

Reducing Cyber-bullying and Problem Behaviors among Students through Parental Group Therapy

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Cyber-bullying tends to leave grave psychological consequences for the victims (i.e. the cyber-bullied) as well as for the perpetrators (i.e. the cyber-bullies) of cyber-bullying. The present study was divided into three phases. The sample for the first phase constituted 600 students from an urban school; while in second phase 30 adolescents with cyber-bullying experiences (i.e. the experimental group), 30 adolescents with no such experiences (i.e. the control group), and also included the parents of adolescents from experimental group. The sample for third phase constituted only the 30 adolescents who constituted experimental group during the previous stage. During first phase Anti-Bullying Committee made a significant number of students to share their cyber-bullying experiences; thereby suggesting its effectiveness in making students reveal their 'never-disclosed' cyber-bullying experiences. The findings of second phase revealed that adolescents having any kind of cyber-bullying experiences tend to display more behavioral problems than the adolescents with no such experiences; and also Parental Group Therapy was an effective intervention in alleviating behavioral problems of such adolescents, and further in ultimately controlling cyber-bullying in school. Results of third phase showed effectiveness of Parental Group Therapy as a form of intervention among adolescents even after 6 months of its completion.

Keywords. Cyber-bullying, Problem behavior, Parents, Group Therapy, Adolescents, Anti-Bullying Committee

The rapid rise in the usage of electronic media such as computers, internet, and mobile phones has given birth to a new form of bullying

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called cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying involves deliberate and repeated harm which is inflicted onto the victim through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Cyber-bullying can be considered as a form of anti-social behavior displayed on the internet (Vollink, Bolman, Dehue, & Jacobs, 2012), where online forums tend to provide communal breeding grounds for the youth to assault each other (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Just like traditional bullying, the victim of cyber-bullying also cannot easily defend him or herself (Smith et al., 2008). But unlike face-to-face bullying, the bullies in cyberspace consider cyberspace as impersonal where they can say whatever they want (Nelson, 2003). Adolescents who otherwise look non-aggressive may get engaged in cyber-bullying since technology imparts a sense of safety and distance from victim (Tokunaga, 2010). As such adolescents can remain anonymous, they are very likely to target people whom they consider powerful or threatening offline, sometimes to take revenge (Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009).

Willard (2006) has identified nine basic types of cyber-bullying. These are: *flaming* (online vulgar language arguments); *harassment* (repeatedly sending humiliating messages through internet); *denigration* (damaging reputation or relationships through online rumors); *outing* (sharing victim's personal information or photos online without getting victim's consent); *impersonation* (portraying oneself as someone else, so as to bring the later into trouble). The remaining four types of cyber-bullying included *exclusion* (deliberate exclusion of someone from the online group); *trickery* (making an individual reveal his/her personal information online, and later making that information available at public online forums without his/her consent); *cyberstalking* (repeated denigration, harassment and threats, just to create intense fear in the victim); and *cyberthreats* (where the offender portrays himself/herself as emotionally upset and therefore, considering for harming someone else or himself/herself, or for committing suicide).

Prevalence of Cyber-bullying

According to 'Ditch the Label's Annual Cyber-bullying Survey 2013', the largest of its kind till date, 69% of young people have been the victims of cyber-bullying, with both males and females at equal risks of cyber-bullying. This survey was based on a sample of 10,008 young people (aged 13-22 years) from various countries of world. This survey revealed that 7 out of 10 young people have been the victims of cyber-bullying; young people have been found to be twice

as likely to be bullied on Facebook as on any social network; and cyber-bullying has been found to have catastrophic effects on victims' self-esteem and social lives (Hackett, 2013).

For understanding the worldwide pervasiveness of cyber-bullying Microsoft Corporation (2012a) also commissioned a study upon youth between the ages 8-17 years from 25 countries of the world. Of those who responded the survey 37% had suffered cyber-bullying and 24% had bullied someone online. Amongst the 25 countries surveyed, Pakistan (Microsoft Corporation, 2012b) has been found to have 22nd highest rate of online bullying. The survey also revealed that of all youth who responded from Pakistan, 26% had experienced cyber-bullying and 38% had bullied someone online. Here girls (30%) experienced almost similar levels of cyber-bullying to that of boys (24%). Similarly, worldwide parents take average 3.3 steps to safeguard their children from cyber-bullying, while, parents in Pakistan take on an average 1.0 step for protecting their children from cyber-victimization. Hence, parents in this country are less likely to take steps to safeguard their children from cyber-bullying. Further, India (Microsoft Corporation, 2012c) has been found to have 3rd highest rate of online bullying amongst the 25 countries surveyed. Of all the youth who responded from India, 53% had experienced cyber-bullying and 50% had admitted to bully someone online. Girls (53%) were found to be equally likely to be bullied online as were the boys (52%), while, parents here take an average number of steps to safeguard their children from cyber-bullying (3.7% in India versus 3.3% worldwide).

