Contents

Preface ix
Important Features of the Book x
Breakdown of Chapters xi

Acknowledgments xiii

About the Authors xv

1. Teens, Technology, and Trouble 1
The Story of Sam 1
What Would Happen to Sam Today? 2
Teens and Technology 4
Technology in Schools 5
Breakout Box: Delete Day 7
Why Schools Must Respond to Cyberbullying and Sexting 8
Technology Isn't the Problem 9
The Power of a Positive School Climate 10
Summary 11
Discussion Questions 12

2. School Climate: Where It Begins and Ends 15
What Exactly Is School Climate? 16
Assessing Your School's Climate 16
Breakout Box: A Positive School Climate Makes Everything Possible 17
Our School Climate Measure 19
School Climate and Behaviors at School 20
The Social Bond 21
Breakout Box: School Climate and Its Effect on School Social Issues 22

© 2012 Hawker Brownlow Education • 9781743305874 • CO5874

© Hawker Brownlow Education

School Climate and Bullying 23
Breakout Box: The Benefits of a Positive School Climate 23
Summary 24
Discussion Questions 24

3. Adolescent Mistreatment in the 21st Century: An Introduction to Cyberbullying 29
Bullying at School 29
Consequences of Bullying 30
What Is Cyberbullying? 31
Breakout Box: A Teenaged Target's Cry for Help 32
The Cyberbullied 34
The Cyberbully 36
Where Does Cyberbullying Occur? 37
Correlates of Cyberbullying 38
Cyberbullying and Self-Esteem 39
Cyberbullying and Suicide 40
Cyberbullying and School-Related Delinquency and Violence 40
Unique Features of Cyberbullying 41
Breakout Box: Decoding Your Digital Footprint 42
Breakout Box: Unique Characteristics of Cyberbullying 43
The Relationship Between Traditional Bullying and Cyberbullying 43
Summary 44
Discussion Questions 44

4. Adolescent Relationships in the 21st Century: An Introduction to Sexting 49
Sexting in the News 50
High-Profile Incidents 53
Why Do Teens Engage in Sexting? 53
Breakout Box: Adolescent Anger Lands Teen on the Sex Offender Registry 54
Sexting Images Go Viral 57
How Many Teens Really Participate in Sexting? 58
National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy 58
Cox Communications 60
MTV/AP 61
Pew Internet & American Life Project 61
Crimes Against Children Research Center 61
Our Own Survey 62

© Hawker Brownlow Education

Sexting: A Continuum of Behaviors 64
Crimes Against Children Research Center Typology 65
Sexting and the Law 66
Breakout Box: Selected State Sexting Bills 68
Summary 69
Discussion Questions 70

5. School Climate and Online Misbehaviors 77
Breakout Box: School Climate and Cyberbullying 78
School Climate and Behaviors Online 78
Our Research 79
Educators' Efforts Matter 82
Whom Do Targets Tell About Their Experiences With Cyberbullying? 83
Expectation of Discipline 84
Summary 85
Discussion Questions 85

6. Strategies for Improving Your School Climate 87
Top-Down Approach 88
Know Their Names 89
Community Building 90
Small Teacher–Student Ratios 91
Stay in the Loop 92
Clearly Define What Is "Not Cool" 93
Breakout Box: Staying in the Loop: What I've Learned by Listening and Understanding 94
Monitor Behaviors and Respond Fairly and Consistently to Problems 95
Encourage Active Student Participation in Decision Making 97
Student–Teacher Evaluations 98
Encourage Reporting of Any Inappropriate Behavior 99
Cultivate Hope 101
The Important Role of School Counselors 101
Breakout Box: School Counselors Can Help 102
Inform and Involve the Community 103
Continue to Lay the Groundwork 104
Use Resources Available to You 104
Breakout Box: What YOU Can Do to Spark Climate Change in Your School 105
Summary 107
Discussion Questions 108

