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University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Cyberbullying and Young People:

Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions (CY:BER)

A thesis submitted to the National University of Ireland, Cork for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Public Health

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university. The work, upon which this thesis is based, was carried out in collaboration with a team of researchers and supervisors who are duly acknowledged in the text of the thesis. The library may lend or copy this thesis upon request.

Signed: ___________________ Date: ____________________

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Statement of Contribution

The PhD candidate was responsible for the overall design, conduct, analysis, and reporting of the research presented in this thesis. Thesis supervisors, co-authors, and members of a Young Person's Advisory Group collaborated in the research process.

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If a PhD was a Mountain

"I considered my options, there was only one, I knew.
There was always only one. To keep walking"
(Cheryl Strayed, Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail, 2012)

The landscape of my life has changed dramatically since I started to climb Mount PhD. Both personally and professionally, I have spent glorious days wandering peaceful valleys and others scrambling up mountains, some literal, some metaphorical, some scaled by choice, and some by necessity. There were happy, bright, and effortless days on the trail and there were harder moments when I had to dig deep to put one tired and heavy foot in front of the other. I know that I would not have made it to the summit, and back down safely, if it wasn't for my expedition team and supporters and I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude.

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August 4th 1924-April 24th 2016

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List of Abbreviations

BCT	Behaviour Change Technique
BCW	Behaviour Change Wheel
CASP	Critical Appraisal Skills Programme
COM-B	Capability, Opportunity, Motivation, Behaviour
COREQ	Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research
GRIPP	Guidance for Reporting Patient and Public Involvement in Research
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LoA	Line of Argument
MRC	Medical Research Council
NSRF	National Suicide Research Foundation
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
ROI	Republic of Ireland
SMS	Short Message Service
UCC	University College Cork
UK	United Kingdom
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation

Abstract

Introduction

Cyberbullying is a complex and multifaceted public health issue among young people. Research indicates deleterious effect on the mental health and wellbeing of victims which warrants action to address this issue. Adults do not have first-hand experience of cyberbullying in their youth and so the development of prevention and intervention strategies can benefit from the engagement of young people's perspectives. However, young people's voices are largely absent from the current discourse. This thesis aims to explore the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying from the perspective of young people with a view to informing the development of evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies.

Methods

The research was framed by the Medical Research Council guidelines for intervention development. Qualitative and participatory research methods were employed. In the first instance a systematic review and meta-ethnographic synthesis of qualitative studies related to young people's conceptualisations of cyberbullying was conducted. Secondly, a rights-based model was developed to facilitate the active involvement of young people in the research process. A Young Person's Advisory Group was purposefully formed to collaborate in the design, conduct, and interpretation of a qualitative study of young people's perspectives on cyberbullying as well as in priority setting for intervention development. Young People's involvement in the Advisory Group was evaluated to determine the effectiveness off the model in facilitating young people's participation in the research process and the acceptability of the approach. The co-designed qualitative study comprised focus groups with secondary school students which were conducted in the school setting.

Findings

The meta-ethnography highlighted that the fundamental role of cyber technology in young people's lives and the complexity and ambiguity of the cyber world in which they connect are inherent to young people's conceptualisations of cyberbullying. The participatory evaluation of young people's involvement in the research process indicated that the elements necessary for the effective realisation of young people's participation rights were present in this study. Based on their interpretation of preliminary findings from the qualitative study, Advisory Group Members identified the non-consensual distribution of nude images and the mental health impact of cybervictimisation as serious concerns for young people and priorities for intervention development. Findings indicate that non-consensual distribution involves a complex process that is produced by, and reinforces, gender power dynamics. Young males, under pressure to conform to societal constructs of masculinity, coerce females to send explicit images which are screenshot and intentionally distributed, without consent, to male peers in exchange for social kudos. Regarding the mental health impact, cyberbullying was described as more psychological in nature and impact than traditional bullying with increased deleterious effect on the mental health and wellbeing of victims. Analysis identified several barriers which prevent victims from seeking social support and participants' perception that suicide is a viable escape route for young victims defeated and entrapped by cybervictimisation.

Conclusion

This research makes a valuable contribution to the existing knowledge base in that it privileges youth voice on the nature, causes, and consequences of the phenomenon and highlights young people's priorities with regard to intervention development. In response to research findings and suggestions from the Young Person's Advisory Group a number of recommendations are made in relation to research, policy, and practice which are grounded in young people's experiences, values, and norms.

1 Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines key themes related to the research within this thesis. It begins with an overview of core concepts and phenomena, definitional issues, prevalence, health impact, coping strategies, and interventions. Cyberbullying research methodologies are outlined which leads to a discussion on the active involvement of young people in research. The chapter concludes with the overall aims and objectives, and the thesis outline.

1.2 Young People and Adolescence

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) define adolescence as the transition period between childhood and adulthood in individuals aged 10-19 years (UNICEF, 2011; World Health Organisation, 2018). This critical period of growth and development is driven by physical and psychological processes and is shaped by social, contextual, cultural, and socio-economic factors and during this stage of the life span an individual acquires the resources and capabilities that influence health and wellbeing in adult life (Kessler et al., 2005; Patton et al., 2016). Of specific relevance to this thesis, in recent decades, adolescence has been transformed by the proliferation of cyber technology, computer technology that involves the internet or cyber space. Smartphones (internet enabled mobile phones), social media (internet-based networks that enable users to interact with others, verbally and visually (Carr & Hayes, 2015)), and instant messaging applications are now integral to the lives of adolescents and have radically changed the nature of social interactions in this demographic. The normal developmental dynamics, conflicts, and stages of adolescence, are now commonly experienced in the context of the cyber world (Barth, 2015; Patton et al., 2016).

This research facilitated the active involvement of individuals within the 10-19-year age group. Researchers considered that it was inappropriate and depersonalising to refer to those involved as ‘adolescents’ and, therefore, for the purpose of this thesis this age group are referred to throughout as ‘young people’.

1.3 Young People's Use of Cyber Technology

Children and young people under the age of 18 years account for an estimated one in three internet users globally (Livingstone, Byrne, & Carr, 2016). Young people far outnumber adults in their use of cyber technology including instant messaging and social networking sites, virtual communities where users can create individual public profiles, interact with real-life friends, and meet other people based on shared interests (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). Young people use multiple devices to access the internet including desktop computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones, and game-consoles (Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014; UNICEF, 2017). Smartphones are the devices that young people are most likely to personally own. Net Children Go Mobile, a two-year project spanning seven European countries found that 46% of young people aged 9-16 own a smartphone and 41% use the device daily (Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014). Within this study 500 young people aged 9-16 were surveyed in Ireland in 2013 where smartphone ownership was estimated to be 40% and non-smartphone ownership 27%. This Irish study found that smartphones (35%) followed by laptops (29%) and tablets (27%) were the devices most used by young people in Ireland to go online (O’Neill & Dinh, 2015). A large scale nationally representative longitudinal study, ‘Growing up in Ireland’, followed 8500 9-year-old children in Ireland until they turned 13. The study found that by the age of 13, 98% of the cohort owned a mobile phone, although the breakdown of smartphone/non-smartphone was not identified (Dempsey, Lyons, & McCoy, 2019). High levels of mobile phone use are also present in older age groups in Ireland, with evidence indicating that 83% of the population aged 15 and over own a smartphone (ComReg, 2017). In the United States of America (USA) 95% of young people aged 13-17 report that they have a smartphone or have access to one and 45% said that they are now online almost constantly (Anderson & Jiang, 2018).

Smartphones enable young people to connect to one another, and to the world, through a range of social and visual media and a sharp increase in their use in recent years has allowed young people instant, ongoing, private, and less supervised access to the internet (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Everri & Park, 2018; Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014; Škařupová, Ólafsson, & Blinka, 2016; UNICEF, 2017). In the Irish context, home is reported as the primary location of internet use and 46% of 9-16 year olds access the internet from their own bedroom on a daily basis where it is possible that the availability of free Wi-Fi contributes to the increased use of smartphones in this context (O'Neill & Dinh, 2015).

Communicative practices including social networking and instant messaging, entertainment activities including listening to music and watching videos, and the use of the internet for educational purposes are the most common activities engaged in online by young people (Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014; UNICEF, 2017). Of note, smartphone users are more likely to engage in these online activities than users of other devices. This is likely due to the portability, convenience, and privacy afforded by the handheld device (Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014). Peer interaction through social networking sites is increasing (Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014). Findings from the European Net Children Go Mobile study suggest that 68% of young people aged 9-16 have at least one profile on a social networking site (Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014). In Ireland, 90% of those aged 15-16 have a social media profile (O'Neill & Dinh, 2015). While Facebook has dominated the social networking landscape in recent years, evidence indicates that young people now express a preference for ephemeral messaging app Snapchat, social networking app Instagram, and video sharing service YouTube (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Everri & Park, 2018; Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014). Snapchat facilitates the sending of images, videos, or text to recipients who can view messages for between one and ten seconds before the content self-destructs and becomes permanently inaccessible. It is possible for the receivers of snaps to take a screenshot on their device and save the photo, but the sender is notified when a snap is saved (Vaterlaus, Barnett, Roche, & Young, 2016). Instagram is a social networking app designed to facilitate the sharing of photos and videos from a smartphone and is reportedly the fastest growing social network globally (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

Instant messaging apps such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger allow real-time transmission of text messages, images, or videos over the internet in a private or group context.

Young people have a strong desire to connect with peers, to stay in touch, express themselves, and share experiences (Livingstone & Brake, 2010) and cyber technologies offer many positive social and learning opportunities. Through social media young people can easily and regularly communicate with family and friends, they can maintain existing interpersonal relationships as well as develop new ones thereby fostering a sense of safety and connectedness (Betts & Spenser, 2017; David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007; Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014). The literature indicates that social media platforms facilitate the development of individual and collective identify and self-expression, including sexual expression and exploration (Cooper, Quayle, Jonsson, & Svedin, 2016). They can foster a sense of belonging in marginalised groups and strengthen and build communities defined by common characteristics or interests (Collin, Rahilly, Richardson, & Third, 2011; Craig & McInroy, 2014; Livingstone & Brake, 2010; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). However, cyber technologies also present contemporary risks and challenges which have not been experienced by previous generations. Facilitated by the rapid increase and omnipresence of cyber technology, one such undesirable social implication is cyberbullying (Tokunaga, 2010) and, in the last decade, media coverage of the severe consequences of cyberbullying, including suicide among young victims, has pushed the phenomenon to the forefront the public agenda (Vandebosch, Simulioniene, Marczak, Vermeulen, & Bonetti, 2013).

1.4 Cyberbullying

1.4.1 Definitional Issues

Cyberbullying is a contemporary form of bullying which is conducted through electronic means, such as e-mail, mobile phone calls, text messages, instant messenger contact, photos, social networking sites, and personal webpages (Ortega, Elipe, Mora-Merchan, Calmaestra, & Vega, 2009). Research indicates that for young people cyberbullying is primarily experienced through social networking sites and that smartphone users are more likely to be victimised than young people who do not use a mobile device (O'Neill & Dinh, 2015; Price & Dalgleish, 2010). It is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon which presents definitional challenges. Efforts to conceptualise cyberbullying have been predominantly top-down, formulated by adults and researchers, and embedded in understandings of traditional bullying (Corcoran, Guckin, & Prentice, 2015; Menesini, 2012). The widely accepted and longstanding definition of traditional bulling by Olweus (1997) has three basic components intent to harm, repetition, and a power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator. Cyberbullying is commonly defined using these three criteria with the addition that aggression is conveyed through electronic devices (Kowalski et al., 2014). In an attempt to unify the multiple definitions in the literature Tokunaga's (2010) widely cited definition of cyberbullying describes the phenomenon as "*…behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others*". However, debate about the application of the traditional bullying criteria to a conceptualisation of cyberbullying is ongoing (Berne et al., 2013; Deschamps & McNutt, 2016; Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2014; Langos, 2012; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Thomas, Connor, & Scott, 2015; Tokunaga, 2010). While several studies report overlapping characteristics between the two types of bullying, evidence indicates that cyberbullying has a number of unique factors stemming from the features of the cyber world and the sometimes complex and ambiguous nature of the communications which take place within it (Cassidy, Faucher, & Jackson, 2013; Dooley et al., 2009; Langos, 2012; Tokunaga, 2010).

Cyber technology is integral to young people's interactions and their relationships (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Mishna, Saini, & Solomon, 2009; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). Continuous engagement with social media increases young people's accessibility to perpetrators thereby facilitating victimisation beyond the reach of traditional bullying which is largely confined to the school day (Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008; Tokunaga, 2010). Repetition is a well-established criterion for traditional bullying and serves to differentiate bullying from occasional acts of aggression (Olweus, 1997). However, repetition is complicated in the cyber world where one time actions can be viewed repeatedly and further distributed through social media thereby creating repetitive effects beyond the direct actions of the initial perpetrator (Abu Bakar, 2015; Baas, de Jong, & Drossaert, 2013; Berne, Frisén, & Kling, 2014; Nocentini et al., 2010; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Slonje, Smith, & Frisén, 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). The permanent and sometimes public nature of cyberbullying also separate it from traditional bullying. Evidence of cybervictimisation can remain online indefinitely as a permanent reminder to victims while the global reach of cyber technology enables an infinite number of witnesses (Campbell, 2012; Langos, 2015; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Slonje & Smith, 2008).

The debate regarding the presence of a power imbalance in cyberbullying is also ongoing (Cassidy et al., 2013; Dooley et al., 2009; Dredge, Gleeson, & Garcia, 2014; Kowalski et al., 2014; Langos, 2012; Menesini et al., 2012; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Thomas et al., 2015; Vaillancourt, Faris, & Mishna, 2017). Power in the physical world is delineated by the physical, psychological, and social characteristics of perpetrators and victims, however, the potential for anonymity, including the ability to assume a new persona, means that these characteristics are less relevant in the cyber world (Dooley et al., 2009; Langos, 2012; Thomas et al., 2015; Tokunaga, 2010). It has been suggested that technological skills may empower perpetrators in the cyber context (Dooley et al., 2009; Langos, 2012; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). However, it has been argued that the utilisation of common cyber technology does not require a high level of skill (Slonje et al., 2013).

Another distinguishing and potentially empowering feature of cyberbullying is the ability for young people to engage in anonymous perpetration context (Dooley et al., 2009; Langos, 2012; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Evidence indicates that approximately 50% of victims do not know the identity of their aggressor (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Young people say and do things in the online context that they would not ordinarily because self-boundaries and norm adherence are reduced by anonymity or in the absence of face-to-face interaction (Suler, 2004; Voggeser, Singh,

& Göritz, 2018). This disinhibition enables young people who would not otherwise engage in bullying to do so in the context of the cyber world (Cassidy et al., 2013; Tokunaga, 2010). Also, due to the absence of physical cues in cyber communication it is difficult for victims to express their distress and, therefore, for perpetrators to recognise the impact of their actions. Consequently, perpetrators tend not to empathise with the victim which may lead to harsher interactions (Abu Bakar, 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008).

Research indicates that victimisation traverses the physical and cyber worlds. There is considerable overlap between traditional bullying and cyberbullying which has led some to describe cyberbullying as an extension of traditional bullying (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Kowalski et al., 2014; Mishna et al., 2009; Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, & Runions, 2014; Olweus, 2013; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008; Topcu, Yıldırım, & Erdur-Baker, 2013). Also, research with young people highlights that issues originating in cyberspace can continue in the school setting, sometimes culminating in physical violence (Baas et al., 2013; Berne et al., 2014; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014).

1.4.2 Types of Cyberbullying

Willard (2007) created a taxonomy of cyberbullying which includes seven types of cyberbullying behaviours namely: flaming, online harassment, cyberstalking, denigration, masquerading, exclusion, and trickery and outing. Flaming involves sending angry, rude, or vulgar messages about a person to an online group or to that person via email or other text messaging. Harassment refers to the repeated sending of offensive messages to a victim. Cyberstalking is said to occur when this harassment becomes threatening or is excessively intimidating. Denigration is concerned with the sending of harmful, untrue, or cruel statements about a person to other people or posting such material online. Masquerading, or impersonation, occurs when a perpetrator pretends to be someone else and sends or posts material that reflects negatively on their victim. Exclusion is deliberately leaving individuals out of an online group, thereby automatically stigmatising the excluded individuals. Finally, trickery and outing occur when the perpetrator tricks an individual into providing embarrassing, private, or sensitive information and posts or sends this information for others to view.

Willard (2007) notes that trickery and outing can include the attainment and non-consensual sharing of sexually explicit images. Recent research indicates that sexualised bullying is commonplace among young people (Mishna et al., 2018; Walker, Sanci, & Temple-Smith, 2013) and sexting, the sharing of sexually suggestive images, videos, or messages, (including nude or semi-nude photographs), through a mobile phone or over internet, has been identified as a risk factor for cyberbullying (Gámez-Guadix & Mateos-Pérez, 2019). In a meta-analysis of sexting behaviour among young people aged 11-17 years, Madigan, Ly, Rash, Van Ouytsel, and Temple (2018) estimate that 15% have sent and 27% have received explicit images. The study indicates that 12% of young people have distributed an explicit image and 8% have had their images distributed without consent. Research demonstrates an increase in sexting with age but evidence indicates that the non-consensual distribution of explicit images is more prevalent in young people (Everri & Park, 2018; Madigan et al., 2018; Patchin & Hinduja, 2019; Walker & Sleath, 2017). In a study of over 5500 students age 12-17 in the United States, Patchin and Hinduja (2019) found that males were more likely than females to request sexually explicit images from others and were also more likely to share these images without the permission of the original sender.

1.4.3 Prevalence

Evidence frequently indicates that cyberbullying is less prevalent than traditional bullying (Modecki et al., 2014; Olweus, 2012; Tokunaga, 2010). However, in contrast, findings from the Net Children Go Mobile study show that traditional bullying is no longer the dominant form of bullying experienced by young people. Findings from this study show that cyberbullying almost doubled in young people aged between 9-16 from 7% to 12% between 2011 and 2014. This was particularly true for young females in which cyberbullying reportedly rose from 8% to 15% (O'Neill & Dinh, 2015).

