Slide 1

Growing up Digital: Media Research Symposium
Chicago, IL
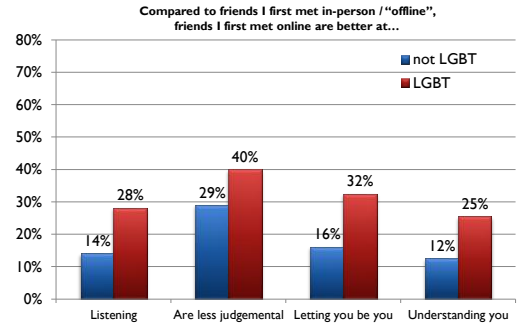May 4, 2015

**Technology in Teen Lives:
A Look at Online Bullying and Sexting**

Michele Ybarra MPH PhD
Center for Innovative Public Health Research

* Thank you for your interest in this presentation. Please note that analyses included herein are preliminary. More recent, finalized analyses may be available by contacting CiPHR for more information.

CiPHR Center for Innovative Public Health Research
Decoding how technology influences and can improve public health

Slide 2

Benefits of technology:
Social support

Compared to friends I first met in-person / "offline",
friends I first met online are better at…

- not LGBT
- LGBT

	Listening	Are less judgemental	Letting you be you	Understanding you
not LGBT	14%	29%	16%	12%
LGBT	28%	40%	32%	25%

Data are from Positive Youth Development, n=2131

Slide 3

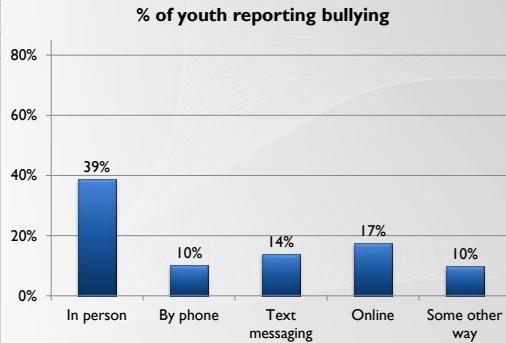**Technology (like other parts of life) also has potential risks**

http://www.reputation.com/reputationwatch/articles/what-compels-cyberbullying-victims-commit-suicide

Slide 4

Prevalence of adolescent cyberbullying

Depending on the measure used, most studies report between 20-40% of youth are targeted by bullying or harassment online and via text messaging (see Tokunaga, 2010 for a review).
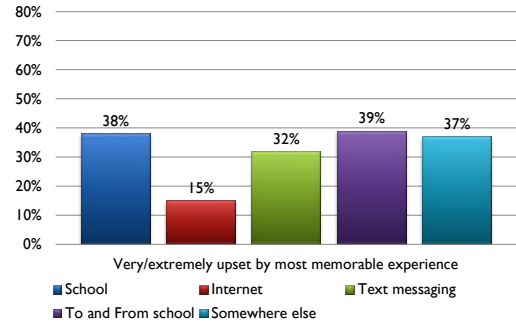
And our data suggest that rates are *not* increasing over time (Ybarra, Mitchell, Korchmaros, 2013)

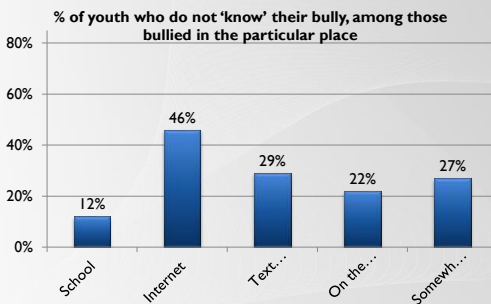**Bullying is more common online than other places (?)**

% of youth reporting bullying

In person 39%, By phone 10%, Text messaging 14%, Online 17%, Some other way 10%

Data are from the Teen Health and Technology Study, 2011 (n=3,777)

Distress related to bullying victimization rates by environment

Very/extremely upset by most memorable experience

School 38%, Internet 15%, Text messaging 32%, To and From school 39%, Somewhere else 37%

■ School ■ Internet ■ Text messaging
■ To and From school ■ Somewhere else

Data from the Growing up with Media study, PI: Ybarra

Anonymity is a unique aspect of online bullying (?)

% of youth who do not 'know' their bully, among those bullied in the particular place

School 12%, Internet 46%, Text… 29%, On the… 22%, Somewh… 27%

Data are from Growing up with Media Study, 2008

Cyberbullying: Recap

The data do not support hypotheses that Cyberbullying is:

- More common than bullying in-person
- Becoming more common over time
- Becoming more upsetting over time
- Is more upsetting than bullying in-person

We need to teach young people about 'digital citizenship' (what it means to be nice online) – but within the context of what it means to be nice *everywhere*

"Sexting"

Definitions vary but survey questions generally refer to the **creation** and **distribution** of photos or videos with a sexual overtone using technology (e.g., a cell phone, email, social networking site, etc).