Hence, as suggested by these surveys, cyber-bullying is a worldwide prevalent phenomenon, especially in Indian subcontinent.

Psychological Consequences of Cyber-bullying

Considering the pain that hateful words can inflict, it is very reasonable to expect that cyber-bullying can lead to various negative outcomes (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). Further, they have argued that the offline fear is generated due to online threats and harassments. The subsequent result is the preoccupation with a constant focus on guarding oneself from problematic encounters at the cost of responsibilities, family matters and academics. This can further elicit in adolescent the feelings of frustration, anger, or depression (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). Anxiety, poor concentration, poor academic performance, hopelessness, depression, and suicide are some of the aftereffects of cyber-bullying for the victim (Klomek, Sourander, &

Gould, 2010; Tokunaga, 2010). Research has also discerned low self-esteem and feelings of hopelessness (Vandebosch & vanCleemput, 2008); frustration and anger (Ortega, Elipe, Mora-Merchan, Calmaestra, & Vega, 2009); and feelings of insecurity and loneliness (Breguet, 2007) as some of the consequences of experiencing cyber-bullying. Where adolescents seek desperately the approval and affirmation of peers, cyber-bullying can lead to peer-rejection and exclusion from the peer group. Such a rejection and exclusion can lead to various psychological, emotional, and behavioral ill effects for the victim.

These negative influences are very likely to penetrate into victim's school and family life, where these are expected to warrant some type of punishment from the teachers and parents for the victim. The grave result of all these events is the ultimate break down of cyber-bullying victim, who may either choose antisocial behavior or seek revenge from the bully as a way of coping (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). According to Feinberg and Robey (2008), the victims of cyber-bullying due to the very nature of information that is posted online by the bully and the fact that such an information is very difficult to eliminate from the internet, are especially likely to experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, attention problems, academic failure, and school avoidance. In sum, the effects associated with cyber-bullying are not limited to hurt feelings which can be easily disregarded, but the consequences have been found to be far-reaching which can damage permanently the psyche of many victimized adolescents (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007).

Moreover, the perpetrators of cyber-bullying, that is, the cyberbullies, are equally at risk for various negative consequences. They have been found to be at higher risks for delinquency, substance abuse, relationship difficulties, and even suicide (Klomek et al., 2010). In comparison to adolescents without any cyber-bullying experiences, the bullies were found to have lower self-esteem and more suicidal thoughts and behaviors (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). Further, Perren, Dooley, Shaw, and Cross (2010) also found cyber-bullying behaviors to be highly correlated with psychological and physical problems. Both the bullies and the victims tend to experience higher levels of stress than their peers, including also higher depressive symptoms, which ultimately lead them to get involve in destructive behaviors such as "increased alcohol consumption, tendency to smoke, and poor school grades" (Perren et al., 2010, p. 2).

Hence, both the cyber-bullies and the cyber-bullied are very likely to suffer various kinds of psychological problems owing to their cyber-bullying experiences.

Parenting for the Cyber-world

With the growing influence of cyber-world over their children, parents too need to widen their parenting skills. But most of the parents are not yet familiar with information and communication technologies, thereby permitting technologically superior youth to enter cyber-world completely unsupervised, exacerbating the problem further (Bullen & Hare, 2000). Parents, in order to keep a check on their child's online activities, themselves need to increase their knowledge regarding internet and mobile phones (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Further, parents need to create an atmosphere at home where the children can easily discuss their online experiences. According to Cornell and Unnever (2004), cyberbullied's decision of informing his/her cyber-bullying to parents is directly influenced by parental socialization, where victims have been found less likely of reporting to their parents if the parents have used coercive child-rearing techniques in the past. In a self-report survey on intermediate high school students, Chou and Huang (2010) found only 11.2% of sample who had reported their cyber-bullying experiences to their parents.