Cyberbullying prevalence rates are highly variable across studies due to definitional and operational inconsistencies and variation in the populations and timeframes studied (Brochado, Soares, & Fraga, 2017; Tokunaga, 2010). However, despite the variance research demonstrates that cyberbullying is a valid and serious concern amongst young people. Findings from a commonly cited meta-analysis indicate that 10-40% of young people experience cybervictimisation (Kowalski et al., 2014). A more recent review of 159 studies on cyberbullying prevalence rates in young people found that lifetime victimisation rates ranged from 5% to 65% and lifetime perpetration rates varied between 1% and 44% (Brochado et al., 2017). In a meta-analysis of studies conducted in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland, Foody, Samara, and O'Higgins Norman (2017) found that 10% of post-primary students (aged approximately 12-18) had experienced cybervictimisation.

1.4.4 The Role of Gender and Age

The role of age and gender in cyberbullying is unclear (Kowalski et al., 2014). Varying definitions, measurement tools, and sample types have led to inconclusive results. Research on traditional bullying consistently demonstrates that young males are involved to a greater extent than females and the bullying is often of a direct nature in the form of physical threats or aggression (Kowalski et al., 2014; Tokunaga, 2010). When females are involved in traditional bullying, their behaviour is generally indirect, or psychological, in the form of spreading rumours, gossiping, and excluding individuals from a group or ignoring them (Archer & Coyne, 2005). Research regarding the role of gender in cyberbullying has produced inconsistent results (Kowalski et al., 2014; Tokunaga, 2010). However, findings increasingly indicate that females are more likely to be involved as both victims and perpetrators (Aboujaoude, Savage, Starcevic, & Salame, 2015; Cassidy et al., 2013; Everri & Park, 2018; Kowalski, Limber, & McCord, 2019; O'Neill & Dinh, 2015; O’Neill & Dinh, 2015). It has been suggested that cyberbullying is similar in nature to indirect bullying in which girls are more often involved (Jacobs, Goossens, Dehue, Völlink, & Lechner, 2015). With regard to age, a review of the related literature highlights a lack of association between age and cyberbullying, although indicates that the greatest incidence may occur in 12-14 year olds (Tokunaga, 2010).

1.5 The Health Impact of Cybervictimisation

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1987) an event is not harmful, threatening or challenging itself; it is the perception of the event that determine meaning. Young people's perspectives on the impact of cybervictimisation vary in the literature. Some young people find it worse than traditional bullying, some find traditional bullying more harmful, and others find them both equally damaging (Cassidy et al., 2013). Evidence indicates that the nature of the bullying influences victims' perception of the impact (Tokunaga, 2010). Young people have reported that the inability to escape cyberbullying, anonymous perpetration, and victimisation through the use of photos or videos, increase the perceived severity of cyberbullying (Mishna et al., 2009; Naruskov, Luik, Nocentini, & Menesini, 2012; Smith et al., 2008). Notwithstanding this variance, cyberbullying is well established as a serious public health problem among young people (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, Stretton, & Karklins, 2015). It is associated with a number of negative physical, psychological, and social outcomes for both victims and perpetrators (Kowalski et al., 2014). Systematic reviews and meta-analyses consistently demonstrate the negative impact of cyberbullying on the mental health and wellbeing of young victims (Fisher, Gardella, & Teurbe-Tolon, 2016; John et al., 2018; Katsaras et al., 2018; Kowalski et al., 2014; van Geel, Vedder, & Tanilon, 2014). Cybervictimisation is linked with psychosomatic symptoms as well as internalising problems. It is associated with sleep disturbances, school avoidance, reduced confidence and self-esteem, worry, anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicide (Fisher et al., 2016; Hamm et al., 2015; Katsaras et al., 2018; Kowalski et al., 2014). A number of studies report stronger associations between cyberbullying and anxiety, depressive symptomology, self-harm, and suicidal ideation than traditional bullying (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Bottino, Bottino, Regina, Correia, & Ribeiro, 2015; Campbell, Spears, Slee, Butler, &

Kift, 2012; Gini & Espelage, 2014; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; John et al., 2018; van Geel et al., 2014). Young people are especially vulnerable to mental health difficulties during the transition from childhood to adulthood (Kessler et al., 2005) and so the risk posed by cyberbullying is a serious concern. Of relevance, research demonstrates rising rates of self-harm in young people in Ireland, with self-harm rates in those aged 10-24 increasing 29% between 2007 and 2018 (Griffin et al., 2018; Griffin et al., 2019).Further, suicide is the second most common cause of death in young people worldwide (Hawton, Saunders, & O'Connor, 2012; Kessler et al., 2005) and according to UNICEF Office of Research (2017), Ireland has an above average international suicide rate of 10.3 per 100,000 of the population aged 15-19 years. However, it should be noted that it is unlikely that cyberbullying alone leads to suicidal behaviour (Cassidy et al., 2013). It has been reported that the persistent, pervasive, and sometimes anonymous nature of cyberbullying may amplify feelings of isolation, instability, and hopelessness in young victims of cyberbullying which are in turn associated with depression and suicidal behaviours (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Hawton et al., 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; John et al., 2018; Luxton, June, & Fairall, 2012).

1.6 Coping Strategies

The way that victims cope with cyberbullying may differentiate between those who suffer negative effects and those who are resilient in the face of cybervictimisation (Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015). Problem-focused strategies, such as seeking support, address the problem and prevent it from reoccurring while emotion-focused approaches direct the issue inward and can take the form of avoidance, escape, or feelings of helplessness (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987; Parris, Varjas, Meyers, & Cutts, 2012; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015; Völlink, Bolman, Dehue, & Jacobs, 2013). Active or problem-focused strategies have been shown to mitigate the negative impacts of cybervictimisation while passive or emotion related coping is associated with depressive symptoms and is detrimental to victims health and wellbeing (Lodge & Frydenberg, 2015; Machmutow, Perren, Sticca, & Alsaker, 2012;

Parris et al., 2012; Perren, Corcoran, Cowie, Dehue, Garcia, Mc Guckin, Sevcikova, Tsatsou, & Vollink, 2012).

The literature highlights various coping strategies employed by young people in response to cybervictimisation. Technical solutions include the victim deleting their social media profile, removing or blocking the perpetrator from their friends or followers list, and/or deleting or blocking disparaging content (Cassidy et al., 2013; Jacobs et al., 2015; Machmutow et al., 2012; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Tokunaga, 2010). Doing nothing or ignoring cyberbullying is a frequently employed strategy, however, research indicates that this approach is ineffective and can in fact lead to an escalation of cyberbullying. It has been suggested that doing nothing is not necessarily an active choice but rather occurs when victims don’t know what else to do (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Perren, Corcoran, Cowie, Dehue, Garcia, Mc Guckin, Sevcikova, Tsatsou, & Vollink, 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010).

Actively seeking help from other people including family, peers, teachers, or health professionals is consistently identified as an effective strategy in response to cybervictimisation (Perren, Corcoran, Cowie, Dehue, Garcia, Mc Guckin, Sevcikova, Tsatsou, & Vollink, 2012; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015). This approach involves communicating with others to gain understanding, advice, information, and support (Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2005). Young people themselves have suggested seeking support as a way of coping with cyberbullying, however, evidence shows that cybervictimisation goes largely unreported (Cassidy et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010). Interestingly, research indicates that cyber victims are less likely than victims of traditional bullying to disclose victimisation (Dooley, Gradinger, Strohmeier, Cross, & Spiel, 2012; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). Young people’s reluctance to report cyberbullying has been attributed to their desire to cope independently, difficulty in proving cybervictimisation, fear of loss of access to cyber technology, fear of retaliation or intensification of bullying, lack of confidence in adults’ ability to help, and a belief that little can be done to stop cyberbullying (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Cassidy et al., 2013; Hamm et al., 2015; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Parris et al., 2012; Perren, Corcoran, Cowie, Dehue, Garcia, Mc Guckin, Sevcikova, Tsatsou, & Völlink, 2012; Šléglová & Černá, 2011; Smith et al., 2008). Young people's belief that adults are ill-equipped to support them is somewhat supported in the literature. For example, while some teachers recognise cyberbullying as a problem for young people others do not see cybervictimisation as having long-lasting negative effects (Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2013; Li & Li, 2009; Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012). Macaulay, Betts, Stiller, and Kellezi (2018) suggest that teachers disregard of the negative impact of cyberbullying implies a lack of knowledge. Further, teachers have reported that they do not feel competent in dealing with cyberbullying with fewer than 10% feeling appropriately skilled (Barnes et al., 2012).

1.7 Cyberbullying Prevention and Intervention Strategies

The risk to the mental health and wellbeing of young people exposed to cybervictimisation requires targeted action to address this issue (Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015). However, despite the established deleterious effect of cybervictimisation, systematic reviews of cyberbullying interventions indicate a paucity of evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies to tackle cyberbullying (Aboujaoude et al., 2015; Della Cioppa, O'Neil, & Craig, 2015; Hutson, Kelly, & Militello, 2017; Mishna, Cook, Saini, Wu, & MacFadden, 2010; Walker & Sleath, 2017). Hutson et al. (2017) identified the intervention components reported in interventional studies on cyberbullying. They found that interventions commonly focused on digital citizenship, the use of technology in a responsible way; coping skills, focusing on ways for young people to respond to cybervictimisation; education on the nature and consequences of cyberbullying; education on communication and social skills; and empathy training.

Research regarding the effectiveness of interventions is mixed. A recent meta-analysis indicates that cyberbullying intervention and prevention programmes are effective but it is not known which elements of these interventions were successful (Gaffney, Farrington, Espelage, & Ttofi, 2019). Efforts have been made to investigate the effectiveness of traditional anti-bullying programmes in targeting cyberbullying.

One such intervention, developed in Finland, is the KiVa Programme (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). KiVa is based on evidence that positive changes in the behaviours of peers reduce the rewards gained by bullies and consequently their motivation to bully. However, research demonstrates that the effect of the intervention on cyberbullying is modest and age specific with no significant effect in those over the age of 13 (Williford et al., 2013). Williford et al. (2013) suggest that the inclusion of components targeted specifically at cyberbullying may result in greater program effectiveness. They consider that it might be beneficial to include instruction for students on appropriate use of cyber technologies, detailed teacher training for recognising and addressing cyberbullying incidents on and off school grounds, and explicit school anti-bullying policies that define specific consequences for cyberbullying. It should be noted that the majority of studies regarding cyberbullying prevention and intervention strategies lack youth perspective (Cross, Lester, Barnes, Cardoso, & Hadwen, 2015). It has been suggested that involving young people in intervention development would help to prioritise intervention components and enhance efforts to address cyberbullying (Spears & Zeederberg, 2013).

1.8 Cyberbullying Research Methodologies

Cyberbullying research is dominated by quantitative research methods, and in particular by self-report survey methods, which have provided information on the characteristics, prevalence, behaviours, attitudes, and impacts related to cyberbullying (Espinoza & Juvonen, 2013; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Smith, 2019). However, despite an ever increasing evidence base, debate regarding the conceptualisation and operation of the phenomenon is ongoing (Berne et al., 2013; Deschamps & McNutt, 2016; Dooley et al., 2009; Kowalski et al., 2014; Langos, 2012; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Thomas et al., 2015; Tokunaga, 2010). As cyberbullying is a contemporary problem of which adults have no first-hand experience in their youth, efforts to understand and address it can benefit from an in-depth understanding of young people’s experiences, values, and norms (Cross et al., 2015; Head, 2011; Mehari et al., 2018; Mishna & Van Wert, 2013;

Shier, 2001; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015). However, while young people are experts in their technologically enhanced lives, their voice is largely absent from the current discourse on cyberbullying. Current conceptualisations have been generated by predominantly deductive methods and are, therefore, filtered through the lens of adult understanding (Cross et al., 2015; Mishna & Van Wert, 2013; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Omission of young people's perspectives risks a misinterpretation of the nature of cyberbullying and of young people's needs and priorities with regard to intervention development (Cross et al., 2015; Kellett, 2005; Mehari et al., 2018; Spears, Slee, Campbell, & Cross, 2011).

While quantitative approaches make a useful contribution to the evidence-base on cyberbullying, young people's experiences of this contemporary and ever evolving phenomenon are embedded with a social context that cannot always be analysed objectively (Broom & Willis, 2007; Spears & Kofoed, 2013). Qualitative research offers researchers the opportunity to step outside the confines of adult thinking (Mishna, Antle, & Regehr, 2004). It has the potential to identify the nuances of cyberbullying, those that cannot be captured with quantitative methods, thereby highlighting the nature of the phenomenon as experienced by young people in their everyday lives (Broom & Willis, 2007; Espinoza & Juvonen, 2013). It offers the opportunity to gain insight into young people's thoughts and feelings about themselves and their worlds and enables their subjective definitions, meanings and experiences to be brought to the fore (Barter & Renold, 2000; Mishna, 2004). While some studies have used qualitative methods to explore young people's perceptions of cyberbullying and coping strategies (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Parris et al., 2012; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Šléglová & Černá, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008; Varjas, Talley, Meyers, Parris, & Cutts, 2010), qualitative research is relatively scarce, particularly in the Irish context. Strikingly, evidence indicates that just seven percent of studies on cyberbullying have employed qualitative methodologies (Smith, 2019). Spears and Kofoed (2013) assert that within the cyberbullying literature qualitative research is viewed as a non-positivist form of enquiry, an appendage to that which is considered true scientific research, rather than a valuable methodology in its own right. They argue that this diminishes the importance of qualitative approaches, their potential to complement quantitative initiatives, and the crucial contribution they can make to the knowledge base on cyberbullying.

1.9 Involving Young People in Research

It has been argued that, given the generational gap between researchers and young people and the evolving nature of cyber technology, the active involvement of young people is essential in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying (Cross et al., 2015; Spears & Kofoed, 2013; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Article 12 of the UNCRC enshrines the right of young people to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account, in any matter or procedure in accordance with his or her age and maturity (United Nations, 1989). Consequently, researchers have a responsibility to respect young people's right to have a say in the conduct of research that is of relevance to their lives. This right is increasingly recognised, respected, and promoted and is increasingly mobilised through the active involvement of young people in the design, conduct, and interpretation of research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Beazley, Bessell, Ennew, & Waterson, 2009; Dunn, 2015; Kellett, 2005; Kirby, 2004; Lundy, McEvoy, & Byrne, 2011; Shaw, Brady, & Davey, 2011). The terms 'involvement in research' and 'participation in research' are used interchangeably in the literature. Generally, these terms refer to "*research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them*" and refer to the active participation of patients/public in the research process rather than the inclusion of people "*as participants in research or as research subjects"* (INVOLVE, 2018).

1.9.1 Benefits of Involving Young People in Research

The way that research is conducted, and the methods that are used to access young people's views can impact on those who are involved as research participants, on the quality and authenticity of data generated, and ultimately on prevention and intervention strategies and health outcomes (Cross et al., 2015; Grover, 2004; Lundy et al., 2011). When actively involved in the research process, young people can provide a unique perspective on the design, conduct, and interpretation of research ensuring that researchers stay mindful of young people's perspectives, values, interests, and norms throughout the process (Kellett, 2005; Shaw et al., 2011). For example, young people can be involved in deciding the focus of the research, in choosing a research sample, in ensuring the accessibility of recruitment material, in directly recruiting their peers, and in the development of data collection tools and strategies. At the analysis and interpretation stage, young people can identify themes for adult researchers to use in analysis and/or make recommendations on what they perceive to be the priority issues for their peers with regard to intervention development (Shaw et al., 2011). As such, actively involving young people in the research process has the potential to facilitate the appropriate and meaningful participation of their peers as research participants, to increase the relevance of research processes and outcomes, to enhance methodological rigour, to generate rich data, and to positively impact on the young people involved (Bird, Culley, & Lakhanpaul, 2013; Brett et al., 2014a; Cross et al., 2015; Head, 2011; Kellett, 2005; McLaughlin, 2006; Moore, Noble-Carr, & McArthur, 2016; Shier, 2001; Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015; Staley, 2009). This is of particular importance in the case of cyberbullying research where young people's perspectives have been largely disregarded despite the valuable and unique expertise that they can offer as social actors and digital natives (Bennett, Maton, & Kervin, 2008; Cross et al., 2015; Spears & Kofoed, 2013).

1.9.2 Models of Young People's Involvement

Young people's participation exists on a wide-ranging spectrum and a number of models have been developed in attempts to capture the various types of involvement (Christensen & Prout, 2002; Hart, 1992; Shaw et al., 2011; Shier, 2001; Treseder, 1997). Based on Arnstein's influential hierarchical model of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969), Hart's Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992) serves as a starting point for thinking about young people's involvement in research. This model (Figure 1.1), which illustrates young people's participation on a continuum represented by the different rungs of a ladder, is useful for assessing the extent to which children are participating within particular contexts. The lower rungs of the ladder represent non-participation including manipulation, decoration, and tokenism while the upper rungs of the ladder depict varying degrees of participation ranging from consultation with children to child-initiated shared decision making at the top rung. While widely cited and influential, this model has been criticised for implying that the upper rungs of the ladder are always superior to those at the lower end, that the ideal levels of participation are those that are child initiated involving shared decision making power with adults (Hart, 2008).

