Bullying on the rise

Dr. Bowler and her colleagues are designing apps and games to help reduce the rates of bullying. The apps encourage users to design websites and apps that do not have a name, logo, or account manager, pop-up bullying messages, etc. I recommend a site called Common Sense Media that has a lot of tips on how to use social media tools. Talk to children at an early age about what to do if someone is mean to them online. They should know that cyberbullying, take a screenshot as evidence. Try not to be judgmental about your child's use of social media. Cyberbullying is as real as any other form of bullying. Take charge of your health today. Be informed. Be involved.

LEANNE BOWLER, PHD

With the popularity of Snapchat and other social media sites, many young people spend a lot of time online. During that time, young people can be exposed to unwanted aggressive behavior—or cyberbullying. In 2015, 15.9 percent of high school students reported being bullied. But experts see cyberbullying as different as in-person bullying. "Cyberbullying is a concern for young people, their parents and adults who care about them—and it is happening more frequently. Bullying is not new. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in 2015, 15.9 percent of high school students reported being bullied.

The HEO can also assist with the youths' sexual orientations or gender roles, and must be careful not to discuss them without the youths' consent. Dr. Bowler and the groups she conducts research about with her colleagues. Researchers want to understand why this is happening and how to prevent it. The following results are true for both traditional bullying and cyberbullying. From data from youths in Pittsburgh schools, a similar story is true in our own neighborhoods. Forty percent of LGBTQ youths were bullied in the past year, compared to only 22 percent of heterosexuals. Twenty percent of LGBTQ youths were cyberbullied. Transgender youths are also twice as likely as nontransgender youths to be bullied. These findings are true for both traditional bullying and cyberbullying.

LGBT youth more likely to be bullied

Robert W.S. Coulter, PhD, MPH

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