

Growing Up With Media: Youth Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying and Unwanted Sexual Experiences

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Introduction

Peer victimization and harassment can have many harmful consequences for adolescents.¹ As young people continue to report the highest rates of connectivity to the Internet and social media,² it is important to understand how victimization and perpetration are expressed in both in-person behavior and through online technological modes.

This is the seventh in a series of seven bulletins summarizing the methodology for and behavioral trends emerging from the national Growing up with Media (GuwM) study. GuwM is a multi-wave longitudinal survey of 1,586 youth aged 10-15 years at baseline. Data were collected initially between August - September 2006, again between November 2007 - January 2008, and finally between August - November 2008. The survey protocol was reviewed and approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Institutional Review Board (IRB).

In this report, we examine the frequency of victimization and perpetration of problem and aggressive behavior. We also examine trends across time (i.e., waves). All reported data were gathered from the child respondent. The report includes the following sections:

Section 1: Bullying Victimization

Section 2: Bullying Perpetration

Section 3: Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Section 4: Unwanted Sexual Perpetration

Section 5: Victimization by Witnessing Violence

What is Growing up with Media?

- GuwM is a longitudinal online survey of a national sample of 1,586 young people, aged 10 to 15 years at Wave 1.*
- Because exposures and experiences online were a main interest of the survey, youth were required to have used the Internet at least once in the past 6 months. The inclusion criteria were purposefully broad to ensure a wide variability in Internet experience and exposure.
- Caregivers were members of the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) opt-in panel and residents of the U.S.
- Caregivers first completed a short online survey (approximately 5 minutes).
- With caregiver permission, youth completed an online survey (approximately 25 minutes).
- The sample was purposefully balanced on youth age and sex.
- Adult participants received \$10 and youth a \$15 gift certificate at Waves 1 and 2. To increase the response rate at Wave 3, adult participants received \$20 and youth a \$25 gift certificate.
- Data were collected across three time points:
 - Wave 1: August – September 2006
 - Wave 2: November 2007 – January 2008
 - Wave 3: August – November 2008
- Data were weighted to match the U.S. population of adults with children between the ages of 10 and 15 years. Adults were the weighting target because they were the recruitment target.
- Propensity scoring was applied to adjust for the adult's (i.e., recruitment target) propensity to be online, in HPOL, and to respond to the particular survey invitation.
- A full report on the methodology of the GuwM study is posted online at: <http://innovativepublichealth.com/guwm-methodology-bulletin>.

**As a result of data cleaning activities, the final sample size for Wave 1 is 1,581 (See the Methodological Details bulletin for more details).*

Report Highlights

Bullying and harassment

More youth report being victimized by, as well as perpetrating bullying at school than any other place queried, including the Internet

- Rates of distress related to bully victimization ranged from 15-40%, depending on where the bullying occurred. The lowest rates of distress were noted for online bullying.
- Online harassment (e.g., mean or rude comments) was more commonly experienced than bullying. Youth were most likely to be upset by rumors spread about them online, and least likely to be upset if they were excluded from a buddy list or other online group.
- Among youth who were bullied both online and at school, many said it was the same person or people, although an important minority said that they were different perpetrators.

Unwanted sexual experiences

Unwanted sexual experiences were just as likely to happen at school as they were online.

- Youth were most likely to be upset by being asked for sexual information about themselves when they did not want to tell the person or by being asked to do something sexual when they did not want to do it.
- Similar to bullying, among those who were targeted both online and at school, about one in three youth said the perpetrator was different online than in-person.

Witnessing violence

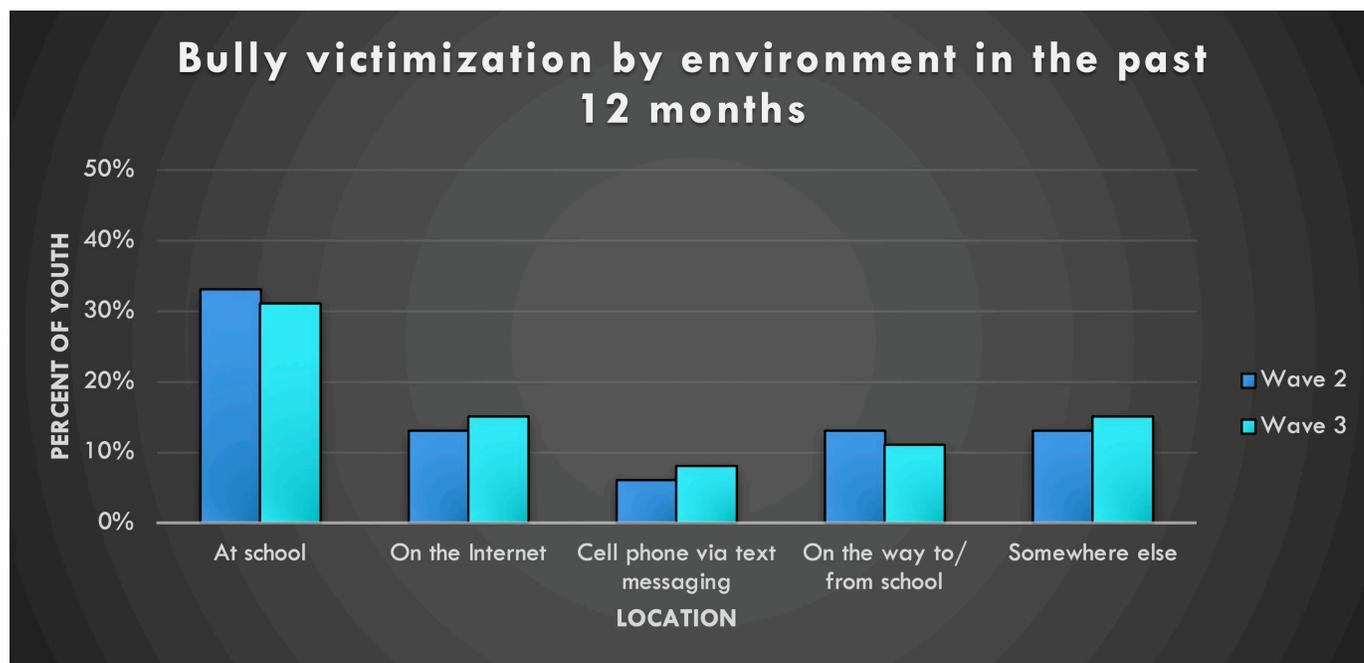
- Seeing someone attacked on purpose was the most common type of violence witnessed by youth; more than one in three youth each year said they had seen this in real life
- Witnessing domestic violence and hearing gun shots were the least common types of violence exposure, affecting 3-9% of youth.

