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PROJECT PARTNER:
ARDA BERATUNG & BILDUNG
https://www.ar-da.de/english-en/
E-Mail: info@ar-da.de

PROJECT COORDINATOR:
Dr. SUSAM DÜNDAR-IŞIK

PROJECT ASSISTANT:
ANNA WECKERT

Erasmus+

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CYBERBULLYING

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Before we begin…..

What do you think of when you hear the word "cyberbullying"?

OR

Go to the website:
www.menti.com

and enter the code:
4361 4755

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General Information on Cyberbullying

Definition:

Cyberbullying

Cyber:
Something pertaining to computers or electronic communication

Bullying:

- Persistent, unwanted and deliberate negative actions

- Intended to socially exclude or harm an individual

- Occurs over over an extended period of time

- Victims of bullying are often perceived as vulnerable and weaker

- Examples: systematic insults, humiliation, threats and sexual harassment

- Power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator(s)

- Often occurs covertly

- Can have severe consequences on the mental and emotional well-being of the victim

Cyberbullying:

→ harmful behaviours directed at individuals using electronic communication methods

- Verbal dimension
- Psychological dimension

General Information on Cyberbullying

Legal Situation:

In many legal systems, cyberbullying is a punishable offence, often categorised as "continued harassment by means of a telecommunications or computer system".

- Example of cyberbullying that can lead to prosecution:

Perceptibly violating a person's honour

- Diminishes an individual's reputation and respect within their social circle.
- Considers the objectiveness rather than the victim's personal feelings.

- Penalties depend on:

- to which extent the actions could potentially impact a person's lifestyle.
- the consequences of the cyber bullying.
- the legal system.

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How Cyberbullying has Changed the Dynamics of Bullying

Changes:

- 24/7 and global accessibility:
  - No geographic or time restrictions
  - Victims can be targeted always and everywhere

- Digital ampflification:
  - Content reaches a large audience quickly
  - Intensifies the harm experienced by the victim

- Escalation:
  - More severe due to digital amplification

- Permanence of content:
  - Impact of cyberbullying lasts longer

- Anonymity and pseudonymity
  - Can embolden perpetrators
  - Makes the prosecution of cyberbullying difficult

- Delayed awareness of injury:
  - Perpetrators are not aware of the damage they create

- New forms of harassment:
  - Doxxing: Publishing information about someone
  - Swatting: Provoking a police response with misinformation
  - Deepfake technology: Realistic fake content

- Mental health impacts:
  - More severe due to the internet`s persistence and omnipresence

How Cyberbullying has Changed the Dynamics of Bullying

Similarities between cyberbullying and analogue bullying:

- Group behaviour

- Power imbalance:
  - Can stem from social status, popularity, knowledge of personal information, reach, …

- Isolation of the victim

- Escalation
  - … to more severe forms of abuse.
  - … creating a growing audience.

- Reinforcement:
  - Perpetrators reinforce each other's negative actions.
  - Group solidarity.

- Audience effect:
  - Presence of an audience fuels negative behaviour.

- Bystanders:
  - … play an important role.
  - … can actively support the perpetrators.
  - … can passively observe but remain silent.
  - … can actively hinder the negative actions.

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Cyberbullying in School

The Dynamics in Classrooms

In every classroom, one or two students suffer due to constant attacks from their peers.

Why might cyberbullying occur frequently in schools?

- Bullying thrives in social systems where individuals feel trapped → schools can create such situations

- The school community often has an established social structure → cyberbullying can help the "stronger" students to remain dominant

- Teenagers often feel explosive emotions they cannot control → amount of cyberbullying cases tends to peak during puberty

- Internet is easily accessible for children and teenagers.

- Cyberbullying might have become more effective than analogy bullying in the eyes of the perpetrators

Cyberbullying in School

Conflicts in Schools

- Areas of conflict:
  - Specific contexts or situations in which conflicts arise
  - Examples: Grades, friendships, classroom dynamics, opinions, clashing ideologies and worldviews, …

- Levels of conflict:
  - How many people are involved? What people are involved?
  - Includes: Systemic issues, individual disagreements, …

- Dynamics of the conflict:
  - Includes: Power imbalances, communication problems, emotional factors, stereotypes, …

- Sub-conflicts:
  - Other smaller conflicts that might influence the larger conflict

The Role of the Teachers

How can Teachers Prevent Cyberbullying?

- Education and awareness.

- Create a safe classroom environment:
    - Promote inclusivity and respect.
    - Encourage open communication.
    - Teach empathy and conflict resolution.
    - Enforce active listening.
- Implement school policies:
    - Enforce anti-cyberbullying policies.
    - Cooperate with school management to create anti-cyberbullying policies if necessary.

- Be a good role-model.

- Stay informed.

What should education about cyberbullying and the internet include?

- Give information about cyberbullying including…
    - what counts as cyberbullying.
    - the legal consequences.
    - the mental health consequences.
    - what to do if cyberbullying occurs.
    - how to protect yourself from cyberbullying.
- Critical thinking:
    - Analysing and questioning sources.
    - Cross-referencing sources.
- Internet ethics:
    - ✦Treat other people how you want to be treated ✦

The Role of the Teachers
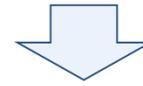
Intervention Methods

- Take immediate action:
  - Take every report about cyberbullying seriously.