During adolescence very often the maladaptive responses are misinterpreted by parents and teachers, and as a consequent the child being considered as willfully mean or disrespectful is punished accordingly, which further reinforces the maladaptive behavior (Stirling, Amaya-Jackson, & Amaya-Jackson, 2008). Physiological changes along with the onset of formal operational thought can complicate further the problems of adolescence. In such situations the problematic behavior can resurface into new more dangerous forms. At this stage the caregivers need to prepare themselves for helping their troubled adolescent respond constructively (Stirling, et al., 2008). Parents, therefore, also need to possess appropriate information and knowledge regarding the issue of cyber-bullying so that they can teach their children about how to avoid it, how to not indulge into all this, how to react if it happens and how to respond correctly so that the situation can be resolved in a proper manner.

Method

Keeping in focus the review of literature and current scenario the present study was divided into three phases. Following are the details of the three phases of this study:

Phase I

The major objective of phase I of the study was to study the effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Committee (ABC) in making school students reveal their never-disclosed cyber-bullying experiences (i.e. either being a victim or a bully or both). The major hypothesis phrased in this phase was that ABC will be effective in making students reveal their never-disclosed cyber-bullying experiences.

Sample. The sample for this phase of study constituted around 600 students (286 female subjects, 314 male subjects, $M_{age} = 12.89$ years, age range: 6-18 years, $SD = 0.69$) from grades 1-12 of an urban school contributing to middle socio-economic status, from Patiala city of Punjab in India.

Procedure. The first phase of this study began with the setting up of Anti-Bullying Committee in a school of city Patiala of Punjab in India. The ABC constituted of six teachers (within the age range of 28-52 years) and twelve senior most students (within the age range of 16-18 years) of school. At first ABC was given intensive awareness regarding cyber-bullying in schools by researchers. Then for about a period of one month the morning assemblies of school incorporated daily 10-15 minutes lecture regarding cyber-bullying. During such lectures the students were motivated to discuss their cyber-bullying experiences with ABC.

For all the students who approached ABC for discussing their cyber-bullying experiences, the focus of ABC was to record their experiences. Such students were made to talk freely about whom they bully or who bully them, and what had prevented them to seek help and guidance from their parents. Such experiences were then used by researchers to discern what all participants had in common as they experienced the phenomenon, so that individual experiences with cyber-bullying can be reduced to the description of a universal essence. Hence, the study was carried out with a phenomenological approach. This phase lasted for about a period of a month.

Ethical considerations. Being a sensitive issue the ethical issues were taken especial care of during the study. The study started first with taking permission from the school authorities. Written consent from every participant was taken. To safeguard the mental health of students the process was labeled as an endeavor towards developing better cyber practices. Insurance of confidentiality gave the participants a fearless chance to participate in the study. Every subject was aware to walk-away from study at any point.

Results. Since confidentiality and no punishment were assured to every student, surprisingly both victims and bullies approached ABC. In total, within a month 45 students with cyber-bullying experiences contacted ABC. Denigration (i.e. posting rumors about a person to damage his/her reputation in a friend circle), outing (sharing someone's secret online), exclusion (intentionally and harshly excluding someone from an online group), and sending/receiving threatening or cruel text messages through mobile phones were amongst the most common cyber-bullying experiences. Hence, the ABC was found to be effective in making students reveal their never-told cyber-bullying experiences.

Discussion. The phenomenological approach followed during first phase revealed that both the cyberbullied (i.e., the victims) and the cyberbullies (i.e., the perpetrators) had weaker parent-child bonds: where the bullies pant out their frustrations of parent-child bond onto the weaker peers; and such weaker peers (i.e., the victims) lack a parent-child bond strong enough to discuss their experiences with their parents, so as to prevent their further victimization.

The cyberbullies revealed that their parents use frequently harsh disciplinary practices for them. The bullies were afraid of their parents. They also disclosed that the parent-child bond they have has never been a source of comfort for them, instead they feel suffocated within it. A lot of anger and frustration for parents was observed within bullies. For these bullies the only source of satisfaction was bullying others online. The absence of parental supervision on their online usage was an added advantage for them. Many of the bullies reported that their parents just wanted them to obey parental commands, maintaining silence being one of them, and hence have never stopped or checked what they do online. As reported by 15year old adolescent (cyberbully) who often bully his classmates online:

".... I do not feel like speaking a word when I am doing something online, and this is what my parents want me to do.....just be quiet.....it (online activity) works both ways.....they (parents) become happy, and me too.....it feels good to exercise control over someone...just like 'the' parents do...."

