

# Training Module 4: Peer-on-Peer Abuse

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Strategies to Recognize and Reduce

April 2020



## Disclaimer

This training module contains general guidelines and information. It is not intended to be a comprehensive summary or to address all possible applications of, or exceptions to, the topics described herein. Various scenarios and issues are covered, but please note that these are to be used as a tool for further guidance and do not represent an exhaustive list of possible scenarios and topics that Program Staff may encounter. This training module should not substitute for additional training to be provided by individual Covered Programs or for guidance on specific situations to be provided by administrators of Covered Programs.



# Objectives

- Learn the definition of peer-on-peer abuse.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of peer-on-peer abuse.
- Discuss vulnerable groups.
- Discuss ways to reduce peer-on-peer abuse.





# What is Peer-on-Peer Abuse?

Any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children.

- The behavior in question is harmful to both the perpetrator (who is a child) and the victim.
- The behavior may be intimate (relationship violence) or non-intimate.



# Bullying

## Bullying Defined

In 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Department of Education released the first federal uniform definition of bullying for research and surveillance. The core elements of the definition include: unwanted aggressive behavior, observed or perceived power imbalance and repetition of behaviors or high likelihood of repetition.



# Bullying (continued)

## Modes of Bullying

The current definition acknowledges two modes and four types by which youth can be bullied or can bully others. The two modes of bullying include:

- **direct** (e.g., bullying that occurs in the presence of a targeted youth)
- **indirect** (e.g., bullying not directly communicated to a targeted youth such as spreading rumors).



# Bullying

## Types of Bullying

The four types of bullying include broad categories of:

- **Physical**
- **Verbal**
- **Relational** (e.g., efforts to harm the reputation or relationships of the targeted youth)
- **Damage to property.**



# Signs a Child is Being Bullied

## Be on the lookout for:

- Unexplainable injuries.
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry.
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness.
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares (for residential camps or children reporting these signs).





# Signs a Child is Being Bullied

(continued)

- Loss of interest in program or activities, or not wanting to go or to participate.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem.
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.
- Gets into physical or verbal fights.



# Signs a Child is Bullying Others

- Has friends who bully others.
- Is increasingly aggressive.
- Frequently reported to program director for violating code of conduct.
- Has unexplained extra money or new belongings.
- Blames others for their problems.
- Doesn't accept responsibility for their actions.
- Is competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity.



# Bullying Prevention Strategies

## Develop a Code of Conduct

- Reinforces values.
- Defines unacceptable behavior and consequences.
- Empowers bystanders.

## Assess the Problem

- Survey participants, staff and parents.
- Target your prevention efforts.



# Bullying Prevention Strategies

(continued)

## Increase Adult Supervision

- Must be visible as well as vigilant.
- Should not be on mobile devices, etc.

## Conduct Bullying Prevention Training and Activities for:

- Participants
- Staff
- Parents



# Cyberbullying

## Cyberbullying Defined

Bullying that occurs using technology (including but not limited to phones, email, chat rooms, instant messaging, and online posts) is considered electronic bullying and is viewed as a context or location.

- Electronic bullying or cyberbullying involves primarily verbal aggression (e.g., threatening or harassing electronic communications) and relational aggression (e.g., spreading rumors electronically). Electronic bullying or cyberbullying can also involve property damage resulting from electronic attacks that lead to the modification, dissemination, damage, or destruction of a youth's privately stored electronic information.