Section 1: Bullying Victimization

Bullying Victimization by Environment

The deleterious effects of bullying have been published extensively.^{3,4} To begin understanding how bullying may be experienced across different environments, a question based upon Olweus' definition of bullying victimizations was added at Wave 2. It was worded thusly: "We say a young person is being bullied or harassed when someone else or a group of people repeatedly hits, kicks, threatens, or says nasty or unpleasant things to them. Another example is when no one ever talks to them. These things can happen at school, online, or other places young people hang out. It is not bullying when two young people of about the same strength fight or tease each other."

School was the most common place where bullying victimization was reported.



Consistently, bullying was most likely to take place at school: One of every 3 youth reported being bullied at school. Less than half as many reported they were bullied online (13-15%), somewhere else (13-15%), or on the way to/from school (11-13%).

Youth Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying and Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Youth who said that they were bullied in the past 12 months were asked how the most serious incident of the victimization made them feel.

<i>How upset were you?</i>	<i>At school (n = 360)</i>	<i>On the Internet (n = 183)</i>	<i>Cell phone via text messaging (n = 96)</i>	<i>On the way to/from school (n = 123)</i>	<i>Somewhere else (n = 154)</i>
Extremely upset	19%	5%	16%	17%	20%
Very upset	18%	10%	15%	23%	17%
Upset	26%	31%	26%	32%	31%
Somewhat	26%	33%	26%	18%	25%
Not at all upset	11%	21%	18%	11%	8%

Between 31% and 40% of youth reported being extremely or very upset as a result of their most serious experience if it happened at school, via text messaging, on the way to/from school, or somewhere else. Youth were least upset by bullying experiences that took place online, with only half as many (15%) reporting being extremely or very upset as a result compared to those who reported a similar impact by school bullying.

Some have suggested that a unique feature of cyberbullying is the anonymity with which it can be perpetrated. To examine this possibility empirically, youth who were bullied in the past 12 months were additionally asked if they knew who had perpetrated the bullying against them. “Know” was defined for respondents as when they could recognize the person or knew who the person was.

Youth who were bullied in the past 12 months were the most likely to report their bully if the incident took place at school.

<i>Do you know the person who bullied you ?</i>	<i>Wave 2</i>	<i>Wave 3</i>
At school	(n = 391)	(n = 360)
Yes	87%	88%
No	6%	6%
Not sure	7%	6%
On the way to/from school	(n = 158)	(n = 123)
Yes	81%	78%
No	11%	19%
Not sure	8%	3%
Cell phone via text messaging	(n = 73)	(n = 96)
Yes	60%	70%
No	21%	23%
Not sure	20%	7%
On the Internet	(n = 158)	(n = 183)
Yes	45%	54%
No	35%	30%
Not sure	21%	16%
Somewhere else	(n = 167)	(n = 154)
Yes	58%	72%
No	29%	23%
Not sure	13%	4%

Nearly 9 of every 10 youth bullied at school knew their bully, as well as 8 in 10 youth bullied on the way to/from school. Youth less commonly reported knowing who bullied them on the Internet (45-54%), on a cell phone via text messaging (60-70%), or somewhere else (58-72%). However, even in these online spaces, anonymity was not a given. This suggests that anonymity is not a unique feature to cyberbullying, nor is the lack of anonymity a hallmark feature of bullying that occurs in person.

Victimization via the Internet

Youth were asked more detailed questions about online victimization experiences. Based upon the Youth Internet Safety Surveys,^{6,7} we asked: “... some questions about things that people sometimes do when they are on the Internet. In the past 12 months, how many times did the following happen to you while you were on the Internet?”

40% of youth during at least one wave reported one or more online bullying and harassment victimization experiences in the past 12 months.

<i>Bullying victimization online in the past 12 months...</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 1,581)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 1,195)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 1,150)</i>
Someone made a rude or mean comment to you online			
Once a week or more	3%	4%	4%
Once or twice a month	5%	5%	6%
A few times a year	6%	9%	8%
Less than a few times a year	16%	16%	19%
Never	70%	66%	64%
Someone spread rumors about you online, whether true or not			
Once a week or more	1%	2%	2%
Once or twice a month	2%	1%	1%
A few times a year	2%	6%	4%
Less than a few times a year	7%	8%	12%
Never	88%	82%	80%
Someone made an aggressive or threatening comment to you online			
Once a week or more	1%	1%	1%
Once or twice a month	2%	2%	2%
A few times a year	3%	6%	5%
Less than a few times a year	8%	7%	9%
Never	86%	84%	83%

Someone your age took you off their buddy list or other online group because they were mad at you^a			
Once a week or more		1%	1%
Once or twice a month	--	3%	3%
A few times a year	--	6%	7%
Less than a few times a year	--	18%	20%
Never	--	73%	69%
Someone posted a video or picture online that showed you being hurt or embarrassed when you did not want them to post it^a			
Once a week or more		<1%	<1%
Every day/almost every day	--	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a week	--	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	<1%
A few times a year	--	<1%	<1%
Less than a few times a year	--	1%	2%

With reports from 1 in 3 youth, the most common peer victimization experienced was someone making a rude or mean comment (30-36%) at least once in the past year. Youth infrequently experienced having someone post a video or picture online that showed them being hurt or embarrassed when they did not want it posted (1-3%).

Out of youth victimized online, those who were victimized while visiting social media network websites doubled across the 36-month study period.

Youth who reported that they had experienced online peer victimization were asked what activity they were doing online when these comments were made.

^aThis question was not asked at Wave 1.