© Hawker Brownlow Education

© 2012 Hawker Brownlow Education • 9781743305874 • CO5874

7. It Takes a Village: Social Norms, Bystanders, and Peer Mentoring **111**
Social Norming 112
An Overview of Social Norms Theory 113
Social Norms Theory and Traditional Bullying 117
Using Social Norming to Prevent Cyberbullying and Sexting 119
Coordinate a Student Play 120
Breakout Box: Using Stage Productions to Enhance School Climate 121
Role-Playing 121
Solidarity Walk or March 122
Four Corners 122
Breakout Box: Canadian Initiatives: Students Making a Difference Against Bullying 123
Pledges 124
Stop Standing By and Start Standing Up! 125
Breakout Box: Minnesota Twins 128
Peer Mentoring 129
Summary 131
Discussion Questions 132

8. Prevention Through Assessment: Taking the Pulse of Your School and Students **139**
Survey Your Students 140
Breakout Box: Talking Points: How to Conduct Research Among Your Students 141
Sampling 142
Breakout Box: Use Data to Guide Your Climate Improvement Efforts 144
Survey Development 144
Survey Administration 148
Breakout Box: Assessment Leads to Better Understanding 148
Don't Forget About the Adults! 149
Focus Groups 150
Breakout Box: Sample Focus Group Questions 151
Confidentiality, Consent, and Ethical Issues 152
Summary 153
Discussion Questions 153
Appendix A: Our Survey Questions 155
Appendix B: Psychometric Properties for Cyberbullying Scale 159

© Hawker Brownlow Education

9. Effective Prevention Requires Effective Response **163**
Can Schools Respond to Behaviors That Occur Away From Campus? 164
Just Say No to "Zero Tolerance": Utilize Informal Responses When Appropriate 166
Natural and Logical Consequences 167
Breakout Box: What Schools Should Do When Made Aware of a Cyberbullying Incident 168
When Can Educators Search the Contents of Student Cell Phones? 168
Special Considerations When Responding to Sexting Incidents 170
Breakout Box: What Schools Should Do When Made Aware of a Sexting Incident 172
Policy Issues 172
Cyberbullying 174
Breakout Box: Elements of a School Cyberbullying Policy 175
Sexting 175
Breakout Box: Elements of a School Sexting Policy 176
When to Get Law Enforcement Involved 177
Educate Students About the Consequences Before the Behavior 178
Breakout Box: One School's Response to Social Networking Drama 178
A Call for Education and Outreach 179
Summary 180
Discussion Questions 181

Index **185**

Additional materials and resources related to *School Climate 2.0: Preventing Cyberbullying and Sexting One Classroom at a Time* can be found at http://www.schoolclimate20.com

© Hawker Brownlow Education

© 2012 Hawker Brownlow Education • 9781743305874 • CO5874

1

Teens, Technology, and Trouble

Our students are always online and always on their phones, and some of them are misusing technology in pretty bad ways. And it's affecting what we're trying to accomplish at our school. We've set numerous rules, and outlined a number of sanctions—some of which are severe. We've implemented blocks and filters. But I feel these strategies are piecemeal. There has got to be a better approach. There has got to be something else we can do.

—educator from Florida

THE STORY OF SAM

Awkward-looking, skinny, tremendously introverted, and simply not popular, Sam found growing up difficult. He couldn't hold eye contact with anyone; he couldn't talk to girls; and he spent a great deal of his time outside of school reading, studying, and playing with computers. He was the quintessential nerd. But don't be misled. Sam wanted to be popular. He wanted to wear the cool clothes; attract the attention of the cute cheerleaders; be strong and tough and confident; and display charm, wit, and humor at all times. But it didn't happen. And so Sam muddled his way through elementary and junior high school, often the victim of both benign

© 2012 Hawker Brownlow Education • 9781743305874 • CO5874

© Hawker Brownlow Education

and malicious bullying, and just did his best to keep growing up. One particular instance vividly stands out in his mind.

The year was 1991. Sam was in eighth grade and was excited about wrapping up the school year and moving on to high school, where things might open up for him in terms of a social life and popularity. It could definitely happen, he thought to himself! In his physical education (PE) class, he was finally beginning to gain a little more confidence in himself, and he enjoyed casually chatting with one of the prettiest girls in the school—also an eighth grader. Well, it turned out that one of the sixth-grade guys who was also in that PE class had over the course of the quarter developed a crush on her . . . and had actually asked her "out"—and she had accepted. So, they were together. Sam didn't think to modify his casual chatting behavior with the girl, which—in the sixth grader's eyes—apparently was a threat to his blossoming romantic relationship. And so Sam was made fun of, and called names, and threatened, and disrespected, and embarrassed, and mistreated by the sixth grader and his friends—all classic forms of bullying.

