

ELECTRONIC AGGRESSION AS NEW FORM OF VIOLENCE IN THE HOME: RADIO RAP SESSIONS TO RAISE AWARENESS IN PARENT AND IN YOUTH

Community health advocates (CHAs) at the University of South Alabama Center of Excellence have recently paid close attention to the rapid increase of youth violence in local urban communities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released a podcast on a new type of youth violence in the home setting: electronic aggression. The CDC reported that up to 34% of youth say they have been victims of electronic aggression and as many as 21% reported having committed this type of violence.

This pilot project worked with a local radio station to produce an on air rap session, open to any caller, on the topic of electronic aggression as an emerging form of violence in the home. The purpose of my research was to increase youths' and parents' awareness of electronic aggression, and to solicit from the community possible actions to prevent this kind of violence. The results of my project show that parents are not aware of the internet behavior of their children.

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INTRODUCTION

Electronic aggression is an emerging, umbrella term that refers to cyber bullying and Internet harassment. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has begun to pay attention to the press and media around this issue and is investigating solutions spurred by calls from state and local education agencies. Little information exists on this emerging problem. The purpose of this study was to make parents and youths aware of electronic aggression and how it can lead to violent behavior.

In a radio podcast, several people discussed different views on how electronic aggression affects youth and parents. A podcast is a series of digital media files which are distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playbacks on portable media players and computers. To determine if I could increase awareness about the danger of electronic aggression by using media targeted at youth and parents, I chose radio as the media focus of my hypothesis.

METHOD AND MATERIAL

I researched my topic at the University of South Alabama's Biomedical library in Mobile, Alabama. The University requires that all research projects are submitted for approval by the institutional review board (IRB). I submitted my research plan to IRB and requested "exempt" status, since I was not accessing names of respondents, the data would be collected in a public forum, and respondents could choose whether or not to participate in the rap session.

Next, I went to a local radio station that is popular with teenage and adult audiences. I was invited by the morning disc jockey to conduct a rap session during the next morning's show. During the session, I was on the air posing my research questions to youth and adults. Both age groups called in and voiced their concerns and opinions.

The rap session delivered one question for parents and another question for youth. The rap session was conducted on July 16, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. The parent question was, "What role do you play in preventing electronic aggression?" Youth were asked, "Do you feel like in some instances that you are victims of violence through social electronic networking such as MySpace and Facebook?" Caller comments and ages were recorded.

RESULTS

According to the question posed to parents, eight responded to the roles they play in preventing electronic aggression. Almost 40% did not allow MySpace and Facebook on their home computer. Out of the eight parents, 25% monitored the pages that their children visited, the other 25% did not know if their child went to either site. Only 13% indicated that their child should not take offense to MySpace and Facebook comments.

Of the eight youth participants in my radio broadcast, 50% were victims of harassment from older men, the other 50% were victims of violence resulting from electronic aggression. Although there were only sixteen participants, my research exposed youth and adults to the effects of electronic

Table 1. Parent and youth responses to questions posed on morning radio show

Parents Responses (8 Participants) What role do parents play in preventing electronic aggression?	Youth Response (8 Participants) Do you feel like in some instances that you are victims of violence through social electronic networking?
2 (25%) of the respondents indicated that they monitored their children's MySpace and Facebook account	4 (50%) were victims of harassment from older men
3 (37.5%) did not allow MySpace and Facebook on their home computer	4 (50%) were victims of violence resulting from electronic aggression
1 (12.5%) indicated that their child should not take offense to MySpace and Facebook comments	
2 (25%) did not know that their child was using MySpace and Facebook	

aggression and how it can be dangerous if not properly monitored.

CONCLUSION

Only a quarter of the parents indicated that they monitored their children's MySpace or Facebook ac-

counts; and just over a third said they did not allow their children to use such websites. Parents may think their children are going on the Internet to do schoolwork. Alarming, half of the youth said they were victims of harassment and half (not necessarily the same youth) said they had been victims of electronic aggression.

RESOURCES

- Podcast: Electronic Aggression.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention & Control, Division of Violence Prevention. (November 28, 2007). Available at: www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=7306#transcript.
- Carlson Karen T. Poverty and youth violence exposure: experiences in rural communities. *Children & Schools.* 2006;28(2):87-96.