policy Recommendation: Schools should collect incident data on cyberbullying and social emotional health and include these in annual evaluations (e. g., the school district and statewide report card). Schools are not currently required by law to provide cyberbullying or socioemotional data in their annual reports. Including these data in the Ohio School Report Card (Ohio Department of Education, n.d.) increases public awareness and accountability within the school, community, families, and minds of individual students.

Conclusion

Recognizing that teachers, administrators, and counselors know their students and community better than we ever could, our strongest recommendation is for them to champion students victimized by cyberbullying and to actively advocate for needed change. First, educators need to critically review the strengths, limitations, and overall impact of current Ohio laws on their school's capacity to effectively address cyberbullying. Second, using supporting evidence, school staff should arrive at an informed opinion. Third, educators must make the personal choice to advocate. For example, Ohio Education Association's (OEA) annual Lobby Day provides an empowering opportunity for educators to meet directly with their legislators and help stimulate changes to Ohio laws affecting schools. Based on our recommendations, we implore all educators to make the systemic changes needed to end cyberbullying.

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