Youth Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying and Unwanted Sexual Experiences

<i>Youth activity when experiencing online victimization</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 506)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 382)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 398)</i>
Instant messaging	54%	50%	48%
Visiting social networking websites	30%	49%	60%
Playing games	26%	18%	23%
Going to chat rooms	20%	11%	9%
Emailing	20%	26%	18%
Listening to music	17%	19%	23%
Surfing the web	14%	10%	11%
Doing schoolwork	9%	13%	10%
Doing something else	9%	9%	9%
Blogging	7%	7%	6%
Reading the news or current affairs	2%	4%	1%
Buying things or looking at prices	1%	3%	3%
Podcasting/downloading files or software	1%	3%	2%
Visiting virtual worlds ^b	--	4%	5%

At Waves 1 and 2, instant messaging was the most common activity in which youth were involved when they were victimized online. However, by Wave 3, in 2008, the percentage of youth who were victimized while visiting social networking websites doubled. At the same time, the percentage of youth who were victimized while going to chat rooms fell in half. Across all waves, youth were least likely to report that they were victimized while reading the news, online shopping, or podcasting/downloading files or software. These changes likely reflect the increase in youth's social networking site usage over the 36-month period of the study (see the Growing up with Media: Media Use bulletin for a detailed examination of youth's media use trends).

<i>How upset were you the most serious time....</i>			
Someone made a rude or mean comment to you online			
Extremely upset	6%	12%	6%
Very upset	13%	11%	12%
Upset	20%	18%	21%
Somewhat upset	33%	41%	40%
Not at all upset	28%	18%	21%
Someone spread rumors about you online, whether true or not			
Extremely upset	14%	20%	13%
Very upset	21%	20%	9%
Upset	27%	16%	32%
Somewhat upset	26%	35%	25%
Not at all upset	12%	9%	21%
Someone made an aggressive or threatening comment to you online			
Extremely upset	15%	15%	7%
Very upset	12%	13%	13%
Upset	23%	19%	29%
Somewhat upset	25%	30%	30%
Not at all upset	25%	23%	21%
Someone your age took you off their buddy list or other online group because they were mad at you^c			
Extremely upset	--	4%	6%
Very upset	--	8%	5%
Upset	--	22%	22%
Somewhat upset	--	42%	30%
Not at all upset	--	24%	37%
Someone posted a video or picture online that showed you being hurt or embarrassed			
Extremely upset	--	12%	18%
Very upset	--	2%	53%
Upset	--	4%	1%
Somewhat upset	--	37%	19%
Not at all upset	--	45%	9%

Youth Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying and Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Youth who reported that they had experienced online peer victimization were also asked how they felt during the most serious incident these comments were made.

Youth were most upset when someone spread rumors about them online, whether true or not.

Overall, youth were least upset when online victimization took the form of being removed from someone's buddy list or other online group; 24-37% of youth were not upset by this at all. Youth who had rumors spread about them were the most upset, with 79-91% upset to some degree. Interestingly, Wave 2 reports of distress were higher across all forms of victimization queried compared to Waves 1 and 3, with the exception of being taken off of someone's buddy list or online group, or having an embarrassing photo or video of them posted.

Victimization Via Text Messaging

We also asked youth whether they owned a cell phone, and sent and received text messages. Those who responded affirmatively to this question were subsequently asked about a series of victimization experiences that may have happened to them through text messaging.

Between 23 and 32% of youth who used text messaging said they received a text message that said rude or mean things.

<i>Harassment victimization via text messaging in the past 12 months...</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 380)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 685)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 805)</i>
Received a text message that said rude or mean things			
Once a week or more	6%	3%	3%
Once or twice a month	2%	1%	4%
A few times a year	5%	5%	8%
Less than a few times a year	10%	15%	17%
Never	77%	76%	68%
Had rumors spread about you using text messaging, whether they were true or not^d			
Once a week or more		2%	1%
Once or twice a month	--	1%	2%
A few times a year	--	2%	3%
Less than a few times a year	--	9%	14%
Never	--	86%	80%

Youth Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying and Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Received a text message that said a threatening or aggressive comment^d			
Once a week or more		1%	1%
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	2%
A few times a year	--	2%	3%
Less than a few times a year	--	3%	10%
Never	--	94%	84%
Received a picture or video message that showed other people your age being hurt or embarrassed when you <u>did not want to receive it</u>^e			
Once a week or more		1%	
Every day/almost every day	--	<1%	--
Once or twice a week	--	<1%	--
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	--
A few times a year	--	<1%	--
Less than a few times a year	--	1%	--
Never	--	98%	--
Had a picture or video message sent to other people that showed <u>you</u> being hurt or embarrassed when you <u>did not want it sent</u>^d			
Once a week or more		1%	1%
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	1%
A few times a year	--	<1%	<1%
Less than a few times a year	--	2%	1%
Never	--	97%	97%