## Cyberbullying (continued)

### Cyberbullying has unique concerns in that it can be:

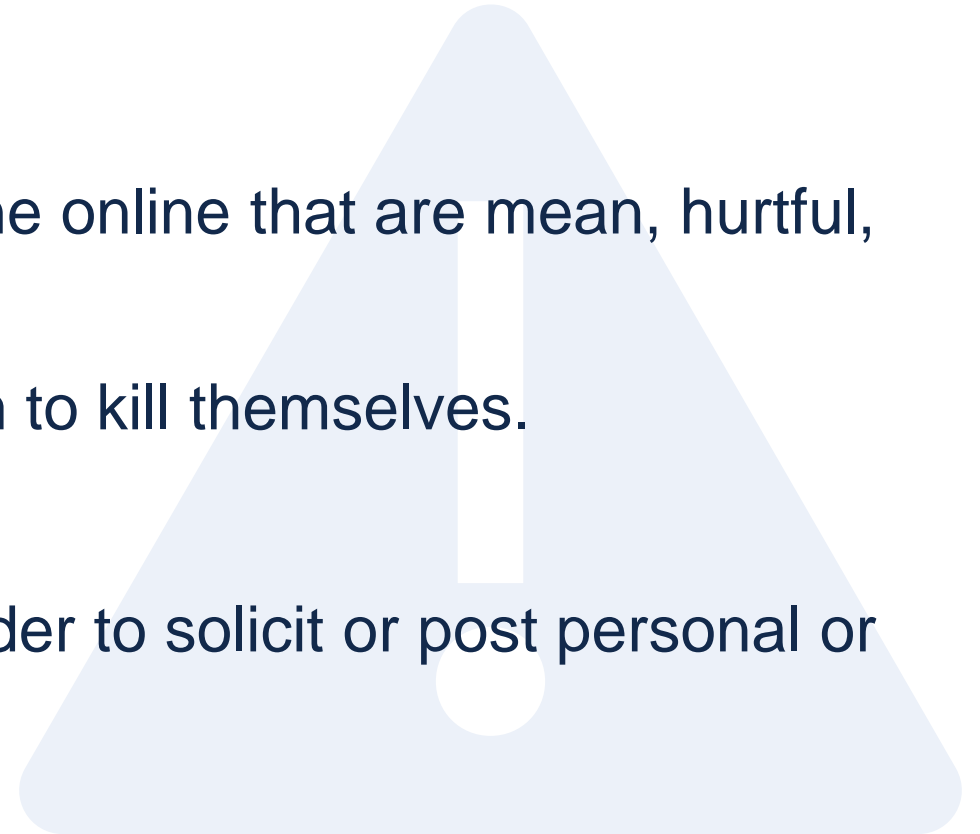
- **Persistent** – Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for children experiencing cyberbullying to find relief.
- **Permanent** – Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life.
- **Hard to Notice** – Because staff and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognize.



# Cyberbullying (continued)

## Signs of Cyberbullying

- Posting comments or rumors about someone online that are mean, hurtful, or embarrassing.
- Threatening to hurt someone or telling them to kill themselves.
- Posting a mean or hurtful picture or video.
- Pretending to be someone else online in order to solicit or post personal or false information about someone else.





# Cyberbullying (continued)

## Signs of Cyberbullying

- Posting mean or hateful names, comments, or content about any race, religion, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics online.
- Creating a mean or hurtful webpage about someone.
- Doxing, an abbreviated form of the word documents, is a form of online harassment used to exact revenge and to threaten and destroy the privacy of individuals by making their personal information public, including addresses, social security, credit card and phone numbers, links to social media accounts, and other private data.





# Cyberbullying Warning Signs

- Noticeable, rapid increases or decreases in device use, including texting.
- A child exhibits emotional responses (laughter, anger, upset) to what is happening on their device.
- A child hides their screen or device when others are near and avoids discussions about what they are doing on their device.
- Social media accounts are shut down or new ones appear.
- A child starts to avoid social situations, even those that were enjoyed in the past.
- A child becomes withdrawn or depressed or loses interest in people and activities.



# Preventing Cyberbullying

## What should you do?

- If you think a child is being cyberbullied, speak to them **privately** to ask about it. They may also have proof on their digital devices.
- If you believe a child is being cyberbullied, speak to a parent about it.
- To understand a child's digital behavior and how it relates to cyberbullying, increase your digital awareness.