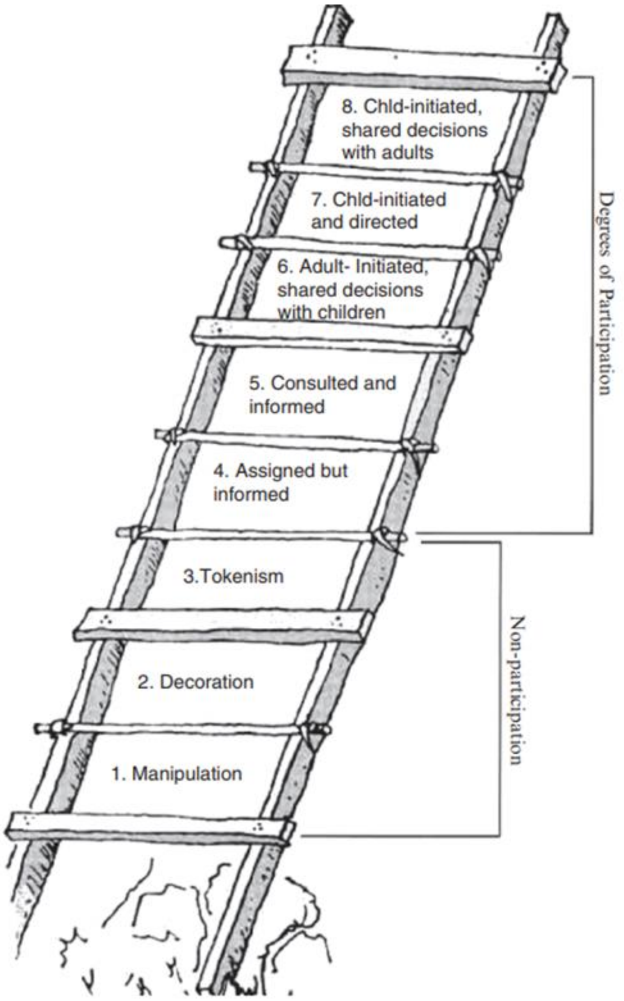

8. Chld-initiated, shared decisions with adults
7. Chld-initiated and directed
6. Adult- Initiated, shared decisions with children
5. Consulted and informed
4. Assigned but informed
3.Tokenism
2. Decoration
1. Manipulation
Degrees of Participation
Non-participation

Figure 1.1 Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation

Following criticism of Hart’s ladder (1992), non-hierarchical models of young people’s participation began to emerge (Christensen & Prout, 2002; Shaw et al., 2011; Treseder, 1997). Shaw et al. (2011) developed a model depicting the different ways of involving young people in research activities. This model implies that no form of participation is superior to another, rather the approach taken to involve young people is determined by the nature of the project, the resources available, and the preferences of the young people involved. The model (Figure 1.2) distinguishes between young people involved as research participants (sources of data) and those actively involved in aspects of the planning and process of research and highlights that levels of involvement in a single project can vary for different young people and at different stages of the research. At the consultation level researchers take young people's views into account, as collaborators young people and researchers engage in shared decision-making engaging in negotiations where necessary, at the final level young people have ownership of the research and are supported by researchers to make informed decisions. Shaw et al. (2011) advise against approaches that give young people total control over research due to quality, ethical, and legal concerns.

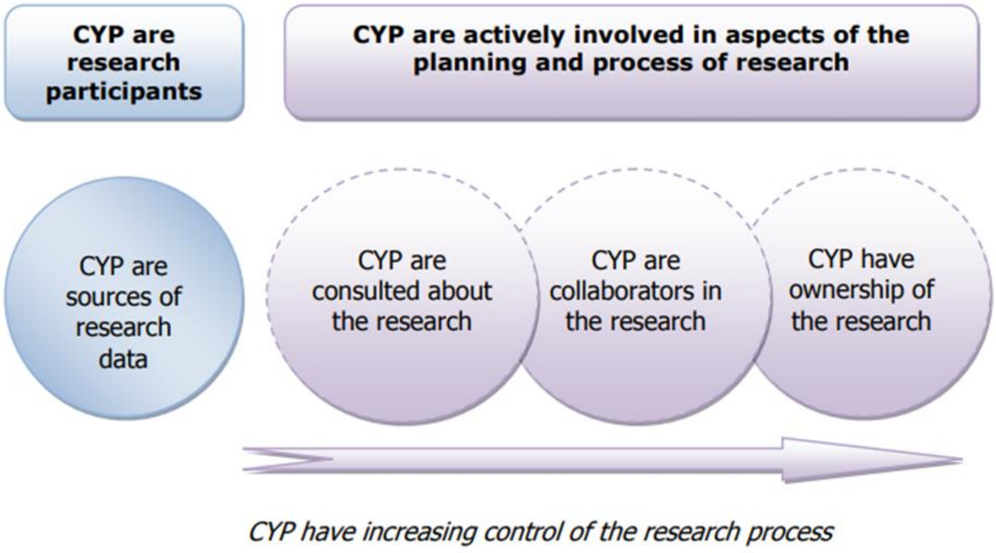
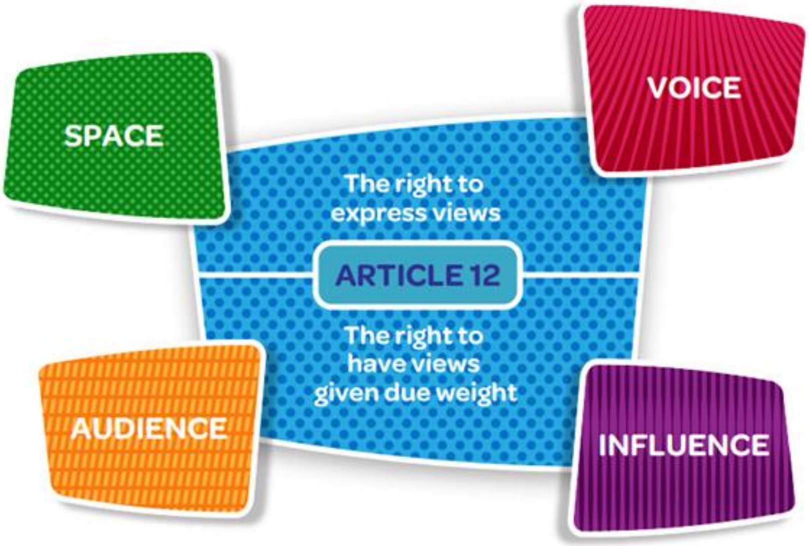

CYP are research participants
CYP are actively involved in aspects of the planning and process of research
CYP are sources of research data
CYP are consulted about the research
CYP are collaborators in the research
CYP have ownership of the research
CYP have increasing control of the research process

Figure 1.2 Levels of Young People's Involvement in Research

Lundy's Model of Participation (Lundy, 2007) provides a framework to support the implementation of young people's participation rights. This non-hierarchical model conceptualises Article 12 of the UNCRC for the effective realisation of young people's participation (United Nations, 1989). As is evident from Figure 1.3, the framework identifies four key chronological concepts underpinning the effective realisation of young people's participation: (1) *space*-children must be given the opportunity to express a view in a space that is safe and inclusive, (2) *voice*-children must be facilitated to express their views, (3) *audience*- the view must be listened to, and (4) *influence*-the view must be acted upon as appropriate (Lundy, 2007; Lundy et al., 2011). This model has been incorporated by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) in the national strategy on children and young people's participation in decision-making. For the purpose of the strategy a checklist was developed based on Lundy's Model to support young people's participation (Figure 4) (Lundy, 2007).

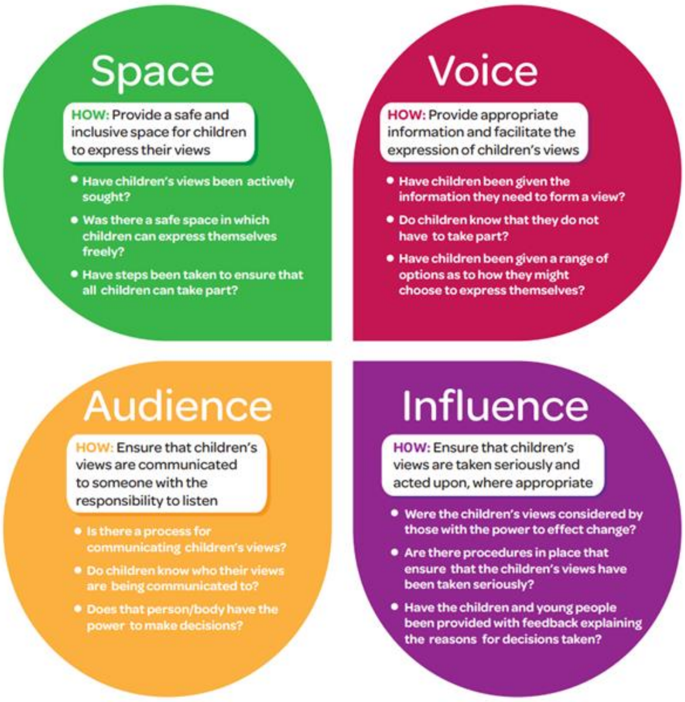
This model posits that within a rights-based approach to young people's participation it is not always optimal to give young people the definitive say in decision-making but rather their views should be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity and ethical considerations. This model highlights that Article 12 does not exist in isolation but should be recognised in line with other children's rights including the right to be safe (Article 19) and free from discrimination (Article 2), the right to guidance from adults (Article 5), the right to seek, receive, and impart appropriate information (Article 13) and the right to have decisions taken in their best interests (Article 3) (Lundy, 2007; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; United Nations, 1989).


SPACE
VOICE
The right to express views
ARTICLE 12
The right to have views given due weight
AUDIENCE
INFLUENCE

This model provides a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC which is intended to focus educational decision-makers on the distinct, albeit interrelated, elements of the provision. The four elements have a rational chronological order:

- **SPACE:** Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view
- **VOICE:** Children must be facilitated to express their view
- **AUDIENCE:** The view must be listened to.
- **INFLUENCE:** The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.

Figure 1.3 Lundy's Model of Youth Participation



Space

HOW: Provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views

- Have children's views been actively sought?
- Was there a safe space in which children can express themselves freely?
- Have steps been taken to ensure that all children can take part?

Voice

HOW: Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children's views

- Have children been given the information they need to form a view?
- Do children know that they do not have to take part?
- Have children been given a range of options as to how they might choose to express themselves?

Audience

HOW: Ensure that children's views are communicated to someone with the responsibility to listen

- Is there a process for communicating children's views?
- Do children know who their views are being communicated to?
- Does that person/body have the power to make decisions?

Influence

HOW: Ensure that children's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate

- Were the children's views considered by those with the power to effect change?
- Are there procedures in place that ensure that the children's views have been taken seriously?
- Have the children and young people been provided with feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?

Figure 1.4 Checklist for Implementation of Lundy's Model if Youth Participation

1.10 Policy Context

International organisations concerned with the welfare of children and young people highlight bullying as a worldwide problem. The UNESCO (2017) School Violence and Bullying Global Status Report differentiates between traditional bullying and cyberbullying and conveys cyberbullying as a significant and growing problem for young people. The report advocates for the active participation of young people in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying and also recommends educating policy-makers, teachers, parents, and young people about cyberbullying and the steps that can be taken to prevent and respond to it.

Demonstrating governmental commitment to young people, the national policy framework for children & young people aged 0-24 years, ‘Better Outcomes Brighter Futures’, is the first overarching national policy framework for children and young people in the Republic of Ireland (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014). The framework comprises an outcomes approach based on five interconnecting and reinforcing national outcomes for children and young people namely: to be active and healthy; to be achieving in all areas of learning and development; to be safe and protected from harm; to enjoy economic security and opportunity; and to be connected, respected and contributing. Many of the outcomes and their associated aims are of particular relevance to the research within this thesis. Of note, the policy states that young people in Ireland have identified bullying and peer pressure as among the worst things about being a child in this country. Consequently, in ensuring that young people are safe and protected from harm the policy aims to protect young people from bullying and discrimination. As well as other forms of bullying, the policy recognises the role of schools, families, and youth organisations in tackling cyberbullying which is described as complex and multifaceted in nature. In ensuring young people’s physical and mental health and social and emotional wellbeing the policy recognises the need to address risk factors citing bullying in particular. It prioritises the development of emotional resilience, mental health literacy, and self-esteem in young people. The policy is underpinned by children’s rights and advocates for the inclusion of youth voice in all decisions affecting young people (United

Nations, 1989). The importance of engaging youth voice is reiterated in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020. Children and young people's participation in decision-making is defined as *"the process by which children and young people have active involvement and real influence in decision-making on matters affecting their lives, both directly and indirectly".* Of relevance to this thesis, this strategy promotes young people's involvement in decision-making in health and educational policy, in the running of schools and services, and in the development of bullying policies and support services.

While the above broad strategies include bullying, the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2013) focus specifically on the establishment of mandatory procedures in schools to deal with bullying, including cyberbullying. The purpose of the procedures is to give direction and guidance to school authorities and school personnel in preventing and tackling school-based bullying behaviour amongst its pupils and in dealing with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere. While no governmental review of the action plan has been conducted, Foody, Murphy, Downes, and O'Higgins Norman (2018) have made efforts to investigate its implementation from the perspective of school principals. Positively, their research indicates the increased presence of anti-bullying policies in Irish schools and the provision of support for those affected by bullying (Foody et al., 2018). However, while this study represents the opinions of principals it is possible that research with young people regarding the provision of support may provide different results. Although required by the mandate, the study found that less than half the schools sampled had appointed a designated person to deal with bullying (Department of Education and Skills, 2013). Also, despite the guidance offered in the procedures, results highlight a need for training, resources, workshops, and guidelines for staff to address bullying in schools indicating that school personnel are currently ill equipped to deal with bullying and cyberbullying (Foody et al., 2018).

1.11 Summary

Cyberbullying is a serious issue for young people whose lives are increasingly immersed in technology and it presents complex challenges for parents, teachers, researchers, and policy-makers. It is now well established as a public health problem with research demonstrating deleterious effect on young people’s mental health and wellbeing over and above that of traditional bullying. The unique features of cyberbullying and the increased negative impact on young people’s mental health warrant targeted prevention and intervention strategies, however, there is a paucity of evidence-based approaches. A lack of consensus regarding conceptualisation of the phenomenon has hindered efforts to understand and address it and the existing evidence-base lacks youth voice. As adult researchers do not have first-hand experience of immersion in cyber technology in their youth, omitting young people’s perspectives risks a misinterpretation of their needs. In order to effectively support young people, prevention and intervention strategies must be positioned in an in-depth understanding of their experiences, values, and norms. The literature underlines that involving young people as co-researchers has the potential to enhance efforts to understand and address cyberbullying. National and international policies support the involvement of young people in efforts to enhance our understanding of cyberbullying.

1.12 Research Aims and Objectives

1.12.1 Overall Aim

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore young people's perspectives on cyberbullying to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon, particularly in the Irish context where it is relatively under researched. The research focuses on conceptualising cyberbullying from young people's perspective and through the active involvement of young people aims to identify their priorities with regard to understanding and addressing cyberbullying. It is envisaged that the research will contribute to the literature on young people's involvement in cyberbullying research, and health research more broadly, and that findings will inform the development of theory and evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies that are grounded in their experiences, values, and norms.

1.12.2 Objectives

1. To systematically review and synthesise the existing literature related to young people's conceptualisation of the nature of cyberbullying
2. To involve young people in the design of a qualitative study of young people's perspectives on cyberbullying in an Irish setting
3. To explore the perspectives of a sample of young people in Ireland on the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying, as well as coping mechanisms
4. To involve young people in the interpretation of research findings and in priority setting for intervention development
5. To evaluate young people's active involvement in the research process

1.13 Thesis Outline

In order to achieve the proposed aims and objectives, this thesis comprises four inter-related original research papers which are outlined and positioned within supporting chapters in Table 1.1. It is envisaged that the findings from this thesis will inform the development of prevention and intervention strategies that are grounded in young people's experiences of the phenomenon while contributing to the literature on involving young people in cyberbullying research and in health research more broadly.

Table 1.1 Thesis Outline

Chapter	Content
1	This chapter provides an overview of cyberbullying including definitional issues, prevalence, health impact, coping strategies, and interventions. It outlines the overall aims and objectives of this research.
2	This chapter presents the overall research design of this thesis and the rationale for its use. It outlines the methodological frameworks and study methods utilised within this research.
3	Young people's conceptualisations of the nature of cyberbullying: A systematic review and synthesis of qualitative research (Paper 1)
4	Involving young people in cyberbullying research: The implementation and evaluation of a rights-based approach (Paper 2)
5	Cyberbullying through the non-consensual distribution of nude images: Young people's perceptions (Paper 3)
6	The mental health Impacts of cybervictimisation and barriers to seeking social support: young people's perspectives (Paper 4)
7	This chapter summarises the overall findings of this research. The findings are considered in the context of existing evidence, the strengths and imitations of the research are outlined, and implications for research, policy, and practice are discussed.

2 Methodological Framework and Study Methods

2.1 Chapter Overview

The aim of this chapter is to describe the overall research design of this thesis and the rationale for its use. The philosophical underpinnings of the research are outlined as well as the methodological frameworks which informed study design and conduct. An overview of the methods used to meet the aims and objectives of this research is provided and ethical considerations are discussed. Finally, readers are directed to the researchers reflexive account.