Sam did his best to shrug off the verbal assault when it came and thought that the sixth grader would soon tire and move on to someone else. But he didn't. Instead—straight out of a Saturday morning movie—the other boy challenged Sam to a fight at the flagpole after school. Sam had to show up—he was attempting to embrace a new image as he transitioned into high school, and it was necessary to leave behind any semblance of being a wimp. In addition, almost everyone in his PE class had heard about the challenge, and he could not lose face. The challenger was a sixth grader, for crying out loud! Even though the other boy was two years younger, he was physically bigger and stronger, so Sam steeled his nerves and tried to chase away the fear by psyching himself up. He could do this. And so he did—he met the sixth grader at the flagpole after the final school bell had rung that afternoon.

And Sam got the living crap beat out of him.

For many reasons, it was an instructive incident for Sam—who, by the way, is actually Sameer, one of the authors of this book. It was the last major experience with bullying that he had—partly due to his growing self-confidence, and partly due to a more mature high school culture where everyone was pretty much doing their own thing. He was lucky. Some adolescents continue to experience bullying into high school and beyond. Or even worse, some don't make it that far.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO SAM TODAY?

As we began to write this book, we thought a lot about what might have transpired between the sixth grader and Sameer had computers and cell phones had been as ubiquitous as they are today. We wondered how he might have been cyberbullied given the very same circumstances. It is

© Hawker Brownlow Education

possible that the sixth grader would have circulated malicious statements via text messaging about Sameer's race, the way he physically looked, the clothes and shoes and length of socks he wore, his "nerdiness," and his "wimpiness." In addition, many students frequented a Facebook "Fan Page" devoted to his junior high school; the sixth grader could have posted comments viciously insulting him and his motives. Using his smartphone, he could have taken a picture of Sameer in the locker room wearing only his underwear and then sent it via Twitter to the rest of the student body.

These behaviors would likely have occurred right alongside the bullying that was going on at school. That's because what happens online is often happening at school; research has shown that most cyberbullies are generally not strangers but peers from school.[1] So all of this begs the question: Why *did* it happen, and why *does* it happen? One of the big-picture reasons we keep coming back to has to do with the environment in which students learn, interact, and simply exist at school.

If you'll travel back in time with us, you'll recall that you did better in classes, grades, and schools where you felt safe, secure, noticed, supported, cared for, encouraged, caught up in school spirit, and a part of something bigger and grander than yourself—a "community" to which you really belonged. Sameer didn't have that growing up in middle school. When he was targeted, he didn't know what to do. He didn't know where to go for help. And his school environment was one in which bullying seemed commonplace, and the potential for being victimized in some way or another was in the back of his mind every day. It wasn't encouraged or condoned by administration, but no meaningful efforts were made to build an atmosphere where peer respect was extremely cool and peer harassment was deemed completely uncool. No attempts were made to intentionally create a social movement to get everyone (administrators, educators, staff, students, and even parents) on board to share the load of promoting positive interactions and heart-level acceptance of each other. It just wasn't happening, perhaps because it wasn't a priority and perhaps because other tasks were deemed more important.

Prevention Point: Technology is a double-edged sword that should not be wielded carelessly.

Sameer's experience was not unique back then, nor is it out of the ordinary to see in schools today. However, a lot has changed in just one generation in terms of how students learn and communicate with friends and teachers. Technological interaction has become as ubiquitous today as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles lunch boxes were when we were growing up. For the most part, this is a good thing. The Internet and cell phones allow students to connect and interact with people and content in ways previously unimaginable. But technology is a double-edged sword that

© 2012 Hawker Brownlow Education • 9781743305874 • CO5874

© Hawker Brownlow Education

should not be wielded carelessly. Cyberbullying and sexting are just two examples of ways some teens misuse technology. Before detailing these problems, it is important to better understand the full extent to which students have embraced high-tech devices.