# Preventing Cyberbullying (continued)

- Develop activities that encourage self-reflection, asking children to identify and express what they think and feel, and to consider the thoughts and feelings of others. Help children develop emotional intelligence so that they can learn self-awareness and self-regulation skills and learn how to have empathy for others.
- Role model, reinforce, and reward positive behavior towards others.
- Encourage peer involvement in prevention strategies.



# NC anti-bullying laws and regulations

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-407.15 (2009)

"Bullying or harassing behavior" is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

- (1) Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- (2) Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.



# NC anti-bullying laws and regulations

(continued) N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-407.15 (2009)

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.



# Sexual Abuse by Children and Teens

- Defined as *sexual activity between children that occurs without consent, without equality (mentally, physically, or in age), or as a result of physical or emotional coercion*. What this means is that a power difference exists between the two children, whether that is in age, size, or ability.
- While the trauma for the victim is the same as if it had happened by an adult, this type of abuse often goes unreported—either because it’s dismissed by adults as “kids being kids” or for the fear of what will happen to one or both of the children to have the abuse known.



# Sexual Abuse by Children and Teens

## (continued)

- The truth is that both children need help in a situation like this. The child being abused certainly needs the appropriate care to avoid the weight of lifelong trauma that so many survivors of child sexual abuse experience, as well as the symptoms that go with it.
- The child who has engaged in the harmful sexual behavior needs help as well. If they are able to see a licensed medical/mental health professional to help them work through these age-inappropriate sexual behaviors, then they are less likely to engage in HSB (harmful sexual behavior) again.



# Sexual Abuse by Children and Teens

(continued)

Peer-on-peer child sexual abuse happens. It is important that behavior of this nature is not ignored. However it is also very important that the different types of behavior are clearly identified, and that no young person is wrongly labeled 'a child abuser', without a clear analysis of the particular behavior.

## Categories of sexual behavior that have been identified:

- normal sexual exploration.
- abuse reactive behavior.
- sexually obsessive behavior.
- abusive behavior by adolescents and young people.





# Sexual Abuse by Children and Teens

(continued)

## Normal Sexual Exploration

This could consist of naive play between two children which involves the exploration of their sexuality. This type of behavior may be prompted by exchanges between children such as: "you show me yours and I'll show you mine".

- One of the key aspects of this behavior is the tone of it. There should not be any coercive or dominating aspects to this behavior. Usually, there is no need for child protection intervention of any kind in this type of situation.



# Sexual Abuse by Children and Teens

(continued)

## Abuse reactive behavior

In this situation, one child who has been abused already, acts out the same behavior on another child.

- While this is serious behavior and needs to be treated as such, the emphasis should be on addressing the victim needs of the child perpetrator.



# Sexual Abuse by Children and Teens

## (continued)

### Sexually obsessive behavior

In this type of situation the children may engage in sexually compulsive behavior. An example of this would be excessive sexual act which may well be meeting some other emotional need.

- However, where children are in care or in families where care and attention is missing, they may have extreme comfort needs that are not being met and may move from one sexual act to excessive interest or curiosity in sex, which takes on excessive or compulsive aspects. These children may not have been sexually abused but they may be extremely needy and may need very specific help in addressing these needs.



# Sexual Abuse by Children and Teens (continued)

## Abusive Behavior by Adolescents and Young People

Behavior that is abusive will have elements of domination, coercion or bribery and certainly secrecy.

- The fact that the behavior is carried out by an adolescent, for example does not, in itself, make it 'experimentation'. However, if there is no age difference between the two children or no difference in status, power or intellect, then one could argue that this is indeed experimentation. On the other hand, if the adolescent is aged thirteen and the child is aged three, this gap in itself creates an abusive quality which should be taken seriously.



# Sexual Abuse by Children and Teens (continued)

## Prevention

There is a high probability that future abuse can be prevented if early intervention takes place.

- Treatment is more likely to be effective if begun early in the child's life. Therefore it is essential to refer concerns about peer abuse immediately to the parent and law enforcement.