2.2 Research Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this thesis is to enhance our understanding of cyberbullying with a view to informing the development of theory and evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies. Qualitative and participatory research methods were used:

1. To systematically review and synthesise the existing literature related to young people's conceptualisation of the nature of cyberbullying
2. To involve young people in the design of a qualitative study of young people's perspectives on cyberbullying in an Irish setting
3. To explore the perspectives of a sample young people in Ireland on the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying, as well as coping mechanisms
4. To involve young people in the interpretation of research findings and in priority setting for intervention development
5. To evaluate young people's active involvement in the research process

2.3 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is an overarching philosophical or ideological stance, a basic set of beliefs about the world that guides research action (Broom & Willis, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Health research commonly sits within a positivist or constructivist research paradigm, although researchers are increasingly pragmatic in that they use the best means to answer a research question rather than prescribing to a specific philosophy (Broom & Willis, 2007). Delineating the researchers philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality is crucial to understanding the overall perspective from which research is designed and carried out (Krauss, 2005). The positivist view maintains that there is only one truth, that reality is fixed and can be directly measured to produce objective knowledge that is independent of human perception (Broom & Willis, 2007; Krauss, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This world view is generally aligned with the deductive quantitative methods that dominate cyberbullying research (Espinoza & Juvonen, 2013; Smith, 2019; Spears & Kofoed, 2013). Often viewed as an alternative to positivism, a constructivist paradigm posits that there is no single objective truth but rather multiple subjective truths and a constantly changing reality that that is constructed by those who experience a phenomenon of interest (Broom & Willis, 2007; Krauss, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Rather than seeking to measure or categorise phenomena, researchers operating within this paradigm focus on interpreting the understandings of research participants and their constructions of reality, inductively developing theory or patterns of meaning (Broom & Willis, 2007; Craig et al., 2008; Creswell, 2014). This paradigm is generally associated with qualitative methods which generate data that enable reflection on subjective meanings and interpretations (Broom & Willis, 2007).

The research within this thesis is grounded in constructivism. It is based on the assumption that adult researchers' conceptualisation of cyberbullying, and therefore, their priorities for prevention and intervention strategies, differ from those of young people due to varying life experiences. Adults do not have first-hand experience of cyberbullying or immersion in cyber technology in their youth (Spears & Kofoed, 2013). Their constructs of cyberbullying and approaches to cyberbullying research are formulated through the lens of adult knowledge and as such it is possible that the prevailing deductive approaches do not reflect young people's experiences, interests, values, and norms. Therefore, in order to understand and address cyberbullying it is vital to consider the reality of the phenomenon as experienced by young people.

2.4 Overarching Methodological Frameworks

2.4.1 The Medical Research Council Framework

As highlighted in Chapter One, there is a paucity of evidence-based cyberbullying interventions (Della Cioppa et al., 2015; Hutson et al., 2017; Mishna, Cook, Saini, et al., 2010; Walker & Sleath, 2017). In particular it has been widely reported that a lack of consensus regarding conceptualisation of the phenomenon has hindered efforts to understand and address it (Berne et al., 2013; Deschamps & McNutt, 2016; Dooley et al., 2009; Kowalski et al., 2014; Langos, 2012; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Thomas et al., 2015; Tokunaga, 2010). As cyberbullying is a contemporary problem of which adults have no first-hand experience in their youth, the development of effective and relevant prevention and intervention strategies can benefit from the engagement of young people's perspectives (Cross et al., 2015; Head, 2011; Shier, 2001; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015). However, young people's voices are largely absent from the current discourse, particularly in regard to the development of prevention and intervention strategies (Cross et al., 2015; Spears & Kofoed, 2013).

The Medical Research Council (MRC) guidance on complex interventions provides a framework to structure and support the development, implementation, and evaluation of complex interventions (Craig et al., 2008). The guidance recommends a systematic approach to intervention development which draws on the best available evidence and appropriate theory, testing of the intervention with a series of pilot studies, and ultimately evaluation. Although the guidance describes a staged approach it is noted that the phases do not necessarily follow a linear pattern, rather they serve to position the researcher within the research process (Figure 2.1).

This thesis is situated within the first stage of the MRC framework, the "Development" stage. In particular, this research aims to identify the evidence-base with regard to young people's perspectives on the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying and their priorities for intervention development.

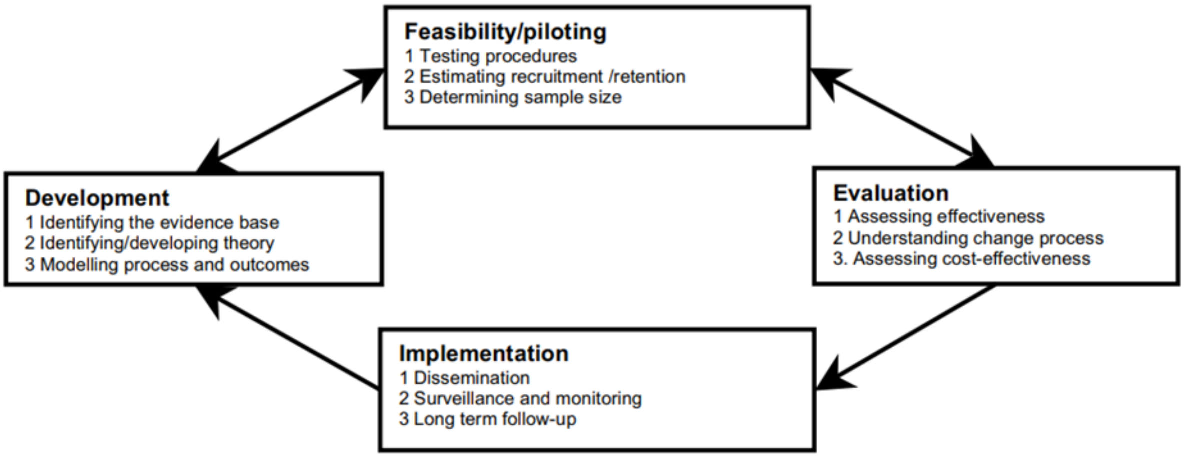

Feasibility/piloting
1 Testing procedures
2 Estimating recruitment /retention
3 Determining sample size
Development
1 Identifying the evidence base
2 Identifying/developing theory
3 Modelling process and outcomes
Evaluation
1 Assessing effectiveness
2 Understanding change process
3. Assessing cost-effectiveness
Implementation
1 Dissemination
2 Surveillance and monitoring
3 Long term follow-up

Figure 2.1 Medical Research Council Framework for Intervention Development

2.4.2 The Behaviour Change Wheel

The MRC provides a useful framework for developing interventions, however, while it advocates for the incorporation of theory in intervention design it does not indicate how this can be achieved (Craig et al., 2008). The Behaviour Change Wheel (BCW), integrates behavioural theory with the development and description of behaviour change interventions and is, therefore, a useful accompaniment to the MRC guidance (Michie, Atkins, & West, 2014; Michie, Stralen, & West, 2011). The BCW is a framework which combines behavioural theory with the development and description of behaviour change interventions (Figure 2.2). At the centre of the BCW is a theoretical model, the COM-B. The COM-B proposes that in order for a behaviour to occur a person must have the capability (C) to perform the behaviour, the opportunity (O) to engage in it and the motivation (M) to do so. The COM-B informs the choice of intervention function, most likely to achieve a change in behaviour and indicates policy strategies to support the intervention. It has been reported that intervention development is poorly described (Michie, Fixsen, Grimshaw, & Eccles, 2009). The systematic nature of the BCW increases the structure and transparency of intervention development and facilitates implementation and evaluation

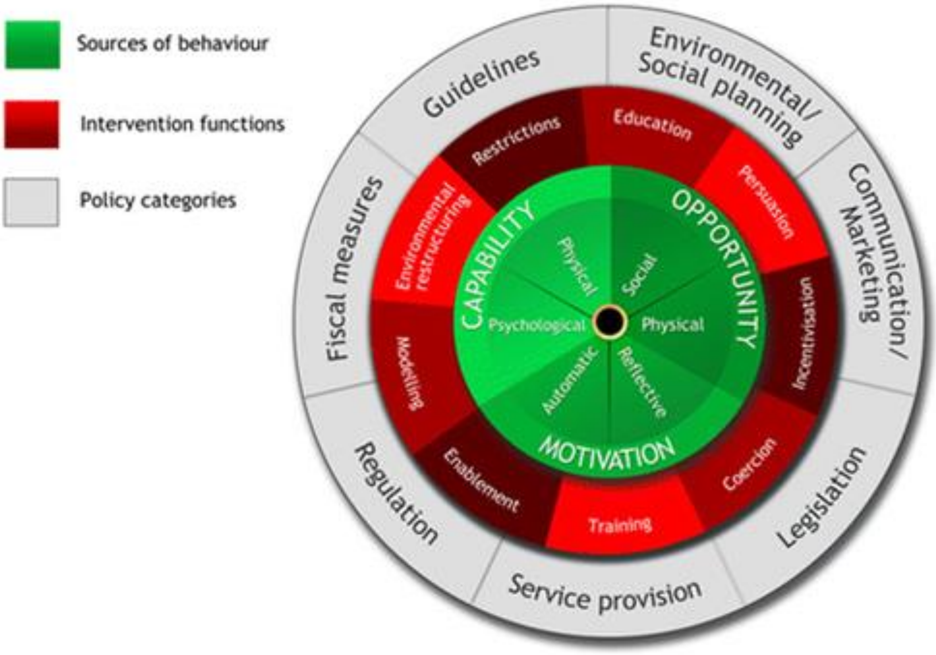

Sources of behaviour
Intervention functions
Policy categories
Guidelines
Environmental/ Social planning
Communication/ Marketing
Legislation
Service provision
Regulation
Fiscal measures
Restrictions
Education
Persuasion
Incentivisation
Coercion
Training
Enablement
Modelling
Environmental restructuring
CAPABILITY
OPPORTUNITY
MOTIVATION
Physical
Social
Psychological
Physical
Automatic
Reflective

Figure 2.2 The Behaviour Change Wheel

2.5 Study Design

The Medical Research Council framework and the Behaviour Change Wheel stress the importance of identifying and understanding the evidence-base in the development of behaviour change interventions (Craig et al., 2008; Michie et al., 2014). Efforts to understand and address cyberbullying have been rooted in traditional anti-bullying methods and have lacked engagement with young people (Cross et al., 2015; Mishna & Van Wert, 2013; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Consequently, the existing evidence-base lacks youth voice on a contemporary problem that exists largely in the domain of young people. As adult researchers do not have first-hand experience of immersion in cyber technology in their youth, omitting young people’s perspective risks a misinterpretation of their needs and misguided prevention and intervention strategies (Cross et al., 2015; Spears et al., 2011). In order to effectively support young people, cyberbullying prevention and intervention strategies must be positioned in an in-depth understanding of their experiences, values, and norms (Mishna & Van Wert, 2013). Further, the literature underlines that involving young people as co-researchers has the potential to enhance efforts to understand and address cyberbullying (Cross et al., 2015; Spears & Kofoed, 2013; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Youth involvement will increase the likelihood that the perspectives of young people are prioritised and that the strategies developed are relevant and appropriate (Cross et al., 2015).

With these issues in mind, a qualitative and participatory study design was utilised to enhance the evidence-base with regard to young people's perspectives on the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying and their priorities for intervention development. Qualitative research allows researchers to step outside the bounds of adult thinking (Mishna et al., 2004). It offers the opportunity to gain insight into young people's thoughts and feelings about themselves and their worlds and enables their subjective definitions, meanings and experiences to be brought to the fore (Barter & Renold, 2000; Mishna, 2004). Qualitative methodologies are consistent with the constructivist paradigm in that they aim to generate data that enable reflection on subjective meanings and interpretations (Broom & Willis, 2007; Creswell, 2014).

Participatory approaches to research refer "*research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them*" and to the active participation of patients/public in research "*rather than the use of people as participants in research or as research subjects"* (Beazley et al., 2009; INVOLVE, 2018). It is the right of young people to have a say in the matters that impact on their lives and actively involving them in the research process has the potential to increase the relevance of research, enhance methodological rigour, provide rich data on cyberbullying, and positively impact on the young people involved (Bird et al., 2013; Brett et al., 2014a; Cross et al., 2015; Head, 2011; McLaughlin, 2006; Moore et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2002; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015; Staley, 2009; United Nations, 1989).

An overview of the study design is presented in Figure 2.3. In the first instance a systematic review and synthesis of the existing qualitative literature on young people's conceptualisations of the nature of cyberbullying was conducted. Secondly, focusing on the development of new evidence related to young people's perspectives on cyberbullying, a qualitative study was conducted in all four secondary schools in a large town in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Young people were involved in this study in two capacities, as collaborators involved in shared decision making with adult researchers about the research process and as research participants in that data was collected from them (Bird et al., 2013; Hart, 1992; Shaw et al., 2011). A Young Person's Advisory Group, comprising four students from each participating school, was established to collaborate with researchers in the design, conduct, and interpretation of the research thereby facilitating the ethical, appropriate, and meaningful involvement of their peers as research participants. The Advisory Group met with adult researchers at a local youth centre for five two-hour research sessions in the 2016/2017 school year. Sessions focused on building the young people's capacity to engage with the research process and the issues surrounding cyberbullying, designing the qualitative study, interpreting the findings of the study, identifying priorities for intervention development, and evaluating young people's involvement in the research process.

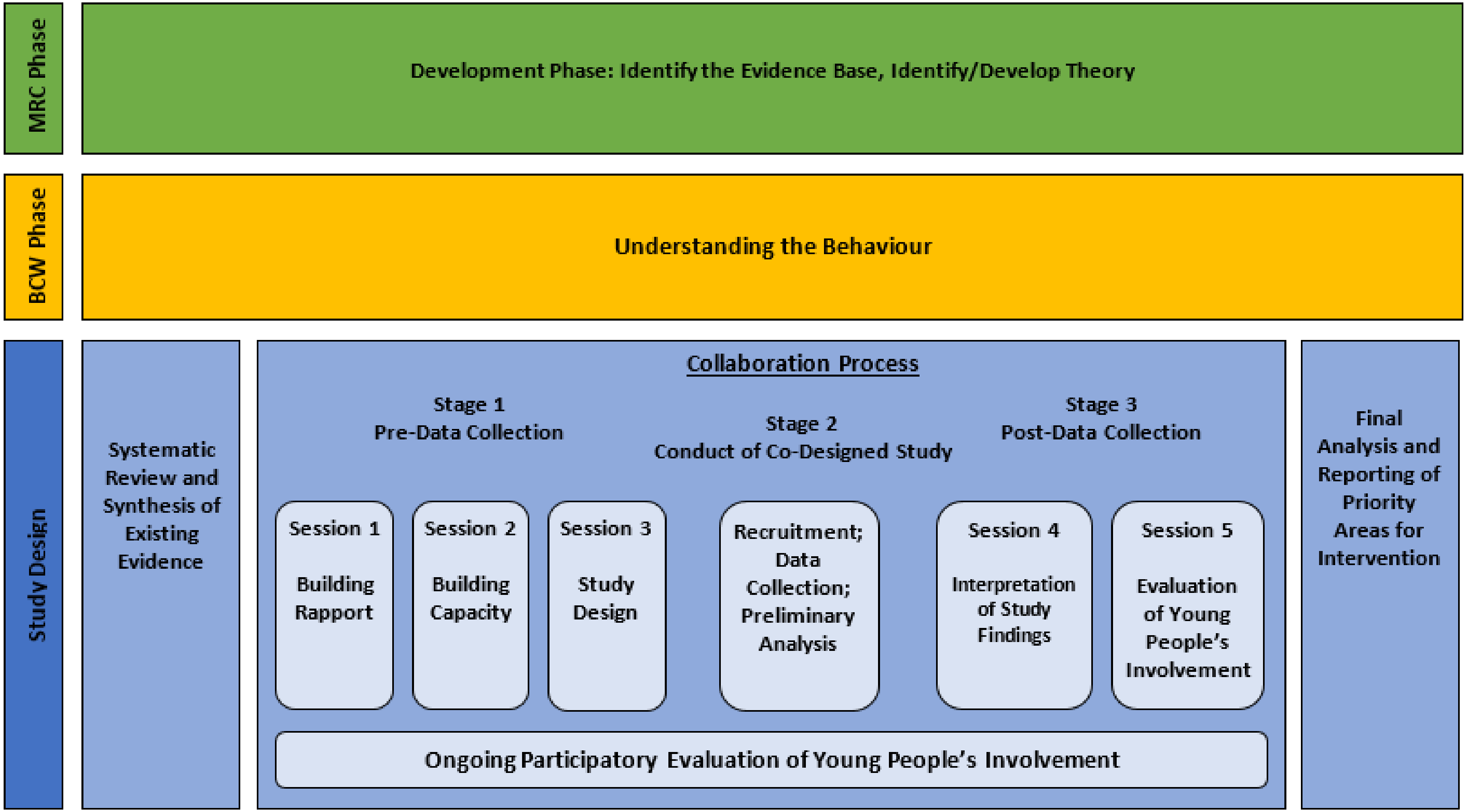

MRC Phase
Development Phase: Identify the Evidence Base, Identify/Develop Theory
BCW Phase
Understanding the Behaviour
Study Design
Systematic Review and Synthesis of Existing Evidence
Collaboration Process
Stage 1
Pre-Data Collection
Stage 2
Conduct of Co-Designed Study
Stage 3
Post-Data Collection
Session 1
Building Rapport
Session 2
Building Capacity
Session 3
Study Design
Recruitment; Data Collection; Preliminary Analysis
Session 4
Interpretation of Study Findings
Session 5
Evaluation of Young People's Involvement
Ongoing Participatory Evaluation of Young People's Involvement
Final Analysis and Reporting of Priority Areas for Intervention

Figure 2.3 Study Design

2.6 Methods

2.6.1 Meta-Ethnographic Study of Existing Evidence

As outlined in the MRC framework and the Behaviour Change Wheel, intervention deign should be informed by the best available evidence (Craig et al., 2008). Meta-ethnography uses rigorous qualitative methods to synthesise existing qualitative studies and aims to produce novel interpretations that transcend individual study findings; it is particularly suited to the development of conceptual models (France et al., 2019; France et al., 2016). Guided by the seven-step model of meta-ethnography as developed by Noblit and Hare (1988), the existing evidence on young people's conceptualisation of the nature of cyberbullying was explored through a systematic review and synthesis of the qualitative literature. Reporting of the review and synthesis is informed by the eMERGe guidance on improving the reporting of meta-ethnography (France et al., 2019). Supplementary material related to this study can be found in Appendix A.