Moreover, the bullies revealed that they prefer to bully weak individuals, especially weaker classmates. As they knew such victims would not be able to give it back to them or to stop them. So cyber-bullying for some adolescents can be a learned behavior, where

parents bully their children in the name of discipline and children repeat the same behavior online with other weaker targets.

The cyberbullied, on the other hand, were not afraid of their parents, only they had never been heard by them. These adolescents generally had parents who often pass their views onto their children without bothering about the views and opinions of their children. Such parents did not understand their child from child's perspective. Where some victims reported that their parents never listen to them, many others revealed that they never disclosed their online bullying to parents because they knew the parents would not be able to understand them. Such parents usually had guidelines for internet usage but it was never ascertained if these are being followed by their children. It was found from the study that although these parents usually do not bully their children, yet they were not receptive to the emotional needs of their children. From the years of experience the children had learned that what they can do is only listen to their parents, and better not to make the parents listen them. As told by a 16 year old female victim of cyber-bullying:

“.....talk to whom.....to parents?.....when you know they won't understand you.....they can't.....they are good, but (pause).....I know they care for me.....bring for me good things.....but I don't understand why they can't understand me.....they never had.....so what's the logic in telling them...”.

Hence, for the cyberbullied the learned-helplessness acquired from the years of experience of parental unresponsiveness was the main cause of non-disclosure to their parents. As the past efforts of making parents hear or understand them failed, these adolescents chose to remain silent.

Phase II

After one month operation of ABC, the study moved towards its second phase, which lasted for about two months. The major objectives of this phase were to study if both cyberbullied and cyberbullies display more behavior problems in comparison to their peers who are not involved in cyber-bullying in any form. It was also intended to demonstrate the effectiveness of Parental Group Therapy in reducing the behavioral problems of cyberbullied and cyberbullies.

Hypotheses. The following hypotheses were phrased:

1. Both cyberbullied and cyberbullies will display more behavior problems in comparison to their peers who are not involved in cyber-bullying in any form.
2. Parental Group Therapy will be effective in reducing behavior problems of cyberbullied and cyberbullies.

Sample. The sample for this stage was extracted from the sample for the previous phase. For this, 30 adolescents (15 female subjects, 15 male subjects) with cyberbullying experiences and who themselves along with their parents were willing to participate in the further stages of study, were selected and formed the experimental group of study. Also, 30 adolescents (15 female subjects, 15 male subjects) with no such experiences formed the control group. The age range for participants in both the groups was 14–18 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 16.72$ years, $SD = 0.51$). All these adolescents belonged to two-parent nuclear families. Both the groups were thus matched on age, socio-economic status, and two-parent nuclear family. The parents ($M_{\text{age}} = 47.32$ years, age range: 35–55 years, $SD = 0.67$) of adolescents from the experimental group, who gave their consents for participation in this study were educated at least to the level of graduation.

Measures. Youth Self Report (YSR; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) which is a 112 items scale had been completed by all of the adolescents from both the groups to describe their own functioning. YSR contains 112 items that measure eight sub-scale symptoms: anxious/depressed, withdrawn/depressed, somatic complaints, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, rule-breaking behavior, and aggressive behavior. Overall functioning is measured by the total problem scale. Achenbach and Rescorla (2001) reported test-retest reliability to be .87 and Cronbach's alpha computed for the demographically matched referred and nonreferred samples to be .95 for total problem scale of YSR. According to Achenbach (2001), the content validity of YSR has been strongly supported by nearly four decades of research, consultation, feedback, and refinement, as well as the by the evidences for the ability of all item to discriminate significantly ($p < .01$) between demographically similar referred and nonreferred children. As reported by Achenbach and Rescorla (2001), the construct validity of the scales has also been supported in many ways, such as evidence for significant associations with analogous scales of other instruments such as Conners Scales, Behavior Assessment System for Children Scales, and with DSM criteria; by cross-cultural replications of syndromes; by genetic and biochemical findings; and by predictions of long-term outcomes (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001).

