

Friday, 9 February 2018

Socialisation not bullying the issue says Kids Helpline with bullied and bully the same person

New Kids Helpline data released today has revealed more than 50 percent of young people surveyed about cyberbullying who had been bullied had also bullied others - a game changer in the bullying and cyber bullying space.

Last week, Kids Helpline put out the call to children and young people across Australia to hear what they had to say about cyberbullying. Of the 395 young people who have responded to Kids Helpline's survey so far, 58% disclosed they have been cyberbullied.

According to **yourtown/Kids Helpline's** Head of Strategy and Research John Dagleish, the survey revealed enlightening results with socialisation identified as a key contributor to bullying.

"We found the line between bully and bullied is blurred with 52% of respondents who said they engaged in potential cyberbullying behaviour being cyberbullied themselves," Mr Dagleish said.

"Many of the young people engaging in cyberbullying also said they did this in an attempt to seek justice for the abuses they had received.

"This suggests cyberbullying takes place because of breakdowns in peer relationships. It also highlights that education is exceptionally important to give our kids the skills to develop and maintain respectful peer relationships and learn legitimate pathways to achieve meaningful conflict resolution."

Of those that were cyberbullied 58% reported experiencing cyberbullying weekly or more frequently. Name calling (77%), rumours (71%) and exclusion (65%) were the most commonly reported forms of cyberbullying.

Encouragingly, 79% of young people had told someone about being cyberbullied with friends (56%), and parents and carers (43%) the most common confidants.

"This demonstrates how important it is that we encourage and support parents and carers to have conversations with their children. While only two out of five young people disclosed the bullying to their parents, of those that did 87% found the conversation helpful," Mr Dagleish said.

"Thirty-three percent (33%) of respondents identified that they have a disability with 68% of those young people reporting they have experienced cyberbullying, highlighting the important conversation parents, governments and the broader community need to have about how we encourage young Australians to value and respect diversity in our community.

"The survey also showed that 85% of those bullied knew their cyberbully and that 61% of those bullied were also bullied in person proving that removing technology from children's lives does not mean bullying will stop. It's not the device but the behaviour of the user that's the issue.

"Boys are less likely to have disclosed cyberbullying. Only 61% vs. 79% overall have told anyone about cyberbullying experienced and only 26% have disclosed this to their parents.

"Gender diverse young people are also less likely to reveal they'd been cyberbullied, with only 64% (vs. 79% overall) telling anyone about the bullying."

Mr Dagleish who will give evidence at the Senate Hearing in Canberra today about the adequacy of the laws that capture cyberbullying, said that preventing and addressing cyberbullying effectively requires a whole of community and multipronged approach.

“We need society-wide and targeted education programs across the nation for both children and adults. We need supports for those who are bullied but also those that bully through adequate counselling, rehabilitation and other support services,” he said.

“While we could also apply the law to deter serious cyberbullying offences we also need to look at the social expectations of social media providers to remove offensive material quickly. There is also a critical need to develop technologies to more effectively deal with harmful and unwanted online use.

“Without this multipronged approach and investment the impact of any legal consequences or action will continue to remain minimal, whilst our children and young people will not be equipped, know where to turn or find adequately resourced support services to effectively deal with their cyberbullying experiences.”

Kids Helpline will keep its Cyberbullying Survey for children and young people aged 5 to 25 open until Friday, 23 February. Children and young people can give voice to their views on cyberbullying at www.kidshelpline.com.au.

Kids Helpline in partnership with Optus is committed to tackling cyberbullying through its unique digital schools program. Digital Thumbprint with Kids Helpline is available FREE to all primary schools nationally. Professional counsellors talk with students and their teachers in class sessions via digital technology about issues such as digital media literacy, respectful relationships, online safety and cyberbullying. To find out more about **Kids Helpline @ School** and the **Optus Digital Thumbprint** program see <https://kidshelpline.com.au/schools>

Kids Helpline works closely with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner to support children and young people who are experiencing online safety issues. Young people can report cyberbullying at www.esafety.gov.au

Kids Helpline is Australia’s only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years. **FREE call 1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelpline.com.au**

We would like to remind media to include **Kids Helpline** contact details at the end of coverage and articles where children and young people may need support.

INTERVIEW/PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES:

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