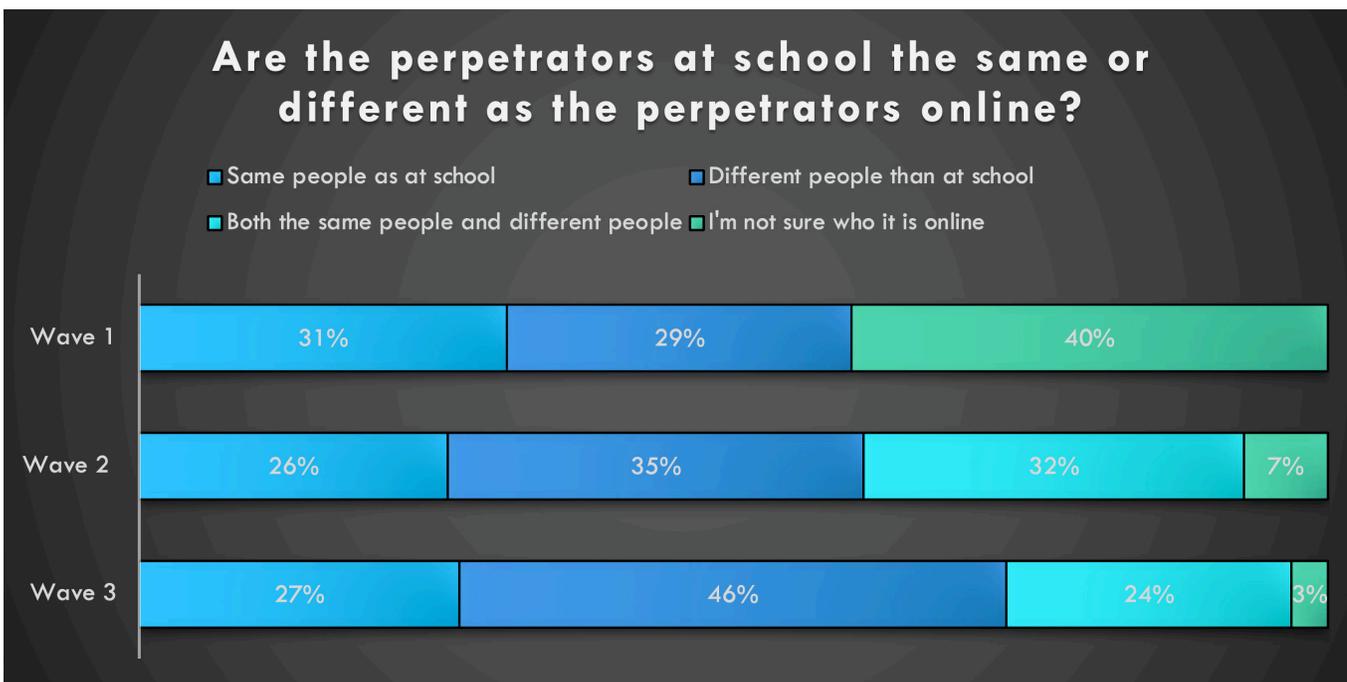
^dThis question was not asked at Wave 1.

^eThis question was not asked at Wave 1 or Wave 3.

The most common text message-based victimization experience was receiving a text that said rude or mean things (23-32%). Similar to online victimization, having a video shared of them or receiving a video of someone else being hurt or embarrassed was the least commonly experience reported (2-3%).

Overlap between Online and Text Victimization and School Experiences

At Wave 1, all youth who reported being harassed online in the past 12 months (NWave1 = 503) were asked whether the perpetrators who bullied them online were the same perpetrators as in school. At subsequent waves, the survey design was changed so that youth were first asked if they knew who harassed or bullied them at school and on the Internet (see Table on previous page). Youth who knew both the online and school perpetrators (NWave2 = 58; NWave3 = 71) were then asked whether the perpetrators were the same or different people.



One of every 3 youth who were bullied at school and online said the perpetrators were the same online as in school. At Wave 1, 29% of youth said they were different perpetrators, which increased 17 percentage points by Wave 3. It is important to note that at Wave 1, 40% of youth were not sure who bullied them online compared to 3% at Wave 3. This difference can likely be explained by the change in the survey design and also a change in the available response options. It is also important to point out that these responses reflect the overlap of school bullying among online victims, but not necessarily the overlap of online bullying among school victims.

Because at Wave 1 the question was asked of those who reported being bullied or harassed online and did not take into account victimization at school, an additional response option was available: “No, I am not bullied/harassed at school” which 60% of youth who were bullied or harassed online endorsed. For comparison to subsequent waves, the Wave 1 sample size in the figure above excludes those who selected “No, I am not bullied/harassed at school”, resulting in a final sample size of 201 (NWave1 = 201).

Youth Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying and Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Starting at Wave 2, youth who reported that they knew the person who harassed or bullied them at school and on a cell phone via text messaging in the past 12 months were asked whether the perpetrators via text messaging were the same or different as those in school (NWave2 = 34; NWave3 = 48).

Among youth who were bullied at school and via text messaging, 33-46% said the perpetrators were the same person. Interestingly, this was slightly more common than online-school overlaps.

A shift in responses over the 12-month period was also observed: At Wave 2, 49% of youth said both the same and different people bullied them at school and via text messaging. At Wave 3, only 10% said the same thing. Accordingly, the rates of youth reporting that different people bullied them through text messaging than at school increased fourfold from Wave 2 to Wave 3.