Procedure. During this phase of study two groups of adolescents (one experimental group and other control group) each comprising 30 adolescents were formed. To make necessary comparisons on behavior problems, all the adolescents within these two groups were administered YSR. After obtaining their scores the adolescents from the control group were thankfully freed from the research. For the experimental group, these were the pre-intervention scores.

After obtaining the pre-intervention scores from the experimental group, the parents of the adolescents from this group were invited for the Group Therapy sessions. To preserve the emotional health of these adolescents, the adolescents were told this to be a normal routine part of researcher's study and bear no implications for them. The therapy for every group started with psycho-education during first few days. During these days, the parents were provided information regarding cyber-bullying and insight into if their children's are having some behavior problems. They were made to reflect onto their past parental experiences where they had not established proper guidelines for their children's internet usage or not effectively monitored their child's online activities, have had allowed their children to experiment with the cyber-world while at the same time by themselves being technologically unaware, and have had trusted their curious adolescents somewhat blindly. These parents were made to understand the subtle signs of their child either being a victim or a bully online. The parents were told about the need for strengthening parent-child bond especially during teen years of their child. The later sessions of the therapy incorporated discussions regarding parenting and subsequent improvement in parent-child bond.

One single session of group therapy lasted for 30-40 minutes and consisted of 8-10 parents. A single group was contacted for 5-7 consecutive days. In all 6 groups of parents were formed. The entire task of providing group therapy to parents took a span of about a month and a half. The post-intervention scores on YSR were obtained from this group after the completion of all the group therapy sessions.

Results. The scores of subjects from experimental group (pre-intervention), in comparison to control group, were found to be significantly higher on YSR. These scores, therefore, revealed that the adolescents from the experimental group demonstrate more behavioral problems than the control group.

Findings showed that pre-intervention scores of experimental group ($M = 75.30$, $SD = 12.66$) and control group ($M = 28.00$, $SD = 7.17$) on the scores on Youth Self Report are significant. The t -ratio

calculated between the scores of both the groups on behavioural measure, that is YSR comes out to be significant ($t = 20.96, p < .01$). The obtained value of t -ratio indicates that a significant difference exists between the scores of these two groups. The mean of scores also show that the adolescents with cyber-bullying experiences tend to display more problem behaviour than the adolescents with no such experiences. Hence, the adolescents having cyber-bullying experiences display more behavioural problems than the adolescents with no such experiences, and this difference is significant. Thus the first hypothesis of this phase of study has been supported.

Further, results also shows the mean and SD of experimental group on YSR before and after intervention. The t -ratio calculated between the pre-intervention ($M = 75.30, SD = 12.66$) and post-intervention ($M = 38.03, SD = 11.94$) scores of adolescents in the experimental group with cyber-bullying experiences on YSR also comes out to be significant ($t = 14.06, p < .01$). The obtained value of t exceeds the critical value, indicating that a significant difference exists between pre-intervention and post intervention scores of this group on YSR. Further, the mean scores also show a decline in problem behaviour scores of this group after intervention. Hence, Parental Group Therapy comes out to be effective in reducing the behavioural problems of adolescents having cyber-bullying experiences. Thus, the second hypothesis of this phase of study also stands supported.

Discussion. This phase of the study was aimed to demonstrate that adolescents, who have either experienced cyber-bullying or themselves are the bullies, tend to display more behavioral problems than the adolescents with no such experiences. The results obtained significantly support the first hypothesis, that is both bullied and bullies display more behavior problems in comparison to their peers. Such problem behaviors generally, rule breaking behavior, aggressive behavior, anxiety, depression, somatic complaints, anxious/depressed, withdrawn/depressed, social problems, thought problems, and attention problems. Kowalski, Limber, and Agatston (2008) have also found similar trends inferring that cyber-bullying gives rise to various psychological and behavioral problems in adolescents such as depression, suicidal ideation, aggression, weapon-carrying, and development of somatic complaints like headaches and stomach aches. Similar results have also been reported by other studies (e.g. Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Ortega et al., 2009; Perren et al., 2010; Tokunaga, 2010).

