Should I Tell on my Peers? Student Experiences and
Perceptions of Cyberbullying

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Abstract

Over the last decade, researchers have found that some adolescents are being bullied not only by traditional methods but also via electronic communication devices. This study provides an overview of student responses to a survey regarding cyberbullying, and explores the reasons students are often reluctant to report victimisation to adults. It includes both quantitative and qualitative data obtained from self-report surveys developed to measure the prevalence of cyberbullying, the media most frequently used for cyberbullying, the nature and content of offensive communications, the extent of reporting victimisation, and student views on preventing and reducing cyberbullying. A total of 154 students aged 13 to 18 years old from three schools in the Bay of Plenty participated in the study. The results provide some insights into the reasons that adolescents often do not tell an adult about being cyberbullied. The main reasons for not telling appear to be beliefs that peers can help more than an adult as well as a culture in which telling an adult may be considered "ratting". Student views on how schools can best deal with cyberbullying involved issues of confidentiality and safety, appropriate discipline, and ensuring school-wide awareness of anti-bullying procedures. These views offer valuable feedback with the potential to inform current anti-bullying programmes.
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