Locating Relevant Studies

Qualitative research has potential to identify the nuances of cyberbullying, those that cannot be captured with quantitative methods, thereby highlighting the nature of the phenomenon as experienced by young people in their everyday lives (Espinoza & Juvonen, 2013). Therefore, the literature search focused on primary studies which had used qualitative methods to explore young people's perceptions of cyberbullying. Mixed-method studies were included if the qualitative component was clearly delineated. Qualitative questions in questionnaires do not facilitate the same level of topic exploration as interviewer led methods and as such studies including open-ended questions as a qualitative element in an otherwise quantitative questionnaire were excluded. Participants were required to be aged between 10 and 19, as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of adolescence, and recruited from the school setting (World Health Organisation, 2018). Studies with mixed samples, for example those including parents or teachers, were excluded to ensure a focus on youth voice. Studies were included if they were English-language, peer-reviewed and published in full.

A comprehensive search strategy was devised using the qualitative PICo (Population, Interest, Context) formula (Stern, Jordan, & McArthur, 2014). The search terms included a combination of Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and keywords synonymous with the following: “adolescents” (Population), “bullying” (Interest) and “cyber” (Context). The initial search was developed in MEDLINE and adapted for use in other databases. Nine databases, encompassing a variety of relevant disciplines, including health, education and the social sciences, were searched from inception to July 2018: Academic Search Complete, CINAHL (the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature), Education Full Text, ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre), MEDLINE, PsycINFO, SocIndex, Social Science Full Text (all EBSCO) and EMBASE (Elsevier). The database search was supplemented by, a review of the reference lists of included studies, contacting authors of conference abstracts and key authors in the field, and a hand-search of four key journals: Computers in Human Behaviour, Cyberpsychology Behaviour and Social Networking, the Journal of Adolescence and the Journal of Adolescent Health.

Inclusion Decisions

The citations and abstracts of retrieved studies were exported to reference management system EndNote X7 and duplicates were removed (EndNote, 2015). In the first instance the author conducted a preliminary screening of titles to exclude records that obviously did not meet the inclusion criteria. Second, using a screening strategy devised in line with the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the author and a second reviewer (KW) independently screened study titles and abstracts. Third, these reviewers independently reviewed the full texts of the remaining studies. Discrepancies and indecisions at both stages were resolved through discussion between both reviewers and in consultation with two additional reviewers where needed.

Quality Appraisal of Included Studies

The author and a second reviewer (SM) read and independently appraised the quality of included studies using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative research (CASP Qualitative Appraisal Checklist, 2013). Disparities were resolved through discussion and consensus decisions. Studies were not excluded from the synthesis on the basis of the quality assessment, but the process uncovered useful information about ethical procedures and methods of data collection and analysis.

Analysis and Synthesis Process

An inclusive approach to data extraction was implemented (Noyes & Lewin, 2011). The author documented and tabulated all relevant contextual and methodological data presented in the included studies according to a standardised data extraction form. Relevant data included: study aims; study context; ethical review and consent procedures; youth involvement in the research process; sample size; participant characteristics; research methods. Focusing on the findings and discussion sections of the papers, first-order interpretations (views of the participants) and second-order interpretations (views of the authors) of the included studies were analyzed thematically (Atkins et al., 2008). Three conceptually rich studies were identified and these were purposefully read and open-coded independently by the author and a second reviewer (CS) to ensure validity in the coding process (Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010). Codes and potential categories were discussed and differences in interpretation were considered by the review team to enhance the analytical process before one reviewer open-coded the remainder of the studies in chronological order.

The author grouped codes into categories of shared meaning, using conceptual mind maps to explore and express relationships within and across categories. All reviewers (RD, KW, CS, SM, MC, EA) on the team engaged in concept development allowing for the consideration of multiple perspectives. Following an iterative process five key concepts that reflected the main findings of the included studies were identified. A grid was developed to assist in identifying the relationship between studies and the contribution of each study to a key concept (Britten et al., 2002). The constant comparative method common to qualitative research was employed to determine how the first and second order interpretations from each study related to each other and to the identified concepts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In order to retain the context of the primary data, geographical details, type of school, gender, and involvement in cyberbullying were explored systematically (Atkins et al., 2008). Similarities and differences in interpretations and contexts were pursued allowing for the reciprocal and refutational translation of studies into one another. Third-order interpretations (views of the reviewers) were developed by synthesising the translations in each key concept. These interpretations were then linked to create a "line of argument", reflecting an overarching understanding of cyberbullying from the perspective of young people within the published literature (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

2.6.2 Co-Generation of New Evidence

To strengthen the evidence-base with regard to young people's perspectives on the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying and their priorities for intervention development, a qualitative study was conducted in all four secondary schools in a large town in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). The study was conducted in collaboration with a purposefully formed Young Person's Advisory Group who, in the role of co-researchers, provided a unique perspective on the design, conduct, and interpretation of the research. Young people's involvement in the research is reported in line with guidance for reporting patient and public involvement in research (GRIPP2) (Staniszewska et al., 2017). The description of the conduct of the qualitative study is informed by the consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007). Supplementary material related to the collaboration process can be found in Appendix B.

Lundy's Model of Youth Participation

Young people's involvement in this study, as both collaborators and research participants, was underpinned by Lundy's Model of Participation (Lundy, 2007; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Lundy et al., 2011) which conceptualises Article 12 of the UNCRC

(United Nations, 1989). As outlined in Chapter 1, this non-hierarchal framework identifies four key chronological concepts underpinning the effective realisation of young people's participation: (1) *space*-children must be given the opportunity to express a view in a space that is safe and inclusive, (2) *voice*-children must be facilitated to express their views, (3) *audience*- the view must be listened to, and (4) *influence*-the view must be acted upon as appropriate (Lundy, 2007; Lundy et al., 2011). This model highlights that Article 12 does not exist in isolation but should be recognised in line with other children's rights including the right to guidance from adults (Article 5) and the right to seek and impart appropriate information (Article 13)(Lundy, 2007; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). A rights-based approach to collaborating with young people, therefore, requires that young people are supported in not only expressing their views but also in forming them (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). Shared-decision making in the research process supported adult researchers to duly consider the views of the Advisory Group but also to make decisions in their best interests (Article 3) when necessary to ensure their safety and wellbeing (Article 19) (Lundy, 2007).

The Collaboration Process

The recruitment of schools commenced in spring 2016 with a view to beginning work at the start of the 2016/2017 school year. Four schools in a large town in the Republic of Ireland were invited to participate. These included a non-fee-paying all-female secondary school (School A), a non-fee-paying all-male voluntary secondary school (School B), a non-fee-paying co-educational vocational school in receipt of additional supports to address educational disadvantage and social exclusion (School C) (Department of Education and Science, 2005), and a fee-paying co-educational private school with a mix of day students and boarders (School D). An information sheet was sent to the principal of each school and during follow-up meetings all four schools agreed to participate. Written consent was obtained to formalise the agreement. A contact person was elected by each principal to act as a link between the adult research team and the school (Lytle, Johnson, Bachman, Wambsgans, & et al., 1994; Shaw et al., 2011).

Transition Year is an optional one-year programme in the fourth year of post-primary education in Ireland. Taken after the junior cycle (first-third year) and before the senior cycle (fifth and sixth year), Transition Year promotes the personal, social, vocational and educational development of students without the pressure of state examinations (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). These students were, therefore, considered well-placed to be involved in the Advisory Group. In September 2016 the lead researcher spoke to Transition Year students about the project and distributed information sheets. Students were advised that their membership of the Advisory Group would be known to others. Transition Year Co-ordinators in each school elected four students from those interested to sit on the Advisory Group. Ten female and six male students participated; all were 16 years old. Written consent was obtained from both young people and a parent/guardian and forms were returned to the school (Morrow & Richards, 1996; Shaw et al., 2011).

Advisory Group members met with adult researchers for five two-hour research sessions in the 2016/2017 school year. These sessions were held during school hours in a local youth centre and were attended by a youth worker and two adult researchers. Sessions focused on building the young people's capacity to engage with the research process and the issues surrounding cyberbullying, designing a qualitative study, interpreting the findings of the study and identifying intervention priorities. It has been noted that young people are rarely asked about their involvement in research (Hill, 2006; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Moore et al., 2016) and so, informed by guidelines for evaluating participation work with young people, an evaluation of young people's involvement in the research process was conducted (Mainey, 2008a, 2008b).

Stage One

Stage one included three sessions focused on the co-design of the study. These included building rapport, building capacity, and study design.

Session One - Building Rapport

Session One focused on building rapport among the research team. Icebreakers were used to ease inhibitions, build trust and create an open atmosphere (Chlup & Collins, 2010). Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group were reviewed collaboratively and approved (Appendix B). As is good practice in group facilitation (Prendiville, 2008), and in working with young people, a group contract was developed to set out the fundamental rules of the group (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2017; Prendiville, 2008).

Session Two - Building Capacity

Session Two focused on building the Advisory Group's capacity to engage with the research process and the issues surrounding cyberbullying (Dunn, 2015; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). Young people are not used to expressing their views or having their opinions taken seriously by adults because of their position in an adult dominated society (Punch, 2002). Therefore, in keeping with a rights-based approach, this session aimed to maximise members ability to express their existing views or form new ones based on the interaction with the information generated, their peers and the adult researchers (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). Brief training in Public Health research was delivered to enable them to make informed contributions to the study design (Brett et al., 2014a). Key topics included "What is public health?", "What is research?", "The cycle of a research project", "Research methods", and "Research ethics".

Strategies to enable the Advisory Group to reflect on and discuss cyberbullying were informed by the literature on capacity building and participatory methods (Dunn, 2015; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Mc Menamin, Tierney, & Mac Farlane, 2015b). A topic guide developed at the University of Toronto to explore cyberbullying with young people was used to inform discussion topics, which included defining cyberbullying, cyberbullying behaviours, motivations, consequences and coping, and reporting (Mishna et al., 2016). Participatory enabling techniques were implemented to stimulate thinking and to facilitate the Advisory Group to refine and express their views (Ritchie, Lewis, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). These techniques provided further insight into the nature of cyberbullying and allowed for adaptation of the topic guide for use later in the project.

- Walking debates, a tool to encourage discussion and the formation of views (Gowran, 2002; National Women's Council of Ireland, 2014) were conducted to enable reflection on the role of gender and setting in cyberbullying, to identify the characteristics of those impacted by victimisation and perpetration and to explore current prevention and intervention efforts. Two signs with the words “*I agree*” and “*I disagree*” were placed on the wall on either side of the room. Statements such as “g*irls are more likely to be victims of cyberbullying than boys”* were read aloud. Advisory Group members were invited to walk to the sign that best reflected their view or stand in the middle if they were unsure. To encourage dialogue, they were encouraged to defend their position and to move if their view changed over the course of the debate.
- ‘Flexible Brainstorming’ (Mc Menamin, Tierney, & Mac Farlane, 2015a) and ‘Sorting and Ranking’ (Chambers, 2002; Mc Menamin et al., 2015a) facilitated discussion about the media through which cyberbullying takes place. Members were provided with flipchart paper, sticky notes, card, and markers and invited to use the materials to depict the media through which cyberbullying takes place using one sticky note or piece of card per idea. They were then asked to sort their ideas into meaningful groupings. Through discussion and a process of retaining or removing certain items a list of the media they believed to facilitate cyberbullying was formed and items were ranked according to the perceived risk of victimisation. This was then used as a tool to enable reflection and discussion about the nature of cyberbullying in different outlets.
- The Carousel technique (Chambers, 2002) was used to enable the Advisory Group to consider motivations for cyberbullying and the impact on those involved. Four tables were set up with markers and a sheet of flipchart paper with one question on each such as: “Why do young people cyberbully others?” and “What is the impact of cyberbullying on the perpetrator?”. Four

members sat at each table and recorded their ideas on the flipchart paper. After five minutes they were invited to rotate to the next table to consider the next question. The flipchart sheets were then displayed and discussed by the group.

Session Three - Study Design

The way that research is conducted, and the methods that are used to access young people's views can impact on those who are involved as research participants, on the quality and authenticity of data generated, and ultimately on prevention and intervention strategies and health outcomes (Grover, 2004; Lundy et al., 2011). As competent social actors, and 'digital natives' (Bennett et al., 2008), young people, in the role of co-researchers, can provide a unique perspective on the design, conduct and interpretation of cyberbullying research to facilitate the appropriate and meaningful participation of their peers as research participants (Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Therefore, in the third session the Advisory Group advised on the study sample, the recruitment of study participants, and data collection methods, tools, and strategies. At the end of Session Two, each member of the Advisory Group was given a draft copy of an information sheet and a consent form to review at home. They brought these to the third session where they presented their feedback on the accessibility of the content before approving the documents for use. The final task with regard to study design was to agree a protocol for the provision of support to any participant experiencing distress.

Through group discussion the Advisory Group considered the study sample. They concluded that the sample should include second (aged 14), fourth (aged 16), and fifth year students (aged 16-17). They recommended excluding those preparing for state exams (3rd and 6th year), as they would have constraints on their time, and also 1st year students. They felt that as 1st year students were new to the school they might be intimidated by the process or would not take the process seriously. The Advisory Group decided that they would like to be involved in the recruitment process suggesting that they would be better able than adult researchers to encourage the participation of their peers.

The Advisory Group debated the merits of various approaches to collecting qualitative data from the students in their schools. Members favoured focus groups, and the absence of school staff, to generate open and honest dialogue among participants. Research supports this approach indicating that the presence of peers reduces the emphasis on the adult-child relationship between the participant and the researcher (Heary & Hennessy, 2002). As the merits of single or mixed-sex groupings are not established, it was agreed that participants would be from the same year group, and that groups would be single or mixed-sex based on the population of the respective school (Gibson, 2007; Heary & Hennessy, 2002; Shaw et al., 2011). The Advisory Group recommended that ice-breakers and group contract development should be included at the beginning of each focus group.

Having developed an understanding of cyberbullying and related issues during the capacity building session, the Advisory Group reviewed the topic guide and adapted it for use with participants in the Irish secondary school setting. As the topic guide was originally used in one-to-one interviews, the questions were re-phrased to suit a focus group setting. To ensure confidentiality and encourage openness it was decided that participants would not be asked directly about their personal experiences. Prompts related to the taking and distribution of "*nude images*" through social media were added to the topic guide as the Advisory Group viewed this as a key issue for young people in Ireland (Appendix B).

Stage Two: Recruitment, Data Collection, and Preliminary Analysis

The next stage involved recruitment to the focus groups. Second (aged 14), fourth (aged 16), and fifth year (aged 16-17) students were purposively sampled. Those preparing for state examinations (third and sixth year) and first-year students new to the school were excluded. The lead researcher visited individual second, fourth, and fifth year classes with Advisory Group members in their respective schools and information sheets were distributed. Students were advised that the Advisory Group would not be aware of the identity of participants. Consent forms signed by young people and parents/guardians and returned to the schools were collected by the first author.

Focus groups were conducted in the format agreed with the Advisory Group. At the outset of each session, an icebreaker was conducted, and a group contract was developed to establish the accepted conditions of participation. The remit and limits of confidentiality were outlined, researchers reiterated that reports of the discussion would be anonymised and that participants could withdraw from the study at any point without consequence (Hill, 2006; Morrow & Richards, 1996). Exploratory, open-ended questions centred on the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying as well as coping mechanisms. In attempts to avoid socially desirable responses, participants were not asked to share their personal experiences (Mishna et al., 2009). However, if participants volunteered personal accounts they were not restricted from doing so. Nametags were provided to all participants, and to researchers, allowing the facilitator to invite by name those that were less vocal than others to comment. A de-briefing was conducted with participants at the end of each focus group to ensure their wellbeing prior to cessation. Participants were reminded that school guidance counsellors and the local youth service were available for support if needed and the first author's contact details and relevant helplines were also provided.

Consistent with the constructivist approach underpinning this research, an inductive thematic analysis was conducted (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Broom & Willis, 2007). Efforts to understand and address cyberbullying have been rooted in traditional anti-bullying methods and have lacked engagement with young people (Cross et al., 2015; Mishna & Van Wert, 2013; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Inductive analysis does not try to fit data into a pre-existing framework but rather allows the data to drive the analysis, therefore, this method allowed young people's voice to be brought to the fore. It has been noted that thematic analysis offers a toolkit for researchers who want to do robust analyses of qualitative data, but yet focus and present them in a way which is readily accessible to non-academics (Braun & Clarke, 2014). This made this approach particularly suitable for the purposes of this research as it allowed researchers to analyse the data systematically in a manner which was accessible to the members of the Advisory Group (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

Thematic analysis is a systematic method for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes or patterned responses within the dataset. Patterns are identified through a rigorous process of data familiarisation, data coding, theme development and revision. Further, although in-depth and complex, findings from this thematic analysis can be easily translated for young people, parents, and school personnel to enable informed, evidence-based efforts to address cyberbullying and support young people which is the ultimate aim of this research. Transcripts were imported to NVivo 12 (2016) and read repeatedly. Transcripts were open-coded to organise data into meaningful groupings and similar codes were categorised. A second researcher coded a sample of four transcripts (LM). Differing interpretations were considered before related categories were grouped and consensus was reached on summary domains within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Stage Three

Session Four - Interpretation of Findings

Preliminary findings were presented to the Advisory Group who were asked if they believed the identified topics to be reflective of young people's experience of cyberbullying and to identify what they perceived to be priority areas for intervention. The Carousel technique (Chambers, 2002) was then used to facilitate the Advisory Group in considering what needs to change in relation to these topics and how this change can be achieved. The members identified the non-consensual distribution of nude images and the mental health impacts of cyberbullying as priority areas for intervention. Subsequently, the themes associated with these domains were later carefully refined in an active and reflexive process by the author. Mind maps were used to to explore and express relationships within and across themes. Consensus on the final themes was reached by the multidisciplinary research team (RD, SM, MC, EA). The fully realised themes are presented in this thesis in Chapters Five and Six where existing theories are drawn on to explain the findings. Supplementary material related to these chapters can be found in Appendix C and D.