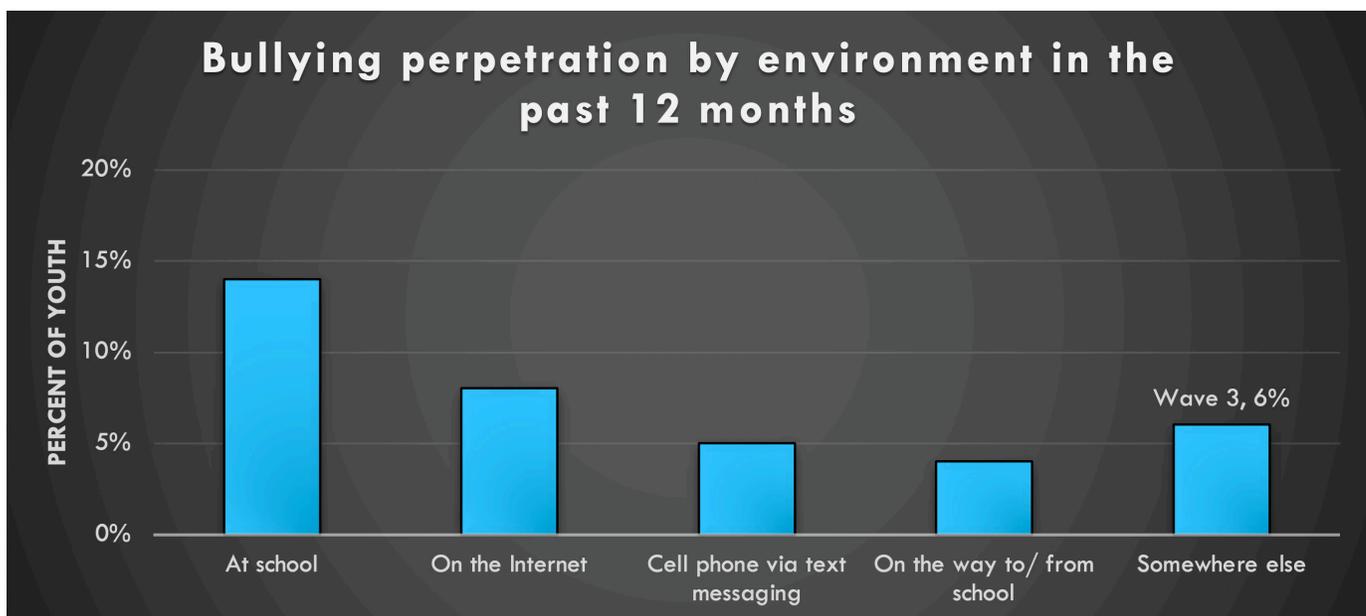
Section 2: Bullying Perpetration

Bullying Perpetration by Environment

Youths' bullying perpetration behaviors were also queried. Mirroring the victimization question, the definition of bullying, adapted from Olweus' definition,⁵ was provided for respondents: "When a person repeatedly hits, kicks, threatens, or says nasty or unpleasant things to other people. Another example is giving someone the 'silent treatment' or purposely not talking to them to make them feel bad. These things can happen at school, online, or other places young people hang out. It is not bullying when two young people of about the same strength fight or tease each other."

At Wave 3, a question was added to the survey that asked youth about the environment in which they perpetrated bullying. The question asked, in the past 12 months, how often they had bullied someone: on the Internet, on cell phones via text messaging, on the way to or from school, or somewhere else.

School was the most common place youth reported having bullied someone.



Online Perpetration

Youth were also asked about specific online perpetration experiences. We asked: “Thinking about things you have done in the past 12 months, how many times have you done the following when you were on the Internet?”

At Wave 1, the online perpetration question was asked only of child respondents who reported using the Internet at least once every few months. In subsequent waves, this question was asked of all child respondents.

One in four youth took someone off their buddy list or other online group because they were mad at them.

<i>Bullying perpetration online in the past 12 months...</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 1,553)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 1,195)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 1,150)</i>
Made rude or mean comments to anyone online			
Once a week or more	1%	2%	1%
Once or twice a month	2%	1%	3%
A few times a year	3%	3%	4%
Less than a few times a year	12%	13%	15%
Never	82%	81%	77%
Spread rumors about someone online, whether they were true or not			
Once a week or more	1%	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	1%	<1%	<1%
A few times a year	2%	1%	3%
Less than a few times a year	8%	9%	9%
Never	89%	89%	87%
Made aggressive or threatening comments to anyone online			
Once a week or more	1%	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	1%	<1%	1%
A few times a year	1%	1%	2%
Less than a few times a year	2%	5%	6%
Never	95%	94%	91%

Took someone off your buddy list or other online group because you were mad at them^g			
Once a week or more		1%	1%
Once or twice a month	--	2%	1%
A few times a year	--	5%	6%
Less than a few times a year	--	18%	18%
Never	--	74%	74%
Uploaded/posted a video or picture of someone your age being hurt or embarrassed online when <u>they did not want you to post it</u>^g			
Once a week or more		<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	<1%
A few times a year	--	<1%	<1%
Less than a few times a year	--	<1%	1%
Never	--	99%	98%

^gThis question was not asked at Wave 1.

The most common bullying perpetration behavior, reported by 1 of every 4 youth, was social exclusion (i.e., taking someone off a buddy list or other online group because they were mad at them). Saying rude or mean comments to someone online was also commonly reported, with 1 in 5 youth reporting this behavior. These perpetration behaviors align with youth’s reports of victimization, though slightly more youth reported having had someone make a rude or mean comment to them online than having done so to others.

Bullying Perpetration Via Text Messaging

We asked youth who reported ever sending or receiving a text message on a cell phone in the past 12 months subsequent questions about perpetrating bullying or harassment through text messaging.

Youths’ bullying perpetration via text messaging was most likely to be in the form of sending a text message that said rude or mean things.

<i>Bullying/harassment perpetration via text messaging in the past 12 months...</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 1,553)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 685)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 805)</i>
Sent a text message that said rude or mean things			
Once a week or more	1%	<1%	1%
Once or twice a month	2%	1%	1%
A few times a year	1%	3%	5%
Less than a few times a year	4%	12%	15%
Never	92%	84%	78%
Spread rumors about someone using text messaging, whether they were true or not^h			
Once a week or more	--	<1%	1%
Once or twice a month	--	1%	<1%
A few times a year	--	1%	2%
Less than a few times a year	--	7%	8%
Never	--	91%	88%
Sent a text message that said a threatening or aggressive comment^h			
Once a week or more	--	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	1%
A few times a year	--	1%	1%
Less than a few times a year	--	4%	7%
Never	--	95%	91%
Sent a picture or video message that showed someone your age being hurt or embarrassed when they <u>did not want you to</u>^h			
Once a week or more		<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	--
A few times a year	--	<1%	<1%
Less than a few times a year	--	<1%	1%
Never	--	99%	98%

^hThis question was not asked at Wave 1.

Among youth who used text messaging, saying rude or mean things was the most common way to aggress upon others via this technology, similar to online bullying and harassment perpetration. Of all behaviors perpetrated through text messaging, this particular behavior also increased the most over time, from 8% at Wave 1 to 22% at Wave 3. In contrast, only 1-2% of youth reported showing a photo or video of someone being hurt or embarrassed when the other person did not want them to share it.

