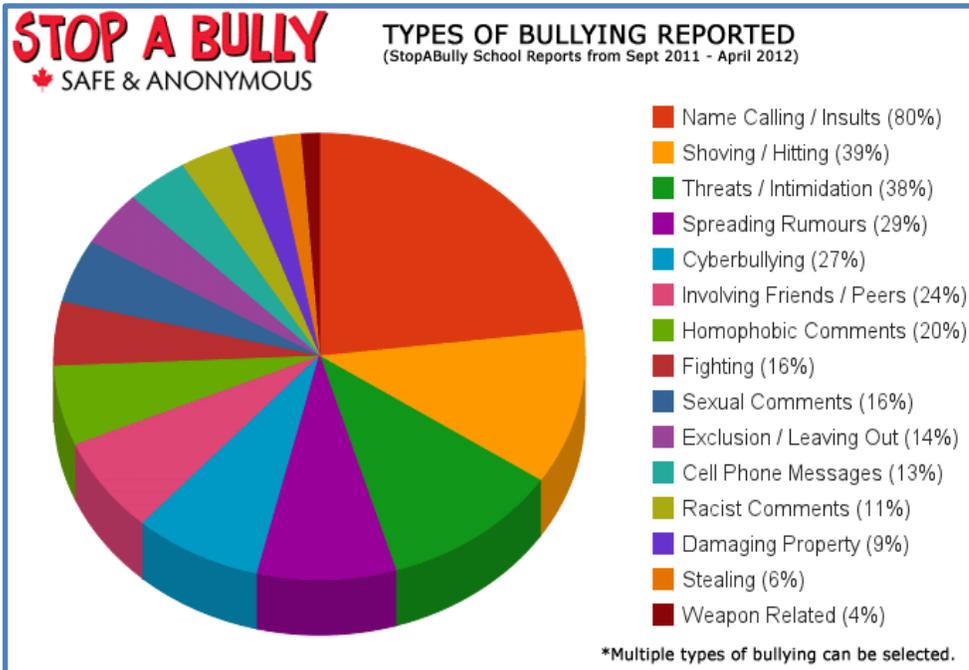




Bullying – Are you a Helpful Bystander?

A study by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Ontario, Canada, has uncovered some surprising results about bullying among boys and girls in grades 7-12.



The 2011 *Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey - Mental Health and Well-Being Report* has found that bullying among students remains a problem, 29% or an estimated 288 thousand students report being the victim of a bully at school. And cyber-bullying, being tracked for the first time in this report, has found 1 in 5 students or 217 thousand kids say they

were victims. What is surprising is that bullying reported by boys has declined to about 26% while the rate for girls has increased to 31%. Girls are also twice as likely as boys to be the victim of cyber-bullying.

Dr David Wolfe, Director of CAMH's Centre for Prevention Science says, "The bullying rates surrounding girls are troubling." "Bullying can have long-term mental health consequences and can affect self-esteem, and hinder the ability to form healthy relationships. The high rates in cyber-bullying are also troubling in that young people today are so technology-driven that bullying now carries over into the home, not just the school setting."

Another disturbing find from the study, is that the number of teens reporting psychological distress remains fairly steady at 34% of all students surveyed. The rates for girls has

References: Stop a Bully website at: <http://www.stopabully.ca/>

increased to 43%, up 7 points since a survey in 1999, compared to 24% of boys. Dr. Robert Mann, lead investigator on the study says, "Many of these students express feelings of unhappiness and depression, anxiety, social dysfunction, constant stress or loss of sleep." 14%

How do kids use technology? (According to a Canadian survey of 10-14 year-olds conducted by the Kids Help Phone)

- 33% talked to someone on-line they never met before
- 30% e-mailed a picture of themselves to someone
- 22% visited a website they knew parents would not permit
- **20% said/did something they later regretted**
- 17% used the Internet in the middle of the night
- 13% made friends with a stranger they met on-line
- **8% sent hurtful messages**
- 5% gave last name, home phone/address
- **5% made a webcam video of themselves on a site**

of the girls surveyed admitted to considering suicide, double the rate for boys.

Cyber-bullying refers to the use of communication technologies (e-mail, cell phones, pager text messages, Internet sites and instant messaging) to physically threaten, verbally harass or socially exclude an individual or group. Using these technologies to distribute damaging messages and

pictures allows bullies to remain anonymous and bullying to become widespread.

Role of the Bystander or the Witness: Despite the large number of individuals that do not agree with bullying practices, there are a very few that will intervene on behalf of the victim. These individuals are labeled bystanders and unfortunately usually tend to lean toward the bully's side. **In 85% of bullying incidents**, bystanders are involved in teasing the victim or egging on the bully. However, in most bullying incidents, bystanders usually do nothing and the bully

takes this as permission to continue behaving badly. There are a number of reasons why children choose not to intervene. Typically they worry that they will make the situation worse or risk becoming the next victim. Bystanders can play a key role in stopping the bullying by discouraging the bully, defending the victim,

redirecting the situation away from bullying or getting help from peers or adults. If you witness bullying don't standby - take action to help the victim. You can make a difference!