TEENS AND TECHNOLOGY

More teenagers in the United States are going online than ever before. Data from the Pew Internet & American Life Project show that 95 percent of those aged 12 to 17 use the Internet.[2] Over 11 million youth go online every single day. Almost three-fourths of teens have a desktop computer, and 18 percent have a laptop. The vast majority (93 percent) go online with their desktop or laptop computer, though an increasing number are accessing the Internet with their cell phones, gaming consoles, and portable gaming devices. Over three-quarters of teenagers have a broadband (high-speed) connection to the Internet at home.[3] As of spring 2011, 76 percent of all teens between the ages of 12 and 17 used online social networking sites, an increase from 58 percent in 2007.[4]

Cell phones, too, have become an efficient way for teens to communicate, surf, and contribute to discussions while on the go. The combination of mobility, the ability to initiate communication at any time (e.g., during periods of emergency or boredom), the decreasing cost of ownership, and continual (and remarkable) improvements in technological capabilities have made cell phones "must-have" devices for teens and adults alike. The most fundamental benefit is that individuals can make or receive calls from almost any location to almost any other location. According to the Pew report, approximately 77 percent of teens owned cell phones in spring 2011.[5]

Of course most cell phones today can do much more than make simple voice calls. They can be used to send and receive text messages (also known as short-message service [SMS] or "texts"). Among teens who own a cell phone, 88 percent say they have sent a text message to another's phone, and 54 percent do it daily.[6] In fact, two-thirds of teens who text say they are more likely to reach out to friends in that manner, rather than talking to them via a voice call. Many teens text others quite regularly: 28 percent send 11–50 texts a day, 16 percent send 51–100, and 31 percent send 100 or more texts every single day—more than 3,400 texts per month in 2011. Girls send and receive about 132 texts per day, while boys send and receive around 94.[7]

In addition to allowing calling and texting, many cell phones can serve as personal digital assistants and provide a host of services such as Internet and email connectivity; games; digital camera functionality; contact information storage; digital music and video player; two-way walkie-talkie; calculator; calendar; appointment reminders; to-do lists;

© Hawker Brownlow Education

alarms; integration with home security systems, appliances, and vehicles; and pretty much anything else you can imagine (there's an app for that!). Teens seem to be very interested in taking full advantage of all of the features that their mobile devices offer. According to Pew,[8]

- 83 percent have taken pictures;
- 64 percent have exchanged pictures;
- 54 percent have recorded video;
- 32 percent have exchanged video;
- 31 percent have used instant messaging;
- 27 percent have used the Internet;
- 23 percent have used use social networking sites; and
- 21 percent have sent email.

It is clear that many adolescents are no longer dependent on a desktop or laptop computer as their mobile phones can do many of the same things. Regardless of whether an individual takes advantage of one, some, or all of their capabilities, cell phones have become the most ubiquitous device of the 21st century thus far.

Internet-enabled devices like computers and cell phones allow adolescents to engage in a host of positive activities. For example, they can conduct research for schoolwork online, communicate with friends in real time, play games, and engage in a number of other pro-social activities. These benefits have in part contributed to their proficiency and comfort with these devices and are an integral part of almost all of their day-to-day activities. If you are raising a teen, you know he or she seems surgically attached to the phone and is pretty much always checking, sending, and posting messages, comments, pictures, and the like—for the primary purpose of socializing and keeping up to date with all that is going on.

Technology puts access to unlimited amounts of information, the ability to entertain yourself, and the ability to quickly and easily communicate with others at your fingertips. Online participation also teaches youth various social and emotional skills that are essential to successfully navigate life. For example, cyberspace provides a venue for identity formation and exploration, opportunities to be introduced to new and different worldviews and opinions, and moments to refine critical-thinking and decision-making skills. Directly and indirectly, youth are reaping a number of extremely important educational, affective, developmental, and relational benefits by embracing and exploiting all that technology has to offer.

TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

Computers have long been a fixture in many American schools. Indeed, we had computers in our middle schools in the late 1980s. And when we

© Hawker Brownlow Education

© 2012 Hawker Brownlow Education • 9781743305874 • CO5874