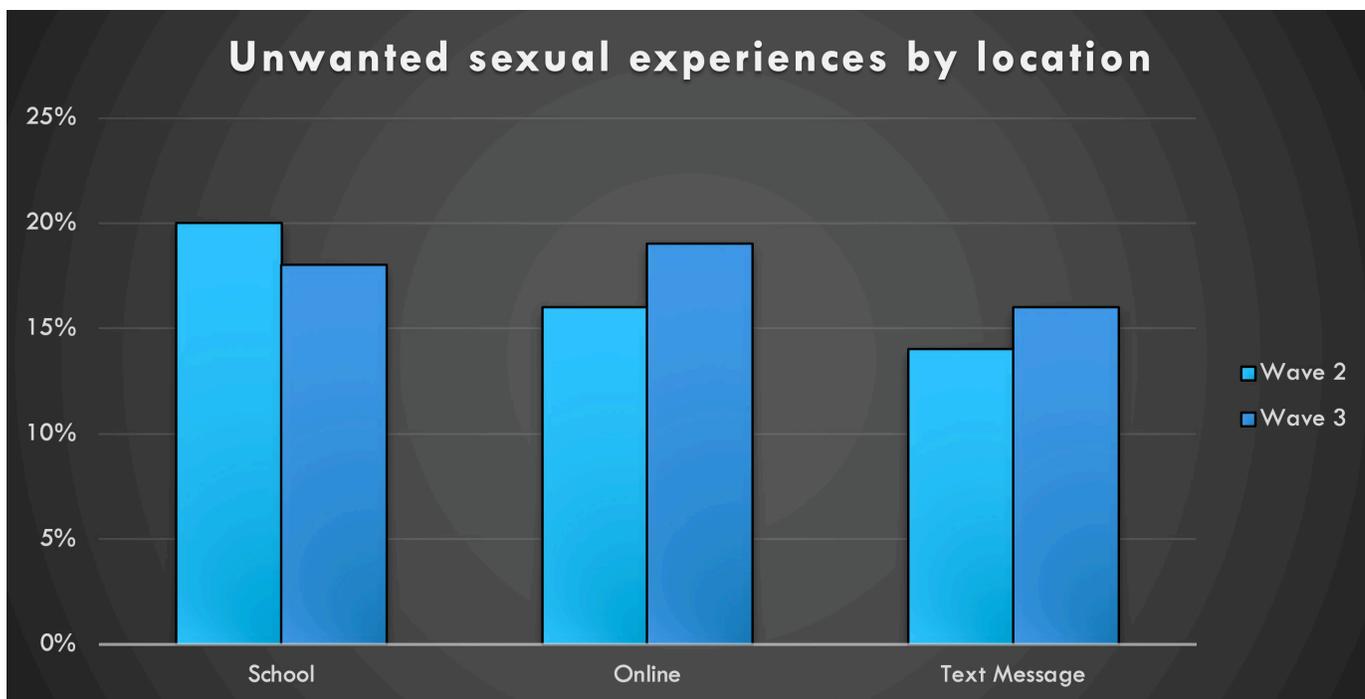
Section 3: Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Unwanted Sexual Experiences by Environment

Youth were asked about unwanted sexual experiences online in the past 12 months, including at school, online, and via text messaging. Questions were based upon the Youth Internet Safety Surveys.^{7,8} Three unwanted sexual experiences were queried:

- Someone tried to get me to talk about sex when I did not want to
- Someone asked me for sexual information about myself when I did not want to tell the person, e.g. really personal questions, like what my body looks like or sexual things I have done
- Someone asked me to do something sexual that I did not want to do

Youth reported unwanted sexual experiences similarly across location.



Unwanted Sexual Experiences at School

Youth were asked more detailed questions about unwanted sexual experiences that took place at school.

Between 15 and 17% of youth reported that someone tried to get them to talk about sex at school when they did not want to.

<i>Unwanted sexual experiences at school in the past 12 months</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 1,195)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 1,150)</i>
Someone tried to get you to talk about sex <u>when you did not want to</u>		
Once a week or more	1%	1%
Once or twice a month	1%	2%
A few times a year	3%	2%
Less than a few times a year	12%	10%
Never	83%	85%
Someone asked you for sexual information about yourself <u>when you did not want to tell the person</u>		
Once a week or more	<1%	1%
Once or twice a month	2%	1%
A few times a year	2%	2%
Less than a few times a year	6%	7%
Never	90%	89%
Someone asked you to <u>do something sexual that you did not want to do</u>		
Once a week or more	<1%	1%
Once or twice a month	1%	1%
A few times a year	2%	1%
Less than a few times a year	6%	6%
Never	91%	91%

The most common form of online sexual victimization was of someone trying to get youth to talk about sex when they did not want to, reported by about 1 in 6 youth. About 1 of every 10 youth reported that someone asked them for sexual information about themselves when they did not want to tell the person or that someone asked them to do something sexual that they did not want to do.

Unwanted Sexual Experiences Online

Youth were also asked detailed questions about unwanted sexual experiences that took place online

During at least one wave, 1 in 6 youth reported that one or more unwanted sexual experiences took place online in the past 12 months.

<i>Unwanted sexual experiences online in the past 12 months...</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 1,581)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 1,195)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 1,150)</i>
Someone tried to get you to talk about sex online <u>when you did not to</u>			
Once a week or more	1%	1%	1%
Once or twice a month	1%	2%	2%
A few times a year	3%	3%	3%
Less than a few times a year	6%	7%	9%
Never	89%	87%	85%
Someone online asked you for sexual information about yourself <u>when you did not want to tell the person</u>			
Once a week or more	1%	2%	1%
Once or twice a month	1%	1%	2%
A few times a year	2%	2%	3%
Less than a few times a year	7%	8%	9%
Never	89%	87%	85%
Someone asked you to <u>do something sexual when you were online that you did not want to do</u>			
Once a week or more	1%	1%	1%
Once or twice a month	1%	1%	2%
A few times a year	2%	2%	2%
Less than a few times a year	3%	5%	5%
Never	93%	91%	90%

Rates of youth who reported unwanted sexual experiences online were similar to rates of youth who reported unwanted sexual experiences at school. These rates were stable across time.

Youth Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying and Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Follow-up questions were asked of youth who reported unwanted experiences to better understand where they were online when it happened.

Notable shifts were observed over time regarding the online activity that youth were involved in when the incident of online unwanted sexual experience occurred.

<i>Youth activity when the online unwanted sexual experiences occurred</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 222)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 165)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 199)</i>
Instant messaging	38%	55%	45%
Going to chat rooms	35%	22%	18%
Visiting social networking websites	32%	46%	61%
Playing games	21%	21%	12%
Emailing	13%	22%	16%
Listening to music	16%	17%	18%
Surfing the web	11%	9%	14%
Doing schoolwork	5%	9%	14%
Doing something else	2%	11%	4%
Blogging	5%	5%	3%
Reading the news or current affairs	3%	5%	1%
Buying things or looking at prices	2%	5%	1%
Podcasting/ downloading files or software	1%	8%	<1%
Visiting virtual worlds ⁱ	--	5%	3%

ⁱThis response option was not available at Wave 1.