Session Five - Final Evaluation

Examples of collaborations with young people in health research are limited (Bird et al., 2013; O'Hara et al., 2017) particularly in regard to cyberbullying research (Cross et al., 2015; Spears, Taddeo, Barnes, et al., 2015; Tarapdar & Kellett, 2011) and it has been noted that young people are rarely asked about their involvement (Hill, 2006; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Moore et al., 2016). Informed by guidelines for evaluating participation work with young people and the checklist for Lundy's Model of Participation, data was gathered throughout the collaboration process and a final evaluation was conducted in Session Five (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015; Mainey, 2008a, 2008b). It was envisaged that the findings of the evaluation would indicate the acceptability of the approach to young people and inform future efforts to involve young people in research. Discussion topics focused on motivations for involvement, the role and impact of the Advisory Group, the suitability of the approach, and the impact on the young people involved. Additionally, participatory enabling techniques generated qualitative data which were co-analysed with the Advisory Group using the principles of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ritchie et al., 2013). The topic guide for the final evaluation as well as images depicting the participatory activities can be found in Appendix B.

- In Session One Advisory Group members were invited to write their 'hopes and fears' for their involvement on sticky notes which were then discussed. 'Hopes' can reveal motivations for participation while 'fears' indicate potential barriers to taking part (Chambers, 2002; Mainey, 2008a).
- At the end of Session Three, as was then custom on popular social media platform Twitter, the Advisory Group were invited to write their thoughts about the day in 140 characters or less. This concise feedback contributed to the on-going evaluation.
- On the final day, in small groups participants were invited to brainstorm the things that make a group work well and to write each idea on an individual sticky note. These sticky notes were then gathered and stuck to the wall before members conducted a thematic analysis of the content. Flip-chart paper containing a continuum labelled from "fully" to "not at all" was then

erected on the wall and members were invited to place the identified themes on the continuum to indicate the extent to which these elements were present in the current group. This enabled discussion about the barriers and facilitators to meaningful participation.

- Three flip charts containing a happy face (depicting positive aspects of the process), a sad face (indicating negative aspects), and a forward arrow (depicting areas for improvement) were put on the wall. Members were invited to populate the charts using sticky notes to convey their experiences. This generated discussion on the positive and negative aspects of the experience and identified areas for improvement.
- Participants were invited to write a short note to their friend who was looking for advice on participating in a similar project to generate data on their experience.

A framework approach (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013) was later applied by adult researchers to structure the findings and to establish the extent to which the elements Lundy's Model of Participation were present (Lundy, 2007). This enabled the exploration of a priori objectives but allowed themes to be identified through the Advisory Group's interpretation of the data. Handwritten data, photographs, interpretations and summaries produced throughout the sessions were recorded electronically along with notes taken by adult researchers and NVivo 11 was used to manage the data. Open-coding was conducted and codes were grouped according to identified themes. Themes were mapped onto a framework informed by Lundy's Model of Participation which outlines the four elements necessary for meaningful participation in accordance with Article 12 of the UNCRC: Space, Voice, Audience and Influence (Lundy, 2007; United Nations, 1989). Findings were sent via email to the Advisory Group for 'member-checking' (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Five members responded, all five were in agreement with the findings and no changes were suggested. At this point Advisory Group members had completed Transition Year and had commenced preparation for their state examinations, therefore, researchers did not follow up with those who chose not to engage.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Young people’s right to be safe within this research project was a priority throughout. Within this project careful consideration was given to both procedural ethics and ethics in practice. Procedural ethics involve the systematic norms, standards, and procedures generally required by an ethical review board while ethics in practice relate to the day-to-day ethical issues that arise in the doing of research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). National and local child protection policies, national guidelines on the conduct of ethical research with young people, and academic literature were identified and reviewed to establish best practices (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011, 2012; Felzmann, Sixsmith, O'Higgins, Ni Chonnachtaigh, & Nic Gabhainn, 2010; Hill, 2005; University College Cork, 2013). Key stakeholders including young people, youth workers, teachers, guidance counsellors, and designated liaison persons in the university and in each participating school, were consulted to ensure ethical research planning, design, and conduct. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Clinical Research Ethics Committee of the Cork Teaching Hospitals (Ref: ECM3 (uuu)) and the study was conducted in line with ethical and child protection guidelines (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011, 2012; Felzmann et al., 2010; Hill, 2005; University College Cork, 2013). In the first instance written consent was obtained from the principal of each participating school. Subsequently, written consent was obtained from parents/guardians and crucially from young people themselves. The remit and limits of confidentiality were outlined to all young people involved who were informed that reports of any discussion would be anonymised and that participants could withdraw from the study at any point without consequence (Hill, 2006; Morrow & Richards, 1996). A protocol for reporting concerns regarding participant welfare was agreed with each participating school in keeping with local operating procedures. The support of the multidisciplinary research team was available to young people, as well as school guidance counsellors and the local youth service. Helplines, approved by the Advisory Group, were also provided to research participants and a de-briefing was conducted with participants at the end of each focus group to ensure their wellbeing prior to cessation. All research data was stored in line with the requirements of the School of Public Health and National Research Foundation at University College Cork.

Engaged in reflexive research, researchers were mindful of their position in the research process, the complexity of undertaking research with young people, and of the power relations between adult researchers and the young people involved (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Morrow & Richards, 1996; Punch, 2002). Consequently, efforts were made throughout this study to ensure that the research process and outputs were representative of young people's interests, needs, and experiences. The implementation of a rights-based approach and the active involvement of young people in the research process facilitated the conduct of ethical and meaningful research (Lundy, 2007). Further the researcher's experience in working with young people enabled safe and effective decision-making in the field where researchers were responsible for dealing with the issues that could not be pre-empted or captured in an ethics application form, the every-day ethical conduct of the research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

2.8 Researcher's Reflexive Account

Qualitative researchers do not exist independently of the research they undertake, rather they are part of the social world that they study. They shape, and are shaped by, research processes and outcomes. The planning, design, conduct, and interpretation of qualitative research is influenced by a researcher's background, values, experiences and assumptions. Therefore, qualitative researchers are encouraged to recognise, examine, and understand the factors that influence their constructs of knowledge through critical reflection of their position in the research process (Creswell, 2014; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, Visitacion, & Caricativo, 2017). Here I reflect on my learning during this journey and my position within the research.

My disciplinary background is in the social sciences and my interest in the social determinants of health and wellbeing, and health-related research, began when I was studying social science as an undergraduate student. For my undergraduate dissertation I undertook qualitative research to explore community perspectives on youth suicide. Motivated to engage in my community by the stakeholders involved in the research I began to volunteer with my local youth service in 2010 and I remain involved with the service today. Owing to my experience in youth work I respect young people, their values and their views, I trust in their abilities, and I believe that they have a lot to offer if afforded the opportunity. Youth work in Ireland is described as informal education designed to aid and enhance the personal and social development of youth people through their voluntary participation (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2019). It is concerned with giving young people a voice in decision-making, building young people’s capacity to make informed decisions, providing learning opportunities to young people, and developing their ability to navigate personal and social relationships. In this role I have undertaken training to manage challenging behaviour in youth work as well as training in community development, and I participate in ongoing training in the national guidelines for the protection and welfare of children. Through youth work I have gained invaluable knowledge and skills in interacting with and advocating for young people. I have learned how to work in an ethical manner that ensures the welfare of young people and that also protects me as an adult working with minors. It was in this role that I was first introduced to reflective practice, the practice of reflecting on actions and experiences so as to engage in a process of continuous learning (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004), and I believe that this has contributed to my development as a reflexive researcher. Over the years my role in youth work has developed in line with my evolving knowledge, skills, and experiences. Having received training in the delivery of sexuality and relationship education I was employed to facilitate related programmes in youth services and schools. In the delivery of these programmes I have developed skills and techniques that enable me to engage effectively with young people on sensitive topics.

Building on my interest in the impact of social structures on health and wellbeing I chose to undertake postgraduate study in public health in 2011. During my course I related to and was inspired by the principles and practices of health promotion which closely mirror the principles of youth work (Rootman, Goodstadt, Potvin, & Springett, 2001). In 2012 I began working in the School of Public Health as a research assistant before commencing my PhD research in 2014. As a public health researcher, I believe in the merits of a pragmatic approach, in that I perceive that the best method, whether qualitative or quantitative, is that which best answers a research question. I believe that both approaches are complementary and have value. However, I acknowledge that my research interests and preferred methodologies sit within a constructivist paradigm and are influenced by person-centred and rights-based approaches which value empowering, participatory, collaborative, and equitable initiatives to improve health and wellbeing. Research of this nature is increasingly evident in the health sphere where the active involvement of patients and the public is promoted to improve the relevance, appropriateness, and effectiveness of research processes and outcomes (INVOLVE, 2018).

At the outset of my PhD journey, my primary supervisor, Professor Ella Arensman, and I discussed a number of research topics that were of interest to the National Suicide Research Foundation, where Professor Arensman is Scientific Director, and I was intrigued by her proposal to examine cyberbullying in young people. When reviewing the cyberbullying literature, my background, interests, and values, drew my attention to the absence of youth voice, and the potential benefit of including same, in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying which ultimately formed the basis of my research. Cyberbullying is a contemporary problem. Those seeking to tackle it, parents, teachers, policy-makers, and researchers (myself included), do not have direct experience of cyber technology in their youth. Therefore, to avoid misinterpretation of young people's experience and misguided intervention and prevention strategies I believe it is vital that efforts to understand and address cyberbullying are grounded in young people's constructs of the phenomenon. Involving young people in decision-making is common practice in youth work, it is the right of young people to have a say in the matters that affect their lives, and as such involving young people in the design, conduct, and interpretation of this research was a logical step for me. I strongly believe that this collaborative approach strengthened and validated the research process and findings while positively impacting the young people involved as well as the adult researchers and facilitators.

It is of note that at the outset of this project I grappled with the level of involvement afforded to Advisory Group members. I felt that the level of involvement facilitated did not meet the gold standard as it sat on rung six of eight on Hart's hierarchical ladder of participation, where the ultimate aim is for young people to initiate and lead on decisions without adult interference.(Hart, 1992) A number of factors contributed to the decision to share decision-making with young people rather than facilitate youth-led research, many of which derived from the sensitivity of the research topic and some of which originated from my own desire, and that of my supervisory team, to retain control over certain elements of the work. For example, I was conscious of my duty to protect the wellbeing of Advisory Group members and research participants; I was concerned that peer relations in schools might deter some young people from participating if members were involved in data collection; I worried that participant confidentiality would be broken if members knew participants' identity; and I was aware of the delicate process of navigating school involvement in research projects and keen to maintain a positive relationship. All of these issues were discussed openly and honestly with Advisory Group members which I think was key to managing expectations and building trust. Now on reflection, I do not necessarily believe that there is a gold standard level of participation but rather that there is an appropriate level of participation based on the nature of the research project and which is agreeable to all parties. I think that the collaborative approach utilised in this study worked well in balancing the power between adults and Advisory Group members. In sharing decision making I was able to ensure that young people's views were given due weight but that decisions were taken in their best interests where necessary. Given the potential vulnerability of young people involved in cyberbullying research I think that this was a reasonable middle-ground. Working within a children's rights-based framework provided justification for this approach and reassured me that our model was acceptable.

During this research I was very conscious of my role in protecting the young people involved and as such I gave considerable time, and effort, to ensuring their safety and wellbeing. I was fortunate to be able to draw on the experience of my multidisciplinary supervisory team in conducting research with young people in school and informal settings. I identified, reviewed, and incorporated national and local child protection policies, national guidelines on the conduct of ethical research with young people, and academic literature on best practices. I consulted key stakeholders including youth workers and teachers, as well guidance counsellors and designated liaison persons in the university and in each participating school to inform research planning, design, and conduct. I also developed contingency plans to manage disclosures of harm and to provide support to vulnerable young people if needed. However, I believe that it was my own experience in working with young people that had the most influence on the safe and ethical conduct of this research.

I now understand more clearly that while procedural ethics, the systematic norms, standards, and procedures generally required by an ethical review board are useful in ensuring an ethical methodology, they provide little support for decision-making in the field with young people where researchers are responsible for practical or as they are sometimes referred to, everyday ethics (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). I believe that through reflective youth work practice and reflexivity in my research I have developed an evidence-informed intuition that enabled me to identify and respond to the subtle and unpredictable situations which arose as a result of my interaction with young people and which could not be anticipated in applying for ethical approval. My experience also meant that I was sensitive to the vulnerability of young people and capable of identifying risk and taking appropriate action where necessary. It was possible to address some of these issues in the moment while some required further action. For example, all groups discussed the recent suicide of a female peer which they perceived had not been dealt with well by their schools. Many participants used the focus group as an opportunity to voice distress, frustration, fear, disbelief, and a longing for answers. As a facilitator at times it was a challenge to find a balance between maintaining the focus of the discussion and responding appropriately to evidently vulnerable young people. This was particularly difficult for me in one all-male group where it was evident that emotional pain and fear were abundant. Participants posed several questions about mental health and asked how to identify the signs and symptoms of depression and suicidal ideation in others and themselves. It is rare to be presented with such a captive male audience displaying their vulnerability and requesting help and information, this may have been as a result of the efforts made to create a safe space for participants. I found this challenging as in a youth work setting I would have taken the opportunity to answer their questions and propose further engagement on this topic. However, wearing my researcher hat I was conscious that my role was to remain impartial and so although my instinct was to respond I instead encouraged them to share their thoughts on the subject. During the de-briefing following this group I returned to these questions and detailed available supports to participants including the opportunity to arrange for a similar discussion to take place within the local youth service who collaborated on the project. I also told the participants that I was concerned for their wellbeing and that I would highlight this to the relevant school contact in a sensitive manner. In this instance and with a heavy-heart I was thankful for the opportunity to debrief with my supervisor Ms Mary Cronin. I notified the school of my concerns and I offered the support of my primary supervisor Professor Ella Arensman. With a background in clinical psychology and vast experience in the conduct of research with vulnerable groups, Professor Arensman was available throughout the research to provide expert advice on protecting the welfare of those involved. This taught me the value of a multidisciplinary team in promoting the safe and ethical conduct of research.

Data collection was a positive experience overall although not without challenges. I believe that the focus group format co-designed with the Advisory Group facilitated the open, honest, and insightful discussion that took place among participants. Although participants discussed similar issues in each session, the dynamic in each group was different. Techniques that I learned though youth work, including the process of developing a group contract to establish the fundamental rules of the group, were useful in building rapport. I was aware of the potential impact of my age and gender on data collection, I was concerned that participants would see me as one of the adults that they could not relate to or that male participants may find it difficult to discuss sensitive topics with me as a woman. However, I was surprised at times by how open the participants were, particularly the male participants in speaking about mental health and the practice of obtaining and distributing nude images. Despite the perception that young males are unlikely to discuss these issues I think that this demonstrates a desire and willingness to do so in the right space. Listening to young people discuss cyberbullying was at times shocking and in parts devastating. I was taken aback by the adult nature of some of the discussion points raised by younger participants, and it struck me that at their age my peers and I were much more naïve than the participants I spoke to. For me, this highlighted the importance of understanding lived experience. Insight into young people's realities can inform relevant and appropriate support efforts to help them navigate these issues. I was saddened by the grip that social media has on young people's lives and the level of anxiety that they live with as a result. It seems that the pressures of adolescence are amplified in and by the cyber world and I found myself thankful that this was not something that I experienced in my adolescence. I empathise with the young people who experience cyberbullying and the pressures of social media and with the parents and teachers concerned for their welfare.

On one occasion I found myself tested by the contributions of a 16-year-old male participant as his world view and mine collided. This participant expressed aggressive, racist, chauvinist, and homophobic views which were difficult to digest during the focus group. Positively, his views were challenged by his fellow participants, however, the energy cost of maintaining composure was significant. The opportunity to debrief with my co-facilitator after this focus group was critical in separating my personal feelings from the research process. Although I did not agree with this participant's position, during analysis I acknowledged his and others divergent views and considered them in my interpretation of the data.

During the analysis stage I was conscious that I wanted to do justice to the efforts of the Advisory Group and the research participants in my interpretation of the data. I felt that as they had been so sincere in their involvement and so honest in sharing their experiences that I had a responsibility to represent them accurately and fairly. During the evolution of my interpretation I valued the opportunity to converse with my multidisciplinary supervisory team. Voicing my thoughts and considering their perspectives enabled me to query my perceptions and assumptions and ultimately develop clarity in my thinking and writing. I am confident that Advisory Group members' further interpretation of identified themes strengthened and validated the research findings. I believe that it is possible to report on a number of issues related to young people's health and wellbeing based on the findings of this research, however, in keeping with the aim of giving young people a voice, the domains and themes presented in this thesis reflect the key concerns of the young people involved with regard to cyberbullying and their priority areas for intervention.

For me interacting with young people, Advisory Group members and research participants, was the highlight of this project and a very rewarding experience. I believe that my experience in youth work provided me with the tools and skills to engage ethically, productively, and meaningfully with the young people involved. The experience of my supervisory team in working with young people in schools and in participatory research methods was also an important factor in the success of the collaboration. Working with the Advisory Group was an uplifting, refreshing, and beneficial experience both personally and professionally. I was inspired by members' enthusiasm for the project and their desire to help young people affected by cyberbullying. I was impressed by their motivation to try something new and challenge themselves despite many revealing that they were nervous about taking part. I was humbled by their capacity for research and their ability to formulate and express their views so articulately. Members provided unique and valuable insight on the design, conduct, and interpretation of the research that without their involvement would not have been accessible.