The results obtained significantly support the second hypothesis that is, Parental Group Therapy is effective in reducing behaviour problems of the bullied and bullies. The initial sessions of therapy were restricted primarily to psychoeducation. Just like Perry and Pate (1994) in their quite earlier research have mentioned that caretakers require information for understanding why their children think, feel, and behave certain ways, the parents in this study were made to understand that their children have either experienced bullying or themselves had bullied others. These parents were made clear that somehow they have not been successful in establishing proper guidelines for their children's internet behaviors. As firm guidelines for internet usage, which should be conveyed to children regularly, are vital for children (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). These parents were made clear that their children are technologically more advanced than they themselves are. They also need to have full awareness about the technologies they bring for their children. The parents need to monitor their child's online activities, so that none of these remain hidden from them. Parents, in order to keep a check on their child's online activities, themselves need to increase their knowledge regarding internet and mobile phones (Juvonen & Gross, 2008).

The parents in the Group Therapy sessions were told to remain bit cautious while trusting their teenagers' blindly, since the growth of adolescent's abstract thinking makes them do experiments with everything, including the cyber-world. Parents, at this stage, are required to pay attention to their children's e-mails, cell phones, and should also know their online passwords. As found by Bauman (2009), both bullied and the bullies were four times more likely of not sharing their online passwords with their parents. Along with keeping an eye on their children the parents were also told to be honest with their *spying* on children's online activities. Use of filters and tracking software for monitoring children's online activities is often effective, but, parents need to remain honest with children in disclosing the filtering, as once the covert and spying behavior of parents get discovered by children it will further lead to heightened feelings of distrust on parents and would intensify the problems further (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Further, before joining the therapy sessions most of these parents are not aware of online bullying that is, cyberbullying. Many of them did not know that their child is becoming a victim or himself/herself is cyberbullying others. These parents have attributed the changes in their children's behavior to their age, without knowing the real causes behind it. They were taught to identify the subtle signs if their child is being a victim or a bully online. The parents were told to notice the

signs, as identified by Hinduja and Patchin (2009), for instance, a cyberbullied can be recognized if he/she shows a sudden stoppage of computer use, gets nervous on receiving a phone call or text message or e-mail, fears going to school, gets sad or depressed after using computer, and suddenly becomes withdrawn after computer usage; further, a cyberbully can be identified if he/she laughs or acts strangely while using internet, often minimizes or exit out programs when parents walk nearby, and gets defensive or nervous when questioned about ongoing online activities by parents. Parents need to understand that in both cases the child is very likely to suffer various emotional, psychological, and behavioral consequences.

The parents were provided awareness regarding deficits in parenting, lack of parent-child communication, lack of parental support to child, and need for strengthening parent-child bond. They were provided guidance which included discouraging the aggressive parental reactions, and were explained that such responses further aggravate their child's stress. According to Marienau and Segal (2006), for parents to get improved, they require learning from and critically reflecting upon their experiences. The requisite of adult learning is a shift in the order of consciousness where parenting values, beliefs, and behaviors shift from being automatic and subjective towards becoming reflective, purposive, and objective. "Helping parents recognize the complexities of parenting and assume the goal of developing a growing repertoire of knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Marienau & Segal, 2006, p. 778) is really effective.

The later sessions of the therapy incorporated discussions regarding parenting. During these sessions it was observed that before the start of this program, these parents were less motivated to reflect upon the causes of their children's behavior problems, and therefore, were using harsh ways to make their children follow their commands. They had fully accepted their children and their wrong ways of parenting, without any desire for mending the parent-child bond. Previous research has also shown that such parents generally lack motivation which tends to interfere with adequate parenting (Hansen, Sedlar, & Warner-Rogers, 1999). They had a belief system that children need to be controlled and it is justified to use harsh methods when children do otherwise. These parents disclosed that they were dealing with their children just in manners they themselves were dealt with by their parents. Hence, such parents had never witnessed effective parenting during their own childhood. In similar terms Pollak (2004) has also observed that some parents generally have very little exposure to good parent role models and therefore, lack knowledge

regarding child-rearing strategies, child development, social problem-solving, and methods to cope with the anger and stress.

Many of these parents, before joining this treatment, did not believe in effective parent-child communication. They believed in satisfying only the physical needs of their children, leaving aside the emotional ones. They believed in controlling their children either forcefully, just having one-sided conversation with children, or giving their children materialistic benefits in exchange of following their commands. This was the only basis for parent-child relationship. These parents lacked frequent talks with their children and the children themselves were either afraid of their parents or due to past experiences of parental unresponsiveness did not discuss any matter with their parents. Hence, these parents were not able to understand their child from child's perspective. But during the process, the need for healthy parent-child communication, especially during the teen years of their child, was made clear. They were told that the requirement is to create such a family environment where children can freely talk with parents about the problems such as cyber-bullying, of their daily lives, where they are not frustrated to the extent that they need to pant out their frustrations onto the weaker and safer targets. These parents also learned this left-out aspect of parenting during the course of study. Baker, Brassard, Schneiderman, Donnelly, and Bahl (2011) have also argued that in order to improve the behavior of children, parent-child relationship needs to be warm, affectionate, and the one which permits the child to receive sufficient attention, and for this effective communication is crucial.