The most common activities youth were engaged in online when the unwanted sexual experience occurred were instant messaging, going to chat rooms, and visiting social networking websites across all waves. Similar to trends noted for online peer victimization, there was an increase across time in youth who reported that they were using social networking sites when the unwanted sexual experience occurred. Indeed, this rate doubled over the 36-month period with 61% of Wave 3 youth reporting that they were visiting a social networking website when the unwanted sexual experiences occurred. During the same time period, rates of being in a chat room when the unwanted sexual experience occurred decreased by half.

Youth who reported an unwanted sexual experience online were also asked how they felt during the most serious incident of unwanted sexual contact.

At least 1 in 10 youth were extremely upset by the most serious time the incident of unwanted sexual experience occurred.

<i>How upset were you the most serious time...</i>	<i>Wave 1</i>	<i>Wave 2</i>	<i>Wave 3</i>
Someone tried to get you to talk about sex online <u>when you did not want to</u>			
Extremely upset	15%	12%	11%
Very upset	20%	17%	15%
Upset	20%	25%	21%
Somewhat upset	22%	27%	32%
Not at all upset	23%	19%	21%
Someone online asked you for sexual information about yourself <u>when you did not want to</u> tell the person			
Extremely upset	24%	16%	12%
Very upset	12%	15%	8%
Upset	17%	24%	20%
Somewhat upset	29%	27%	37%
Not at all upset	18%	18%	23%
Someone asked you to <u>do</u> something sexual when you were online that you <u>did not want to do</u>			
	<i>(n = 107)</i>	<i>(n = 91)</i>	<i>(n = 105)</i>
Extremely upset	22%	18%	13%
Very upset	14%	9%	21%
Upset	28%	26%	16%
Somewhat upset	22%	28%	27%
Not at all upset	14%	19%	23%

Youth were more upset by unwanted sexual experiences online during Wave 1 than subsequent waves. Overall, youth reported the least amount of distress when someone asked them for sexual information about themselves when they did not want to tell the person and the most upset when someone asked them to do something sexual. Compared to online victimization experiences, youth were equally likely to be extremely upset by unwanted sexual experiences. Levels of distress were not queried for school incidents so comparisons cannot be made.

Overlaps Online Versus School

At Wave 1, all youth who reported that someone asked them to do something sexual that they did not want to do when they were online in the past year (NWave1 = 107) were asked whether the people who tried to this were the same or different people than those who did so at school. At subsequent waves, this question was asked only of youth who were sexually solicited in any way both at school and online in the past 12 months (NWave2 = 95; NWave3 = 122).

Among youth who reported unwanted sexual experiences both online and at school, about 1 in 3 said that they were targeted by different people. Nearly half of youth were unsure about who was targeting them online at Wave 1; however, this was reduced to 1 in 5 youth in subsequent waves. Between 26% and 31% of youth said they were targeted by the same person online and at school, compared to 29-46% of youth who reported being targeted by different people online vs at school. Rates of youth who said it was both the same and different people varied over time, making it difficult to see patterning.

ⁱ Because at Wave 1 the question was asked of those who reported unwanted sexual solicitation online and did not take into account unwanted sexual experiences at school, an additional response option was available: “No, no one asked me to talk about sexual things at school,” which was endorsed by 30% of youth who were sexually solicited online. For comparison purposes to subsequent waves, the Wave 1 sample size in the figure above excludes those who selected “No, no one asked me to talk about sexual things at school,” resulting in a final sample size of 71 (NWave1 = 71).

Unwanted Sexual Experiences Via Text Messaging

Among youth who use text messaging, receiving a picture or video text message that was sexual in any way was the least common form of unwanted sexual experience.

<i>Unwanted sexual experiences via text messaging in the past 12 months...</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 380)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 685)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 805)</i>
Received a text message that asked you for sexual information about yourself <u>when you did not want to</u> tell the person^k			
Once a week or more		1%	1%
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	1%
A few times a year	--	<1%	1%
Less than a few times a year	--	4%	4%
Never	--	94%	93%
Received a text message that asked you to <u>do</u> something sexual that you <u>did not want to do</u>^k			
Once a week or more		1%	1%
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	1%
A few times a year	--	<1%	<1%
Less than a few times a year	--	2%	4%
Never	--	95%	94%
Received a picture or video text message that was sexual in any way that you <u>did not want to</u> receive			
Once a week or more	1%	2%	2%
Once or twice a month	3%	<1%	1%
A few times a year	3%	1%	2%
Less than a few times a year	2%	3%	5%
Never	91%	94%	90%
Received a text message that was sexual in any way that you <u>did not want to</u> receive			
Once a week or more	1%	3%	2%
Once or twice a month	3%	2%	1%
A few times a year	2%	2%	3%
Less than a few times a year	4%	5%	8%
Never	89%	88%	86%

^kThis question was not asked at Wave 1.

Youth Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying and Unwanted Sexual Experiences

The most commonly reported unwanted sexual experience among youth who used text messaging was receiving a sexual text message that they did not want to receive (10-14%). Receiving a sexual picture or video text message that youth did not want to receive was also somewhat common (6-10%).

Rates of the four unwanted sexual experiences queried were stable across time and location. While youth experience them less than victimization rates, an average of 1 in 6 youth reported unwanted sexual experiences, of which at least 10% found it to be extremely upsetting.

Section 4: Sexual Perpetration

Perpetration of Unwanted Sexual Experiences Online

2-3% of the youth reported engaging in unwanted sexual behavior online in the past 12 months.

<i>Perpetration of unwanted sexual behavior online in the past 12 months...</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 1,581)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 1,195)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 1,150)</i>
Tried to get someone to talk about sex online <u>when they did not want to</u>			
Once a week or more	<1%	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	<1%	<1%	<1%
A few times a year	<1%	<1%	<1%
Less than a few times a year	1%	1%	2%
Never	98%	98%	97%
Asked anyone online for sexual information about themselves <u>when that person did not want to tell you</u>			
Once a week or more	<1%	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	1%	<1%	<1%
A few times a year	<1%	1%	1%
Less than a few times a year	2%%	1%	3%
Never	97%	97%	97%
Asked anyone to <u>do</u> something sexual online that <u>when the other person did not want to</u>			
Once a week or more	<1%	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	<1%	<1%	<1%
A few times a year	<1%	1%	<1%
Less than a few times a year	1%	1%	2%
Never	98%	98%	98%

Youth reports of perpetrating unwanted sexual behavior in the past 12 months were quite rare, with 3% or less endorsing any one type of behavior at each wave.