Collaborators on this project not only included young people but also included four schools and a youth service. I am grateful for the support of the principals, teachers, guidance counsellors, home-school liaison officers, and youth workers that made this research possible and I am acutely aware that their contribution was vital to the project's conduct and success. Although many of the staff that I spoke to over the course of this project indicated that their actions to help young people are limited by the curriculum, timetabling, and limited resources, their participation in this project is testament to their desire and willingness to support young people. I believe that there is scope to increase collaboration between youth services and schools in Ireland in that youth services have the resources to provide relevant and appropriate support in a format that meets the wants, interests, and needs of young people.

This research demonstrates the benefits of conducting research *with* young people, rather than about, or for them. I am hopeful that this work will encourage others to collaborate with young people in efforts to improve health and wellbeing. Collaboration can help to ensure that research processes and resultant outputs are reflective of the experiences, interests, values, and norms of young people, thereby increasing the relevance and appropriateness of intervention and policy development with positive impact on those involved, researchers and young people alike. The young people who participated in this project hoped that by doing so they could help those affected by cyberbullying and I hope that with this work I have done my part for them.

2.9 Summary

This chapter outlined the overall research design of this thesis and the rationale for its use. Grounded in a constructivist research paradigm and informed by a rights-based approach qualitative and participatory approaches were used to meet the aims and objectives of this research, particularly the conceptualisation of cyberbullying from the perspective of young people and the identification of young people's priorities with regard to intervention development. The following chapters will describe the research process and relevant findings.

3 Young People's Conceptualisations of the Nature of Cyberbullying: A Systematic Review and Synthesis of Qualitative Research

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3.1 Abstract

Introduction

Cyberbullying is a serious public health problem facing young people. Adults do not have first-hand experience of being immersed in social media in their youth and this necessitates the inclusion of youth voice in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying. This study aimed to synthesise qualitative studies which had explored young people's conceptualisations of the nature of cyberbullying, with a view to informing conceptual and intervention development.

Methods

A systematic review and meta-ethnographic synthesis of qualitative studies was conducted. Nine databases were searched from inception to July 2018. The Critical Appraisal Skills Program assessment tool was used to appraise the quality of included studies.

Results

Of 4,872 unique records identified, 79 were reviewed in detail and 13 studies comprising 753 young people from 12 countries were included. 5 key concepts were identified: Intent, Repetition, Accessibility, Anonymity and Barriers to Disclosure. A "line of argument" illustrating young people's conceptualisation of cyberbullying was developed.

Conclusion

The significance of information and communication technology in young people's lives, and the complexity of the cyber world in which they connect, must be recognised. The distinctive features of cyberbullying identified in young people's characterisation can be used to inform bottom-up research and intervention efforts.

3.2 Introduction

Amidst a rapid growth in information and communication technology (ICT), cyberbullying has emerged as an international public health concern (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007). Involvement in cyberbullying impacts negatively on the physical, psychological, and social wellbeing of both victims and perpetrators (Kowalski et al., 2014). It is associated with anxiety, depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation, and reportedly has a stronger association with depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation than traditional bullying (Bottino et al., 2015; Fahy et al., 2016; Hamm et al., 2015; John et al., 2018; Katsaras et al., 2018; Nixon, 2014; van Geel et al., 2014). Cyberbullying, therefore, presents complex challenges for parents, teachers, and policy-makers and is a serious problem for young people whose lives are increasingly immersed in technology (Cassidy et al., 2013; Deschamps & McNutt, 2016; Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011; Marées & Petermann, 2012; Sigal, Tali, & Dorit, 2013).

In light of the known risks to young people’s health and wellbeing presented by cyberbullying, over and above that of traditional bullying, reviews highlight a need for targeted evidence-based, prevention and intervention efforts (Della Cioppa et al., 2015; Hutson et al., 2017; Mishna, Cook, Saini, et al., 2010). Cyberbullying is a contemporary problem and adults do not have first-hand experience of being immersed in social media in their youth, therefore, the development of appropriate interventions requires a thorough understanding of the nature of cyberbullying from the perspective of young people (Craig et al., 2013; Michie et al., 2011; Spears et al., 2011; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). As ‘digital natives’ young people are experts in their technology-rich lives and as such can provide unique insight (Bennett et al., 2008; Cross et al., 2015; Mishna & Van Wert, 2013; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). The omission of their perspective may lead to a misinterpretation of cyberbullying and subsequently to misguided prevention and intervention strategies.

The literature indicates that efforts to understand and address cyberbullying have been rooted in traditional anti-bullying methods and have lacked engagement with young people (Cross et al., 2015; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Smith, 2019; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). The longstanding definition of traditional bullying has three basic components: intent to harm, repetition and a power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator (Olweus, 1997). These components are consistently applied in cyberbullying research with the addendum that aggression is conveyed through electronic devices (Kowalski et al., 2014; Tokunaga, 2010). Debate about the application of these criteria to cyberbullying is ongoing and the absence of consensus on the conceptualisation and operation of the phenomenon has hindered efforts to understand and address it (Berne et al., 2013; Deschamps & McNutt, 2016; Dooley et al., 2009; Kowalski et al., 2014; Langos, 2012; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Thomas et al., 2015; Tokunaga, 2010).

Qualitative research offers the opportunity to gain insight into young people’s thoughts and feelings about themselves and their worlds. It allows for young people’s subjective definitions, meanings and experiences of cyberbullying to be brought to the fore (Barter & Renold, 2000; Mishna, 2004). Several studies have explored young people’s characterisations of cyberbullying using qualitative methods. These studies highlight that while there are commonalties between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, there are also a number of factors unique to cyberbullying due to the complexity of the cyber world and the ambiguous nature of some of the interactions which take place within it (Baas et al., 2013; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014). A synthesis of these qualitative studies has the potential to achieve greater conceptual understanding of cyberbullying from young people’s perspective (France et al., 2014).

This study reports the first meta-ethnography of young people’s conceptualisations of the nature of cyberbullying. Meta-ethnography uses rigorous qualitative methods to synthesise existing qualitative studies and aims to produce novel interpretations that transcend individual study findings; it is particularly suited to the development of conceptual models (France et al., 2019; France, Wells, Lang, & Williams, 2016). The objectives of this study were to systematically review, appraise, and synthesise the findings of qualitative studies of young people's conceptualisations relating to the nature of cyberbullying, with a view to informing conceptual and intervention development and the future conduct of cyberbullying research.

3.3 Methods

Design

The study was guided by the seven step model of meta-ethnography as developed by Noblit and Hare (1988) and informed by methodological accounts and worked examples (Atkins et al., 2008; Britten et al., 2002; Evans & Hurrell, 2016). Similar to traditional systematic reviews, this process can generate new insights, highlight gaps in our knowledge and show areas of data saturation where no further primary research is required (Campbell et al., 2011). Meta-ethnography focuses on constructing translations and interpretations that are grounded in people's everyday lives. It is commonly used in the synthesis of qualitative health-research and has been used successfully to synthesise qualitative studies of young people's perceptions and experiences (Pound, Langford, & Campbell, 2016; Wilkinson, Whitfield, Hannigan, Ali, & Hayter, 2016).

Review Team

The multidisciplinary research team comprised members from the clinical and social sciences. Of relevance, members have expertise in sociology, psychology, public health, youth work, mental health, systematic reviewing, along with qualitative and participatory research methods.

Locating relevant studies

The literature search focused on primary studies which had used qualitative methods to explore young people's perceptions of cyberbullying. Mixed-method studies were included if the qualitative component was clearly delineated. Studies including open-ended questions as a qualitative element in an otherwise quantitative questionnaire were excluded. In an effort to create a homogeneous sample, participants were required to be aged between 10 and 19, as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of adolescence, and recruited from the school setting (Patton, 2002; World Health Organisation, 2018). Studies with mixed samples, for example those including parents or teachers, were excluded. Studies were included if they were English-language, peer-reviewed and published in full.

A comprehensive search strategy (Appendix A) was devised using the qualitative PICo (Population, Interest, Context) formula (Stern et al., 2014). Numerous and varied labels have been ascribed to bullying through electronic devices, therefore, an initial sweep of the literature was undertaken to identify a list of relevant terms. The search terms included a combination of Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and keywords synonymous with the following: “adolescents” (Population), “bullying” (Interest) and “cyber” (Context). The initial search was developed in MEDLINE and adapted for use in other databases. Nine databases, encompassing a variety of relevant disciplines, including health, education and the social sciences, were searched from inception to July 2018: Academic Search Complete, CINAHL (the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature), Education Full Text, ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre), MEDLINE, PsycINFO, SocIndex, Social Science Full Text (all EBSCO) and EMBASE (Elsevier). The database search was supplemented by, a review of the reference lists of included studies, contacting authors of conference abstracts and key authors in the field, and a hand-search of four key journals: Computers in Human Behaviour, Cyberpsychology Behaviour and Social Networking, the Journal of Adolescence and the Journal of Adolescent Health.

Inclusion decisions

The citations and abstracts of retrieved studies were exported to reference management system EndNote X7 and duplicates were removed (EndNote, 2015). In the first instance one reviewer (RD) conducted a preliminary screening of titles to exclude records that obviously did not meet the inclusion criteria. Second, using a screening strategy devised in line with the inclusion and exclusion criteria, two reviewers (RD, KW) independently screened study titles and abstracts. Third, these reviewers independently reviewed the full-texts of the remaining studies. Discrepancies and indecisions at both stages were resolved through discussion between both reviewers and in consultation with two additional reviewers (EA, SM) where needed.

Quality appraisal of included studies

The review team actively read and re-read the included studies throughout the stages of the meta-ethnography (Lee, Hart, Watson, & Rapley, 2015). Two reviewers (RD, SM) read and independently appraised the quality of included studies using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative research (CASP Qualitative Appraisal Checklist, 2013). Disparities were resolved through discussion and consensus decisions. Studies were not excluded from the synthesis on the basis of the quality assessment but the process uncovered useful information about ethical procedures and methods of data collection and analysis.

Analysis and synthesis process

The full-texts of included studies were imported to QSR's NVivo 12 Software to facilitate the qualitative analysis and synthesis (NVivo 12, 2016). An inclusive approach to data extraction was implemented (Noyes & Lewin, 2011). One reviewer (RD) documented and tabulated all relevant contextual and methodological data presented in the included studies according to a standardised data extraction form (Appendix A). Relevant data included: study aims; study context; ethical review and consent procedures; youth involvement in the research process; sample size; participant characteristics; research methods. Focusing on the findings and discussion sections of the papers, first-order interpretations (views of the participants) and second-order interpretations (views of the authors) of the included studies were analysed thematically (Atkins et al., 2008). Three conceptually rich studies were identified and these were purposefully read and open-coded independently by two reviewers (RD, CS) to ensure inter-coder reliability and validity in the coding process (Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010). Codes and potential categories were discussed and differences in interpretation were considered by the review team to enhance the analytical process before one reviewer open-coded the remainder of the studies in chronological order.

One reviewer grouped codes into categories of shared meaning, using conceptual mind maps to explore and express relationships within and across categories (RD). All reviewers on the team (RD, SM, KW, CS, MC, EA) engaged in concept development allowing for the consideration of multiple perspectives. Following an iterative process five key concepts that reflected the main findings of the included studies were identified. A grid was developed to assist in identifying the relationship between studies and the contribution of each study to a key concept (Appendix A) (Britten et al., 2002). The constant comparative method common to qualitative research was employed to determine how the first and second order interpretations from each study related to each other and to the identified concepts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In order to retain the context of the primary data, geographical details, type of school, gender, and involvement in cyberbullying were explored systematically (Atkins et al., 2008). Similarities and differences in interpretations and contexts were pursued allowing for the reciprocal and refutational translation of studies into one another. Third-order interpretations (views of the reviewers) were developed by synthesising the translations in each key concept. These interpretations were then linked to create a “line of argument”, reflecting an overarching understanding of cyberbullying from the perspective of young people within the published literature. (Noblit & Hare, 1988). The “line of argument” is presented in the discussion section of this paper and is presented graphically in Figure 9. Reporting of the review and synthesis is informed by the eMERGe guidance on improving the reporting of meta-ethnography (France et al., 2019).

3.4 Results

Searches

The search process is expressed using the PRISMA Flow Diagram in Figure 3.1 (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009). The electronic database searches returned 4,872 unique records after duplicate removal. Four additional records were identified through other sources, two from the hand-search and two through consultation with experts in the area. Preliminary title screening excluded 2,781 records and title and abstract screening excluded a further 2,012 records. The full-texts of 79 articles were assessed for eligibility, 66 were excluded leaving 13 articles for inclusion in the meta-ethnography.

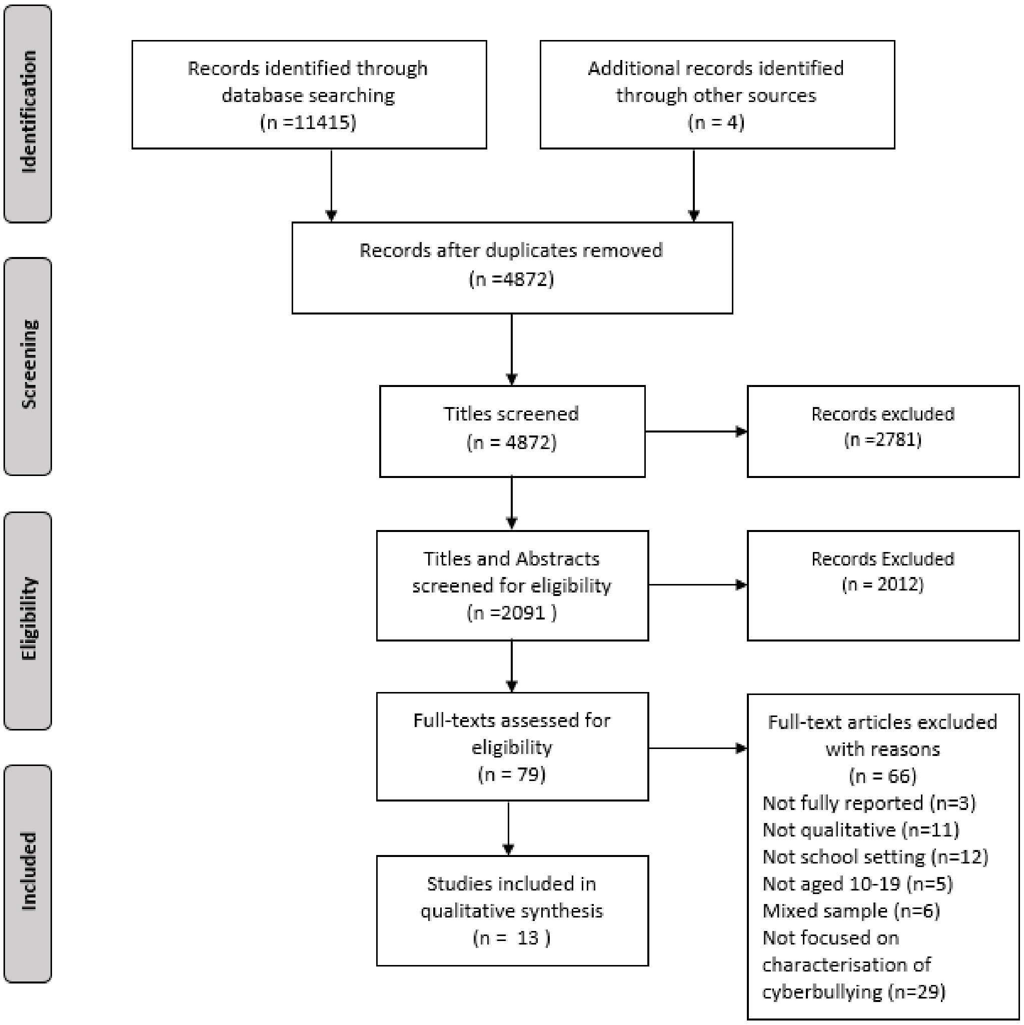
Identification
Screening
Eligibility
Included
Records identified through database searching (n =11415)
Additional records identified through other sources (n = 4)
Records after duplicates removed (n =4872)
Titles screened (n = 4872)
Records excluded (n =2781)
Titles and Abstracts screened for eligibility (n =2091)
Records Excluded (n = 2012)
Full-texts assessed for eligibility (n = 79)
Full-text articles excluded with reasons (n = 66)
Not fully reported (n=3)
Not qualitative (n=11)
Not school setting (n=12)
Not aged 10-19 (n=5)
Mixed sample (n=6)
Not focused on characterisation of cyberbullying (n=29)
Studies included in qualitative synthesis (n = 13)

Figure 3.1 PRISMA Flow Diagram

Study and Participant Characteristics

The characteristics of the 13 included studies are presented in Table 3.1. In summary, a total of 753 young people aged between 10-19 were involved as research participants across 12 countries. The majority of studies used focus groups for qualitative data collection (Berne et al., 2014; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Burnham & Wright, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Naruskov et al., 2012; Nocentini et al., 2010; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Three studies incorporated vignettes or scenarios to frame group discussion (Berne et al., 2014; Naruskov et al., 2012; Nocentini et al., 2010). In the one study which utilised a participatory approach, young people were involved in selecting topics for discussion and data were collected using various enabling techniques including writing and reciting stories (Baas et al., 2013). No other study reported the active involvement of young people in the research process.