Motivation

From focus groups of teenagers, three reasons for 'sexting' emerge (Lenhart et al., 2010):

1) Exchange between boyfriends / girlfriends
2) Exchange between boyfriends / girlfriends that are then shared with people outside of the relationship (e.g., break up; fight)
3) Exchange between people not yet in a relationship but where at least one hopes to initiate a relationship

"These images are shared as a part of or instead of sexual activity, or as a way of starting or maintaining a relationship with a significant other. And they are also passed along to friends for their entertainment value, as a joke or for fun." – Amanda Lenhart, Pew Internet & American Life Project

Past-Year Sexting Prevalence by Age and Sex
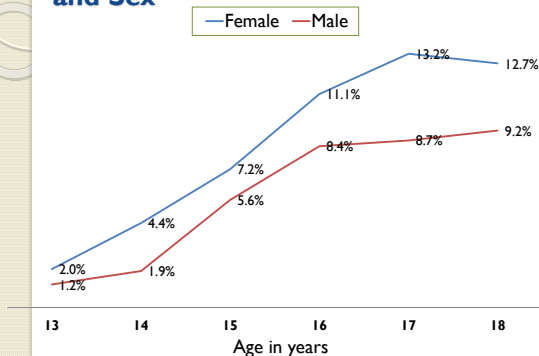
## Relative odds of other Sexual Behaviors for Adolescent men and women who sext versus not sext

Youth characteristics	Male youth (*n* = 1,613) Adjusted Odds Ratio	Female youth (*n* = 2,102) Adjusted Odds Ratio
Sexual behaviors (past 12 months)		
Vaginal sex	**5.6 (3.1 - 10.1)**	**11.4 (7.6 - 17.0)**
Anal sex	**7.5 (2.7 - 20.4)**	**10.8 (6.1 - 19.2)**
Risky sexual behaviors		
Had concurrent sex partners	**3.9 (1.3 - 11.6)**	1.9 (0.8 - 4.5)
Consistent condom use	0.6 (0.3-1.5)	0.7 (0.4-1.2)
# of past-year sex partners (M:SE)	**1.1 (1.0-1.2)**	**1.4 (1.2-1.6)**
Most recent sex partner had an STI	2.9 (0.6-14.5)	1.1 (0.3-4.6)

Substance use
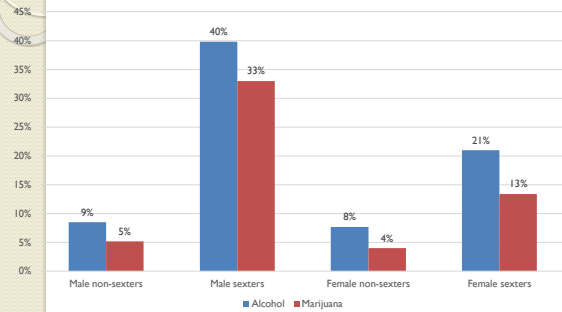
Both monthly alcohol and marijuana use is significantly higher for "sexters" than their same-sex non-sexting peers.

Positive psychosocial indicators
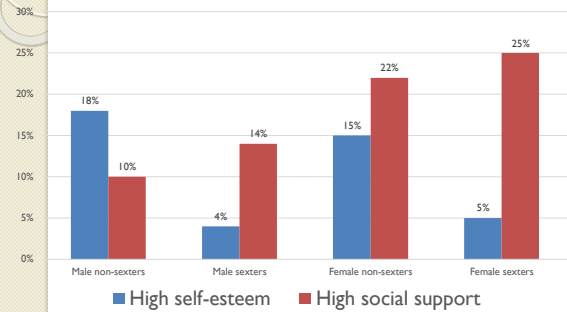
Sexters had significantly lower self-esteem that non-sexters. Social support was similar between the two groups.

What adults can do

Bullying programs should be ubiquitous	• Bullying prevention programs need to be holistic and **address all environments and modes simultaneously**
Teach youth to be critical	• **Help young people evaluate the legitimacy of websites** (e.g., government and university sites versus others)
Integrate technology into educational programming	• Technology is a core piece of young people's lives. Everything we can do to **integrate technology into learning activities helps them translate these lessons into their 'real world'.**
Sexting is really not all that common	• Although the media has portrayed sexting as a problem caused by new technology, health professionals may be more effective by approaching it as an aspect of **adolescent sexual development and exploration** and, in some cases, a marker for **risk-taking and psychosocial challenge.**