# Signs of Sexual Violence

## Signs of Sexual Violence in Younger children:

- An older child behaving like a younger child (such as bed-wetting or thumb sucking).
- Has new words for private body parts.
- Resists removing clothes when appropriate times (showering, bed, toileting).
- Asks other children to behave sexually or play sexual games.
- Mimics adult-like sexual behaviors with toys or stuffed animal.
- Wetting and soiling accidents unrelated to toilet training.



## Signs of Sexual Violence (continued)

### Signs of Sexual Violence in Adolescents:

- Self-injury (cutting, burning)
- Inadequate personal hygiene.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Sexual promiscuity.
- Running away from home.
- Depression, anxiety.
- Suicide attempts.
- Fear of intimacy or closeness.
- Compulsive eating or dieting.



# Signs of Sexual Violence (continued)

## Physical Warning Signs

- Pain, discoloration, bleeding or discharges in genitals, anus or mouth.
- Persistent or recurring pain during urination and bowel movements.
- Wetting and soiling accidents unrelated to toilet training.





# Signs of Sexual Violence (continued)

## Prevention

- Set and respect clear guidelines.
- Watch out for signs.
- Speak up.
- Support your participants.
- Be prepared to act and report to law enforcement.



# Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct

## Sexual Harassment Defined

Sexual harassment is a broad term, including many types of unwelcome verbal and physical sexual attention.

- Sexual harassment generally violates civil laws—you have a right to work or learn without being harassed—but in many cases is not a criminal act.



# Sexual Harassment (continued)

## Forms of Sexual Harassment

- Physical acts of sexual assault.
- Requests for sexual favors.
- Verbal harassment of a sexual nature, including jokes referring to sexual acts or sexual orientation.
- Unwanted touching or physical contact.
- Unwelcome sexual advances.
- Discussing sexual relations/stories/fantasies in inappropriate places.
- Feeling pressured to engage with someone sexually.
- Exposing oneself or performing sexual acts on oneself.
- Unwanted sexually explicit photos, emails, or text messages.



# Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment does not always have to be specifically about sexual behavior or directed at a specific person.

- Although sexual harassment laws do not usually cover teasing or offhand comments, these behaviors can also be upsetting and have a negative emotional effect.



# Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (continued)

## Sexual Assault Defined

Sexual assault refers to sexual contact or behavior, often physical, that occurs without the consent of the victim.

- Sexual assault usually refers to acts that are criminal. Some forms of sexual assault include:
  - Penetration of the victim's body, also known as rape.
  - Attempted rape.
  - Forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetration of the perpetrator's body.
  - Fondling or unwanted sexual touching.



# Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (continued)

## Sexual Misconduct Defined

Sexual misconduct is a non-legal term used informally to describe a broad range of behaviors, which may or may not involve harassment.



# Relationship/Dating Violence

## Relationship/Dating Violence Defined

Relationship/Dating violence (also known as intimate partner abuse) is a pattern of controlling behaviors that one partner uses to get power over the other it includes:

1. Any kind of physical violence or threat of physical violence to get control.
2. Emotional or mental abuse, such as playing mind games, making a person feel crazy, being yelled at, constantly being put down or criticized.
3. Sexual abuse, including making their partner do something they don't want to do, refusing to have safe sex or making their partner feel guilty about themselves sexually.



# Relationship/Dating Violence

(continued)

## Perpetrator Signs (apply to all genders):

- Extreme jealousy.
- Controlling behavior.
- Quick involvement.
- Unpredictable mood swings.
- Alcohol and drug use.
- Isolates partner from friends and family.
- Uses force during argument.
- Believes in rigid sex roles.
- Blames others for his/her problems.
- Cruel to animals or younger children.
- Verbally abusive.
- Abused former partners.
- Threatens violence.
- Shows hypersensitivity.