All the parents at the end of treatment sessions reported significantly more use of effective parental practices. They reported a tremendous increase in their ability of giving support and appropriate parenting practices to their children, which they lacked earlier. The parents, along with acknowledging the deficits in their parenting, have had started to understand their child from their child's perspective, and thus have started to accept their child more fully. This was remedial to parent-child bond and was in itself a cure. Hence, throughout this study parenting was believed to be a continuous evolving process. Amongst the pioneer research in this field it's been postulated by researchers that parental awareness is a developmental process which tends to unfold during childhood and continues to develop with parental experience (Newberger & Cook, 1983). The parents can be made to reflect onto their past ways of wrong parenting, and to adopt the newer better ones.

Phase III

The major objective of this phase was to investigate if the behavioral changes in the adolescents from experimental group were maintained after the termination of previous phase. It was hypothesized that the behavioral changes in the adolescents from experimental group will be maintained after the termination of previous phase.

Sample. The sample comprised only the 30 adolescents who constituted experimental group during the previous stage.

Procedure. Following second phase, ABC continued to contact the participants of experimental group on very frequent basis. The newer experiences were again analyzed by researchers up to a period of six months. This was done so as to see if the behavioral changes in the adolescents from experimental group were maintained after the termination of Parental Group Therapy phase.

Results and Discussion. The elements common within all post-intervention experiences were that most of the cyberbullies had resorted to bullying others to a minimal extent or had stopped completely; the frustrations of weaker parent-child bonds got reduced, and they no longer needed weaker targets for panting out their frustrations. Furthermore, many of the cyberbullied were no longer experiencing cyber-bullying in any form, they had become more assertive and did not hesitate to share their daily experiences with their parents, and were getting most of the parental support owing to an improved parent-child relationship. As reported by their class teachers most of these adolescents had shown marked improvement in their classroom performance. These adolescents themselves reported to have fuller peer relations than they earlier had. In nutshell, the cyberbullies had learned to avert from their past bullying behaviors, and the cyberbullied had learned to say no and deal effectively with their bullies.

Overall, the final phase of study revealed that effectiveness of Parental Group Therapy as a form of intervention was sustained even after 6 months of its completion; thereby completing the entire study successfully.

Limitations and Suggestions

This study does have some limitations. Firstly, gender as a variable was not considered in this study. Thus the future research

may explore the differences in cyber-bullying experiences due to gender. Secondly, both cyberbullies and cyberbullied comprised the experimental group (i.e. having any kind of cyber-bullying experience), although their nature of cyber-bullying experiences were bound to be different. The future research may take place in the direction of analyzing separately the different nature of such experiences. Both these limitations of study were made intentionally, as otherwise it would have been an overly ambitious investigation to code these curricula as well. These curricula were left open to deal with for the future research.

Conclusion

In the end, it can be said that adolescents with an increase in formal operational thought willingly experiment with newer things, such as cyber-world. And during this process of experimentation they may sometimes become either the victims or perpetrators of cyber-bullying. Falling somewhere during the process of experimentation is not altogether bad, but not getting a way to come out of it definitely is. This confusion can further give rise to problem behavior of various kinds. The web of confusion grows enormously under weak parent-child bond. The need is to have such a relationship with parents where the adolescents do not require some other outlets for removing out their frustrations and can report parents freely the matter when they become the victims. Achieving this also reduces the problem behavior of such adolescents. Becoming a perpetrator and being a victim of cyber-bullying both can be prevented and treated if parents come forward to deal with this issue. Parents generally are intentionally not bad, but sometimes they too need guidance for proper parenting. Children by their own should come to their parents and parents themselves should be receptive to them. Such parent-child bonding at the micro-levels will then ultimately lead to the controlling of cyber-bullying incidents at the higher school-levels. This is what that was desired during this study, and this is what that was achieved at the end of this study.

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