Chapter 7
Anti–Cyberbullying Interventions

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, interventions aimed at combating cyberbullying will be presented and discussed. Since the middle of the 2000s, various anti-cyberbullying programs have been implemented, but evidence for their effectiveness is limited since most of these programs are the result of experimentations and limited-size studies. Particular attention will be devoted to peer group educational interventions, since it has been suggested that this is the best way to reduce the risk of cyberbullying and buffer its negative impacts. Anti-cyberbullying programs are usually designed to be run in schools and foresee the involvement of teachers and many of them are derived from anti-bullying programs. This does not invalidate or limit their reliability or efficacy. In fact, the value of educational interventions depends on how they are re-adapted, as well as on the competence and expertise of the trainers and facilitators involved. Finally, school anti-cyberbullying regulations will be discussed, since they should be considered to all effects and purposes as primary anti-cyberbullying interventions.

INTRODUCTION

In chapter 4, we have highlighted some technological interventions to combat cyberbullying, such as filters for blocking online harassment, and panic buttons that cyber victims can push when they feel under threat.

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However, the literature reveals that the most important elements associated with the decrease in cyberbullying are whole school anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying policies, school conferences, parent training/meetings, teacher training, information for parents, and cooperative group work. The intensity of interventions and their duration seems to be significantly associated with the decrease of bullying and cyberbullying.

The majority of the interventions developed to prevent cyberbullying are educational programs. These revolve around educating children, teachers, and parents in e-safety and, particularly, in providing them with information, techniques, and initiatives aimed at combating and buffering cyberbullying (Marzano & Lizut, 2019).

Without a doubt, prevention through education is the intervention strategy that is the most largely agreed on by researchers and practitioners alike, but preventing cyberbullying through education is no easy task. Cyberbullying, usually, takes place among mates either at school or outside the school gates. Cyberbullies are able to hit their victims anywhere and everywhere, it being sufficient that they are online. For this reason, many programs advocate the involvement of parents and, often, integrated initiatives are suggested that engage educators, parents, and, of course, children (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009; Perren et al., 2012; McGuckin et al., 2014).

However, teaching-learning theories and teaching-learning experience suggest that different programs should be designed for educators, parents, and children since they represent different classes of learners, each of which require a specific mode of involvement and diverse types of knowledge strands. As a consequence, interventions that involve educators, parents, and children can be very positive, but should be carefully designed and should involve very skilled trainers.

Conferences in which educators, parents, and children are invited to attend together will not be effective if the content and modality of presentation have not been designed in order to meet the different expectations and exigencies of a heterogeneous audience. In this regard, conferences organized by police officers that focus on cybercrime and on the legal consequences of identity theft, impersonation, online defamation, violation of privacy, and other similar aspects can be useful for parents but may be boring for adolescents. Fisk reports an episode that is very common in cyberbullying conferences organized for an adolescent audience:

*In 2010, I was invited to attend two youth internet safety presentations put on by the New York State Police Computer Crime Unit. As I sat in the audience...*
User Experience of Mobile Internet: Analysis and Recommendations
www.igi-global.com/article/user-experience-mobile-internet/37458?camid=4v1a