# Relationship/Dating Violence

(continued)

## Victim Signs (applies to all genders):

- Physical signs of injury.
- Truancy, dropping out of program, especially if a partner is enrolled.
- Indecision, letting partner make all decisions.
- Changes in mood or personality, especially if partner is near.
- Emotional outbursts.
- Isolation by partner.
- Use of drugs or alcohol.



# Relationship/Dating Violence

(continued)

## Male Victims

Boys are more likely to laugh at dating violence, take it less seriously than girls, or ignore it. Explanations for this include:

- a. Failure to understand they are victims.
- b. Embarrassment, shame, confusion.
- c. Threats from the abuser.
- d. Fear the abuser will take revenge if they say anything.
- e. Concern their parents will prevent them seeing the abuser.
- f. Concern they will lose privileges-like use of a car or freedom to go out as they please.



# Relationship/Dating Violence

(continued)

## Male Victims

Boys and men can be sexually used or abused, and it has nothing to do with how masculine they are.

- If a boy liked the attention he was getting, or got sexually aroused during abuse, or even sometimes wanted the attention or sexual contact, this does not mean he wanted or liked being manipulated or abused, or that any part of what happened, in any way, was his responsibility or fault.



# Relationship/Dating Violence

(continued)

## Male Victims

- Sexual abuse harms boys and girls in ways that are similar and different, but equally harmful.
- Whether he is gay, straight or bisexual, a boy's sexual orientation is neither the cause or the result of sexual abuse. By focusing on the abusive nature of sexual abuse rather than the sexual aspects of the interaction, it becomes easier to understand that sexual abuse has nothing to do with a boy's sexual orientation.
- Girls and women can sexually abuse boys. The boys are not "lucky," but exploited and harmed.



# Relationship/Dating Violence

(continued)

## Remember!

- Gender should not play a role in recognizing the signs of dating violence or your response to a victim of dating violence.
- You should remain “gender neutral” when talking to victims.



# Relationship/Dating Violence

(continued)

## Same-Sex Victims

In same-sex relationships, the problem is not fighting or “mutual battering,” but domestic violence.

- a. The issue in domestic violence is control.
- b. A survivor’s needs are usually subordinated and she or he often changes her behavior to accommodate or anticipate his/her batterer’s demands.
- c. This unequal power relationship distinguishes battering from fighting. In an abusive relationship, fighting back is self-defense, not ‘mutual battering’.



# Relationship/Dating Violence

(continued)

## Vulnerable Groups

Those aged 10 and upwards (although younger victims have been identified).

Children with intra-familial abuse in their histories or those living with domestic abuse.

Children in care and those who have experienced loss of a parent, sibling, or friend.

Children who have been abused or have abused their peers.



# Peer-on-Peer Abuse

## Strategies for reducing Peer-on-Peer Abuse

- Create an environment based on informed choice
- Ensure children know the risks
- Provide training on safe relationships
- Spot the signs and know how to respond
- Teach children to take responsibility for their thoughts and emotions





# Reporting

- Any person 18 years or older who knows or should have reasonably known that a juvenile has been or is the victim of a violent offense, sexual offense, or misdemeanor child abuse under G.S. 14-318.2 shall immediately report that case of that juvenile to the appropriate local law enforcement agency in the county where the juvenile resides or is found.
- **All incidents involving peer-on-peer abuse will immediately be reported to UNC-CH Police Department per G.S.14-318.2.**



# Resources

- Campus Safety Magazine: <https://www.campussafetymagazine.com/>
- Safeguarding Network: <https://safeguarding.network/>
- Stopbullying.gov: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- AbuseWatch.net: [https://www.abusewatch.net/child\\_peer.php](https://www.abusewatch.net/child_peer.php)
- Stop It Now: <https://www.stopitnow.org/help-guidance/prevention-tools>



# Certification

## Instructions

1. Click on the link below to certify that you have completed this training:  
[https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_cA4O0vqvLLgGBdr](https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cA4O0vqvLLgGBdr)
2. Enter your program director's email when requested to send a notice of completion for record retention.



# Questions?

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