Perpetrating Unwanted Sexual Experiences Via Text Messaging

Youth were asked about perpetrating unwanted sexual experiences via text messaging in the past 12 months. Behaviors mirrored those asked at school and online, with the addition of whether youth had sent a text message that was sexual in any way that the recipient did not want to receive.

Similar to online perpetration, few youth (1%) reported perpetrating unwanted sexual experiences via text messaging in the past 12 months.

<i>Sexual perpetration via text messaging in the past 12 months...</i>	<i>Wave 1 (n = 1,553)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (n = 685)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (n = 805)</i>
Sent a text message that asked someone for sexual information about themselves <u>when that person did not want to receive it</u>¹			
Once a week or more	--	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	--	<1%	<1%
A few times a year	--	<1%	1%
Less than a few times a year	--	<1%	1%
Never	--	99%	97%
Sent a text message that asked someone to <u>do</u> something sexual when that person <u>did not want to receive it</u>¹			
Once a week or more	--	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	--	--	--
A few times a year	--	--	<1%
Less than a few times a year	--	<1%	1%
Never	--	99%	98%

Youth Victimization and Perpetration of Bullying and Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Sent a text message that was sexual in any way when that person <u>did not want to</u> receive it			
Once a week or more	<1%	<1%	<1%
Once or twice a month	<1%	<1%	--
A few times a year	<1%	<1%	<1%
Less than a few times a year	<1%	1%	3%
Never	99%	98%	97%

^hThis question was not asked at Wave 1.

According to youths' reports, perpetration of unwanted sexual experiences via text messaging was just as infrequent as perpetration online.

Section 5: Victimization by Witnessing Violence

Youth were asked about their exposure to violence in real life. Specifically, we asked youth: "Sometimes you see things happen to other people in real life. This means not people on TV, in video or Internet games or movies, or things that you just read about. Have you in real life...

- seen someone get attacked or hit on purpose? Somewhere, like at home, at school, at a store, in a car, on the street or anywhere else?
- seen one of your parents get hit, slapped, punched, or beat up by your other parent, or their boyfriend or girlfriend?
- seen someone steal something from a home, a store, a car, or anywhere else? Things like a TV, stereo, car, or anything else?
- been in a place in real life where you could see or hear people being shot, bombs going off, or street riots?"

Items were from the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire,⁹ which was included in the Youth Internet Safety Surveys.^{6,7} At Wave 1, youth were asked if they ever witnessed these violent behaviors. At Waves 2 and 3, youth were asked if they had witnessed these violent behaviors in the past 12 months.

Youth most commonly reported witnessing someone being attacked or hit on purpose.



The most common type of violence exposure was seeing someone being deliberately attacked. Fewer youth reported seeing someone engage in theft, hearing gunshots, or witnessing a parent or caregiver hit the other. While exposure to physical attacks decreased over time, as would be expected when comparing “ever” with “past year” rates, rates of exposure to other violence were less predictable.

Conclusion

This bulletin provides a comprehensive view of directly experienced victimization and unwanted sexual attention as well as the indirect victimization experience of witnessing violence that youth experience in their everyday lives. Across experiences, we see that youth are just as, if not more, likely to report that these experiences took place in the real world (i.e., at school and in real life) when compared to online and text messaging technologies. As much as the world is changing, victimization and unwanted sexual experiences are still happening in person, and we need to be mindful of helping youth healthfully navigate these real-world experiences.

That said, online victimization is not entirely absent, and when it does happen, it is usually on social media websites or through instant messaging platforms, both of which encourage social interaction. We need to help youth learn how to communicate assertively and positively across all spaces and places.

The rate of exposure to in-person violence bears noting as well. Nearly half of youth said they had seen someone physically assaulted in real life. Spousal abuse by one's caregiver and exposure to gun noises were less likely to be reported, although in at least one wave, 1 in 10 youth reported having experienced one of these forms of violence. These findings suggest that we should consider contextual violence when exploring health youth development.

Taken together, these data show that far too many of our young people are involved in victimization, with equally concerning numbers exposed to the violence of others in their communities. While there is certainly no magical Band-Aid, studies like these are critical to documenting the magnitude of the problem and serve as a call for more work in the area of youth victimization and violence prevention.

Please note that these youth victimization and perpetration experiences have been extensively published elsewhere, including a comparison of online and offline bullying and unwanted sexual experiences,¹ an examination of trends in technology-based violent experiences (e.g., bullying, harassment, unwanted sexual experiences) including a comparison of perpetrator and victim experiences by age,² and an examination of exposure to violent media and the expression of seriously violent behavior.¹⁰ For more information regarding these topics, please refer to the articles available on the CiPHR website.

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About CiPHR

The Center for Innovative Public Health Research (CiPHR) is a non-profit research organization in the United States centered on understanding the impact on and opportunities for adolescent health represented by new technologies. Our mission is to promote new and innovative methods that improve the health and safety of young people. We understand that if we are to affect young people, we must go to where they “are.” We believe a multi-pronged approach is necessary, with survey and epidemiological research alongside active youth intervention and prevention efforts.

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Other Bulletins in This Series:

- Methodological Details
- Media Use Patterns
- Parent and Youth Reported Household Rules Characteristics
- Exposure to Violence and Sex in Media
- Youth Violence Victimization and Perpetration
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Indicators

Selection of Other Publications:

Ybarra M, Diener-West M, Markow D, Leaf P, Hamburger M, Boxer P. Linkages between Internet and other media violence with seriously violent behavior by youth. *Pediatrics*. 2008;122(5):929-937.

Ybarra ML, Mitchell KJ, Hamburger M, Diener-West M, Leaf PJ. X-rated material and perpetration of sexually aggressive behavior among children and adolescents: Is there a link? *Aggress Behav*. 2011;37(1):1-18.

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