- Report the cyberbullying.

- Meet with the involved parties.

- Make sure consequences are implemented and effective.

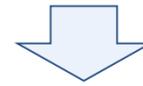**How to Address Cyberbullies Effectively**

- Empathy building exercises

- Digital literacy education, including:
  - responsible online behaviour.
  - the importance of respecting other people's privacy and boundaries.

The Role of the Students

If cyberbullying happens in school, students are most likely involved in it.

Students have a large responsibility.
They, in a way, decide, whether cyberbullying happens or not.

It is always better to speak up than to stay silent!

That is why students should…

pay attention to any information given to them concerning cyberbullying.

report any incident of cyberbullying they witness.

be aware of the policies their school has concerning cyberbullying.

treat others with respect.

inform themselves about what they should do if they witness cyberbullying.

Tips for Victims of Cyberbullying

- Avoid responding to the cyberbully.

- Document the evidence.

- Report the cyberbullying. Block the cyberbully.

- Distract yourself from the cyberbullying and practice self-care.

- Remember: You are not alone!

  - You should tell a trusted adult about the cyberbullying.

  - You can seek help from counsellors or helplines.

  - Seek a mental health professional if the cyberbullying is taking a toll on your mental health.

Case Study - Mika

Description

- Mika, a sixth grade student, holds a dominant position in his class. He can be considered the class leader.

- Mika cyberbullies his classmate Sebastian. He creates a derogatory photo collage featuring personal pictures of Sebastian.

- He posts this collage in the class chat on WhatsApp, accompanied by a threatening audio message.

- Several classmates react positively to the content, further amplifying the harm caused.

Case Study - Mika

Intervention

1. Documenting evidence:
   Sebastian's mother documents the chat as proof of the cyberbullying.

1. Initial assessment:
   The headmaster and school social worker investigate the situation to determine the severity of the threat. They also assess the interpersonal relationship between Mika and Sebastian.

1. Confrontation:
   Mika initially denies the severity of his actions but is confronted with the evidence. He acknowledges his actions but attempts to downplay them.

1. Renouncement of use of force:
   Mika agrees to refrain from using force and formally renounces it in a written deposition.

1. Providing support:
   Sebastian is offered a school escort to ensure his safety at school.

Case Study - Mika

Regulating the Conflict

1. Conflict analysis:
   The school team analyses the conflict on multiple levels, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, systemic and involving the parents.

1. Systemic brief intervention (SBI):
   A Systemic Brief Intervention is conducted within the class group to address systemic issues.

1. Mediated apology:
   A mediated conversation between Mika and Sebastian takes place, where Mika apologises for his actions, acknowledges his mistake and expresses remorse. Sebastian accepts the apology.

1. Reparation and responsibility:
   Mika is given the option to make amends for his actions. He agrees to do twelve hours of voluntary work for the school custodian and presents a written and oral apology to his class, addressing his offence and its impact on class cohesion.

1. Parental involvement:
   All measures are discussed with the parents of both Mika and Sebastian.

Case Study - Mika

Outcome

- Over time, it is observed that there are no further altercations between Mika and Sebastian.
- There are also no more cyberbullying incidents in the class chat.
- The students in the class also adhere to their voluntary commitment to uphold appropriate behaviour.

This case highlights the importance of a coordinated and multifaceted approach to address cyberbullying incidents in schools.

Case Study - Sarah

Description

- Sarah is a 16-year-old high school student. She enjoys spending time on social media platforms, particularly Instagram.

- She has a group of friends at school and is active in various online communities.

- One day, she notices a series of hurtful comments and messages on her Instagram posts and receives anonymous messages that state, "go away" and, "nobody likes you".

- Sarah feels sad, lonely and anxious due to the cyberbullying.

- She becomes increasingly withdrawn, looses interest in her hobbies and her grades started to decline.

- She confides in her best friend about the situation but is hesitant to share it with her parents or teachers out of fear of making the situation worse.

Case Study - Sarah

Regulation

- Sarah's best friend encourages her to speak to a trusted teacher about the cyberbullying.
- The teacher reports the incidents to the school administration, who promptly initiates an investigation.
- The school also provides Sarah with access to a counsellor to help her cope with the emotional impact of the cyberbullying.
- The school takes disciplinary actions against the perpetrators in accordance with its anti-bullying policies.
- Additionally, Sarah's parents consider legal action against the individuals responsible for the cyberbullying.

Case Study - Sarah

Conclusion

- Cyberbullying incidents are complex on a legal and ethical level.

- Cyberbullying can have severe emotional and psychological consequences for the victims.

- Open communication between students, parents and teachers is essential for addressing cyberbullying

- Schools must have clear policies to address and prevent cyberbullying

- Addressing cyberbullying that happens in schools requires a collaborative effort involving the school, parents, teachers and students.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!