

## Cyber Playgrounds: College Students' Behaviors, Attitudes, and Perceptions of Cyberharassment



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## Introduction

- ◆ More than half of undergraduates know someone who has been cyberharassed
- ◆ Definitions
  - ◆ Cyberbullying
  - ◆ Cyberharassment
  - ◆ Cyberstalking
- ◆ U.S. Dept. of Education's Higher Education Center
- ◆ State laws



## Purpose

- ◆ Assess the behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions of college students regarding cyberharassment practices



## Methods

- ◆ Exploratory study
- ◆ Faculty teaching social science GUR courses
  - ◆ Freshman through junior-level courses
- ◆ Questionnaire
  - ◆ 53 questions
    - ◆ Behavior, attitude, and perception of congruent practices
    - ◆ Demographics

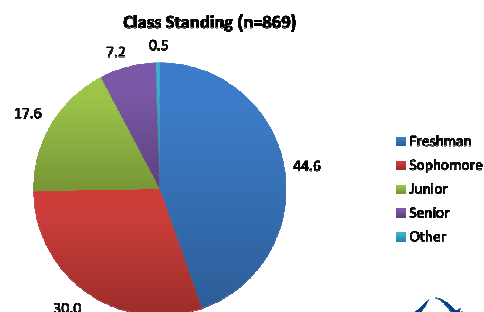


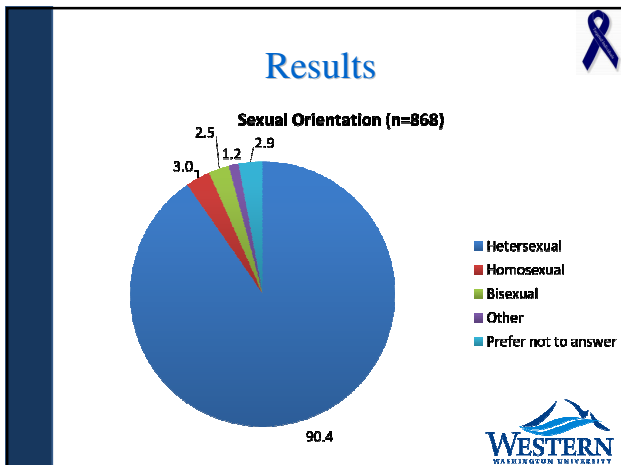
## Results

- ◆ 84% of faculty provided permission
  - ◆ Response rate of students = 87.9%
- ◆ 914 surveys collected
- ◆ Mean participant age = 19.7 years (SD ± 2.7)
- ◆ Sex – 59.5% female
- ◆ Mean hours of electronic communication = 3.6 hours (SD ± 3.4)



## Results





- ### Results
- ◆ Behavior in last 30 days
    - ◆ Monitoring SN page of unknown person
    - ◆ Post comment on SN page of unknown person
    - ◆ Read text messages without permission
    - ◆ Post personal information and embarrassing photos without permission
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- ### Results
- ◆ Attitudes toward acceptability
    - ◆ Forwarding offensive text messages
    - ◆ Checking someone's call history
    - ◆ Monitoring an unknown person's SN page
    - ◆ Posting a comment on an unknown person's SN page
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- ### Results
- ◆ Perception of peer behavior in last 30 days
    - ◆ Posting potentially embarrassing photos of someone online without permission
    - ◆ Reading someone's text messages
    - ◆ Posting material online that could tarnish someone's reputation
    - ◆ Monitoring an unknown person's SN page
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### Results

- ◆ Mean perception and mean behavior scores
  - ◆ Frequency scale: 1 (never – 0 times) to 5 (7 or more times)

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Behavior Score</b>	1.19	.24
<b>Perception Score</b>	2.45	.71

p=.000

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- ### Conclusions
- ◆ Students are not regularly practicing many cyberharassment-type behaviors
  - ◆ Attitudes toward such behaviors are generally negative
  - ◆ Perception of peer participation in such behaviors is skewed
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## Conclusions



- ◆ Health educator role
  - ◆ Reverse the potential negative social norming of cyberharassment-type behaviors
  - ◆ Collaborate with community leaders
  - ◆ Tech education for students



## Study Limitations



- ◆ No identification of cyberharassment victimization
- ◆ Lack of data about repeated behavior, focused behavior, or threatening behavior
- ◆ Lack of data about relationship status
- ◆ Insufficient participants for data analyses regarding sexual orientation



## Future Research



- ◆ Investigation of student knowledge about cyberharassment
- ◆ Development, implementation, and evaluation of cyber-education programs for students
- ◆ Investigation of repeated student cyber-behaviors in context of state laws



## Contact Information



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