Table 3.1 Study and Participant Characteristics (NS=Not Specified)

STUDY	YEAR	COUNTRY	STUDY AIM	SCHOOLS N=	SCHOOL TYPE; GRADE(S)	QUALITATIVE PARTICIPANTS N=	MALE/ FEMALE %	AGE	QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION	QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS
ABU BAKER	2015	Malaysia	Construct a grounded theory of cyberbullying phenomenon on the basis of adolescents' reports about their own cyberbullying incident	5	1 primary and 4 secondary schools	105	NS	12-18	Interviews and focus groups	Grounded theory
BAAS ET AL.	2013	Netherlands	Explore children's perspectives on the problem of cyberbullying	4	Elementary schools	28	M=54% F=46%	11-12	Drawing, writing and reciting stories and poems, magazine clippings, flipchart	Grounded Theory
BERNE ET AL.	2014	Sweden	Explore adolescents experiences of appearance related cyberbullying	2	One private and one public school; 9	27	M=52% F=48%	15	Focus groups	Thematic analysis
BETTS ET AL.	2016	UK	Examine technology use and conceptualisation of cyberbullying	2	One secondary school and one high school; 7-13	29	M=62% F=38%	11-15	Focus groups	Interpretive phenomenological analysis
BURNHAM & WRIGHT	2012	USA	Examine cyberbullying attitudes, beliefs and	2	Middle school; 7-8	13	M=62% F=38%	NS	Focus groups	NS

STUDY	YEAR	COUNTRY	STUDY AIM	SCHOOLS N=	SCHOOL TYPE; GRADE(S)	QUALITATIVE PARTICIPANTS N=	MALE/ FEMALE %	AGE	QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION	QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS
			opinions among middle school students.							
JACOBS ET AL.	2015	Netherlands	Gain insight into cybervictims experiences, perceptions, attitudes and motivations related to cyberbullying	5	Vocational secondary school; 1st Class	66	M=47% F=53%	12-15	Focus groups	Thematic analysis
MISHNA ET AL.	2009	Canada	Explore technology, virtual relationships and cyberbullying from the perspective of students	5	NS; 5-8	38	M=45% F=55%	NS	Focus groups	Grounded Theory
NARUSKOV ET AL.	2012	Estonia	Investigate students' perception and definition of cyberbullying	1	Secondary school; 6 & 9	20	M=50% F=50%	12&15	Focus groups	Thematic analysis
NOCENTINI ET AL.	2012	Italy, Spain & Germany	Examine students' perceptions of the term used to label cyberbullying, behaviours and the perception of definitional criteria	NS	NS	70	M=57% F=43%	11-18	Focus groups	Thematic analysis
PELFREY & WEBER	2013	USA	Address deficits in the literature	3	One high school and	24	M=33% F=67%	NS	Focus Groups	Thematic analysis

STUDY	YEAR	COUNTRY	STUDY AIM	SCHOOLS N=	SCHOOL TYPE; GRADE(S)	QUALITATIVE PARTICIPANTS N=	MALE/ FEMALE %	AGE	QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION	QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS
			around student perceptions of the actualisation, nature and impact of cyberbullying		two middle schools; 6-12					
SMITH ET AL.	2008	UK	Examine the nature and impact of cyberbullying in secondary schools	6	Secondary schools	47	NS	11-15	Focus groups	*"… content analysed to give main themes"*
TOPCU ET AL.	2013	Turkey	Investigate the perceptions of Turkish high school students about cyberbullying	1	High school; 9	7	M=86% F=14%	15	Interviews	Content analysis
VANDEBOSCH & CLEEMPUT	2008	Belgium	Develop a clear definition of cyberbullying that is congruent with the experiences and views of youngsters	10	General, technical and vocational schools	279	M=51% F=49%	10-19	Focus groups	*"analysis focused on the detection of general trends…differences in answers between sub-groups"*

Quality appraisal

Findings from the quality appraisal are outlined in Table 3.2. The overall quality of the included studies was high. Three studies were judged to be less valuable because of a lack of clarity across the CASP domains, particularly with regard to research methods (Burnham & Wright, 2012; Smith et al., 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Researcher reflexivity was found to be lacking in the majority of studies; only one study made explicit reference to the adult-child relationship and its impact on the research process (Mishna et al., 2009). Ethical issues were not discussed in four studies (Abu Bakar, 2015; Naruskov et al., 2012; Topcu et al., 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Five studies reported approval from an ethics committee (Berne et al., 2014; Burnham & Wright, 2012; Mishna et al., 2009; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008) while a Dutch study reported that ethical approval was deemed unnecessary by an ethics committee in the Netherlands (Jacobs et al., 2015). Seven studies discuss obtaining consent from a parent/guardian (Baas et al., 2013; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Burnham & Wright, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2008). Consent/assent from the young people involved was discussed in five of these cases (Baas et al., 2013; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Burnham & Wright, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009). One study reported consent from a teacher only (Berne et al., 2014) and another stated that consent protocols were followed but these were not specified (Pelfrey & Weber, 2014).

Table 3.2 Quality Appraisal of Included Studies

Authors and Year of Publication	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Has the relationship between the researcher and the participants been adequately considered?	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Is there a clear statement of findings?	How valuable is the research?
Abu Baker 2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Valuable
Baas et al. 2013	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valuable
Berne et al. 2014	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valuable
Betts et al. 2016	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unclear	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valuable
Burnham and Wright 2012	No	Yes	Unclear	Unclear	Yes	No	Yes	Unclear	No	Some value
Jacobs et al. 2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valuable
Mishna et al. 2009	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valuable

Naruskov at al. 2012	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unclear	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Valuable
Nocentini et al. 2012	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valuable
Pelfrey and Weber 2013	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Unclear	Yes	Valuable
Smith et al. 2008	No	Yes	Unclear	Yes	Unclear	No	Yes	Unclear	Yes	Some value
Topcu et al. 2013	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Valuable
Vandebosch and Cleemput 2008	No	Yes	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	No	No	Unclear	Yes	Some value

Translation of Included Studies

At a descriptive level young people equated cyberbullying with "*bullying via the Internet*" (Mishna et al., 2009; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). It was portrayed as repeated victimisation intended to harm or is perceived as harmful by the victim (Abu Bakar, 2015; Baas et al., 2013; Berne et al., 2014; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2015; Naruskov et al., 2012; Nocentini et al., 2010; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Topcu et al., 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). However, young people's characterisation of the phenomenon was complicated by the all-consuming and complex nature of the cyber world and the ambiguous nature of many interactions that take place within it (Baas et al., 2013; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014). No consensus was indicated on the sex of those involved in cyberbullying victimisation or perpetration. A Turkish study, conducted with young people active in cyberbullying, indicated that boys were more likely to be involved in cyberbullying (Topcu et al., 2013). However, a number of studies suggested that girls were more likely to be involved in cyberbullying as victims and perpetrators (Berne et al., 2014; Jacobs et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2008). A Dutch study suggested that "cyberbullying is in some respects like indirect bullying, in which girls are more often involved" (Jacobs et al., 2015).

Five meta-themes that reflect young people's conceptualisation of cyberbullying are reported below: Intent, Repetition, Accessibility, Anonymity and Barriers to Disclosure. Sub-themes are highlighted in ***bold italics***. Themes are illustrated by first-order interpretations (views of the study participants; *italicised quotations*) and second-order interpretations (views of the authors; non-italicised quotations). Contextual data is reported where available (Atkins et al., 2008).

Meta-Themes

Intent

The intent to harm was reported by several studies as a key element within young people's descriptions of cyberbullying (Berne et al., 2014; Naruskov et al., 2012; Nocentini et al., 2010; Topcu et al., 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Intent to harm was often motivated by revenge, sometimes for face-to-face bullying (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Burnham & Wright, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Naruskov et al., 2012; Topcu et al., 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Jealousy was also reported as motivating factor, commonly aimed at those considered popular (Baas et al., 2013; Berne et al., 2014; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2015; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Topcu et al., 2013). A 15 year-old girl in a Swedish study explained: "*If I wrote something mean then it would be like pure jealousy, because I would feel like…'She is so fucking perfect, she's got a perfect life and I want that too,'…Ah, but then I'll write a mean comment, so that she doesn't get such an actual perfect life*" (Berne et al., 2014, p. 529).

It was perceived that victims are intentionally targeted because of physical and social characteristics including appearance, sexuality, personality, friends (or lack of) and popularity (Baas et al., 2013; Berne et al., 2014; Jacobs et al., 2015; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Topcu et al., 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Young people perceived cyberbullies as insecure and recognized cyberbullying acts as enhancing the self-esteem of the perpetrator (Berne et al., 2014; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2015). Some studies reported that perpetrators of cyberbullying choose vulnerable victims, "which in their eyes may be anyone who is weaker or different" (Baas et al., 2013, p. 252), "because they are expected not to defend themselves" (Topcu et al., 2013, p. 147).

Intent, however, was portrayed as a "...subjective notion, with potential problems of interpretation for both victims and bullies" (Baas et al., 2013, p. 251). Several studies reported that the "***effect on the victim and his/her perception of the acts*** can…be more relevant" (Nocentini et al., 2010, p. 139) to young people in characterizing cyberbullying than the intention of the supposed aggressor (Abu Bakar, 2015; Berne et al., 2014; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Naruskov et al., 2012; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Several studies reported that online joking or banter, described as jocular interactions between friends with no malicious intent, has the potential to progress to cyberbullying because of potential ambiguity in how the message is interpreted by the recipient. This highlights that there may be *"a* difference between the way things [are] intended and the way things [are] perceived" (Baas et al., 2013; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Burnham & Wright, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008; Topcu et al., 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008, p. 501). One student from the Netherlands explained: *''I hacked my friend's MSN account for fun. He was at home sitting at his computer saying 'Sh*t, sh*t, sh*t, I can't log on anymore'. He calls me in panic saying his computer has been hacked. And then I say: 'Joke'!*" (Baas et al., 2013, p. 251). It was considered that if the act is perceived as a joke then it is not harmful, but if the target of a behavior is negatively impacted this was interpreted as cyberbullying (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Nocentini et al., 2010).

It appears that the interpretation of messages, and their effect on the recipient, is fluid and is influenced by contextual and external factors (Abu Bakar, 2015; Jacobs et al., 2015; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014). What might be agreeable one day may mean something very different to an individual "on a day where exogenous stressors…have created a sense of internal tension*"* (Pelfrey & Weber, 2014, p. 404). Some studies suggested that the relationship between those involved in banter online can influence the interpretation of the behavior (Baas et al., 2013; Betts & Spenser, 2017). Close friends may "grant each other some leeway in these exchanges" (Pelfrey & Weber, 2014, p. 405) and are more likely to interpret the behavior as a joke. Casual friends may not understand the intended humor and, consequently, "may take offense which leads to an escalating conflict (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Nocentini et al., 2010; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). However, a male high school student in the USA outlined: *"… we would be having fun but…they get offended by you or my friend gets offended, basically when it goes too far that's when it gets to escalate*" (Pelfrey & Weber, 2014, p. 404).

Many studies highlighted how the ***absence of face-to-face interaction*** in the cyber world contributes to the ambiguous nature of intent (Abu Bakar, 2015; Baas et al., 2013; Mishna et al., 2009; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008; Topcu et al., 2013). Due to the absence of physical cues it is difficult for victims to express their distress and, consequently, for perpetrators to recognize the impact of their actions

(Abu Bakar, 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008). Consequently, perpetrators “tend not to empathize with the victim” (Baas et al., 2013, p. 252) and this may lead to “more harshness in teasing and jokes” (Pelfrey & Weber, 2014, p. 404). Likewise, “victims may find it hard to estimate the presumed bully’s intentions, and therefore are more likely to interpret intended jokes as forms of cyberbullying” (Baas et al., 2013, p. 252). In the case of intentional harm, the absence of face-to-face interaction was thought to make it easier for the perpetrator, as explained by a 13 year-old girl in a Canadian study: *“...It's easier to say more hurtful comments because sometimes you don't like to say things to people's faces but when you do it for revenge on MSN or something...you do not see how much they are hurt by it”* (Mishna et al., 2009, p. 1224). One study, conducted in elementary schools in the Netherlands, noted that the ambiguous nature of intent gives perpetrators with harmful intentions the defense that their behavior was intended as a joke and, therefore, the power to “laugh away the seriousness of their actions” and avoid culpability (Baas et al., 2013, p. 252).

Repetition

Several studies reported that repetition indicates intentional cyberbullying. One-off or occasional events were depicted as tolerable and “not directly a form of cyberbullying”. However, it was perceived that if the behavior is repeated it cannot be unintentional. It was recognized that repetition differentiates between a joke and an intentional attack and characterizes the severity of the action. (Baas et al., 2013; Jacobs et al., 2015; Naruskov et al., 2012; Nocentini et al., 2010; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). An elementary school student in a Dutch study articulated that: “*Just a couple of pranks is not so bad, it can even be funny. But if it happens more often, it is not nice anymore”* (Baas et al., 2013, p. 251).

However, repetition in cyberbullying is complicated by the potential public nature of the acts with many studies noting that “***one-time actions may have repetitive effects”*** (Baas et al., 2013, p. 251) if executed in the public domain (Abu Bakar, 2015; Berne et al., 2014; Nocentini et al., 2010; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). It was highlighted that young people “may not be aware of the lasting consequences of one-time actions" (Baas et al., 2013, p. 251). Damaging material lingers online "for anyone to download or forward" (Abu Bakar, 2015, p. 339); students in Germany perceived that "each person receiving the information about the victim…counted as an additional incident" (Nocentini et al., 2010, p. 137). Cyberspace empowers young people to disseminate damaging content easily and quickly to a large number of people, therefore, it was deemed preferable to bully others through means of technology (Berne et al., 2014; Topcu et al., 2013). For the victim, the "nature of social media can exponentially increase the number of persons who view or hear about potentially embarrassing issues" (Pelfrey & Weber, 2014, p. 409). Visual cyberbullying, the distribution of disparaging pictures or videos online, was perceived as particularly damaging (Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Students in an Estonian study perceived visual cyberbullying as more serious as it was more humiliating and more convincing, they articulated that "*a picture can paint a thousand words*" (Naruskov et al., 2012, p. 333) It was suggested that perpetrators may share photos or say mean things about others to obtain peer rewards or a higher social status through the amusement of the wider audience (Berne et al., 2014; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Naruskov et al., 2012; Nocentini et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2008).

Accessibility

Several studies highlighted that ICT is the dominant medium of communication in young people's lives and is integral to young people's interactions and relationships. When away from the online environment young people report feeling isolated from social life (Abu Bakar, 2015; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Mishna et al., 2009; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Topcu et al., 2013). Some studies characterized young people as dependent on ICT (Abu Bakar, 2015; Mishna et al., 2009). A 14 year-old girl in the UK asserted: "*I actually don't think people can live without technology now…*" (Betts & Spenser, 2017, p. 24). It was reported that the omni-present nature of ICT facilitates ***relentless cyberbullying*** and distinguishes it from traditional face-to-face bullying. Traditional bullying is believed to have a clear cut-off point but cyberbullying can happen at any time of the day or night reflecting young people's continual engagement with ICT (Abu Bakar, 2015; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014). A secondary school student in London highlighted that *"it's constant all the time"* and "*really hard to escape"* (Smith et al., 2008, p. 381). Many studies reported that cyberbullying takes place more often outside of school and is commonly experienced while at home, facilitated by technological access and insufficient adult monitoring and regulation (Burnham & Wright, 2012; Mishna et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008). A Canadian study highlighted that an expectation of safety in the home can make cyberbullying feel particularly invasive. A 10-year-old boy from this study articulated: *"You can't physically hurt somebody through cyberbullying, but you can definitely hurt your feelings. You can say many hurtful things and make you feel really sad, because you're in your own safe place. You're in your home"* (Mishna et al., 2009, p. 1224).

It was highlighted that, enabled by technology, ***victimization traverses the physical and cyber worlds*** which can result in *"non-stop bullying"* (Mishna et al., 2009, p. 1224). A large overlap between cyberbullying and traditional bullying was noted, with victims sometimes targets of both (Jacobs et al., 2015; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Several studies described cyberbullying as an extension of school bullying with perpetrators empowered to continue their harassment in cyberspace after the school day (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Mishna et al., 2009; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Topcu et al., 2013). Conversely, some young people highlighted that issues that begin in cyberspace can sometimes result in physical violence in the school setting (Baas et al., 2013; Berne et al., 2014; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014). A Dutch study noted that for young people the "fear of possible escalations to physical violence appeared to be even stronger than the fear of cyberbullying itself" (Baas et al., 2013, p. 250). A study conducted in the USA described the "cyclical nature" of cyberbullying which "often begins in cyberspace, becomes apparent within the school walls, and revolves back to cyberspace again" (Pelfrey & Weber, 2014, p. 411).

Anonymity

It was suggested that knowing the identity of the individual behind a cyberbullying act "made it possible to put the action into perspective…and to react accordingly"

(Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008, p. 502). However, anonymous acts can make it difficult for a victim to determine a perpetrator's identity (Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Several studies reported that the unknown created by anonymity contributed to the insecurity, distress, fear, and powerlessness experienced by victims. This was recognized by young people as a large part of the power and impact of cyber bullying (Baas et al., 2013; Mishna et al., 2009; Naruskov et al., 2012; Nocentini et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008).

The anonymity afforded by social media enables perpetrators to engage in cyberbullying acts with little fear of repercussion (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Mishna et al., 2009; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008; Topcu et al., 2013). The absence of consequence "means that behavior is no longer constrained by the norms and rules of social interactions" (Betts & Spenser, 2017, p. 31; Mishna et al., 2009; Topcu et al., 2013). It was reported that anonymity can "…empower those who were unlikely to become real life bullies or who were even victims of traditional bullying", to engage in bullying behaviors (Abu Bakar, 2015; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008, p. 502). Perpetrators of traditional bullying are often characterized as having a strong physique or as belonging to a powerful group. However, these characteristics are irrelevant in the cyber world where the ability to be anonymous means that "everyone can harass others regardless of their conditions as long as they are online" (Abu Bakar, 2015, p. 401). This perspective was illustrated by a female victim of cyberbullying in a Dutch study who said "*Yes* ***everybody can be a bully****. Whether it's someone who's very small with glasses and whatever, or someone who's very tall and who looks like a bully…"* (Jacobs et al., 2015, p. 58). Similarly, young people indicated that "everyone is equally likely to be the target of cyber bullying" (Berne et al., 2014; Topcu et al., 2013, p. 146). A Belgian study outlined that "in some instances, persons who were perceived as more powerful in real life" and therefore, unlikely to be victims of bullying in the physical world, "were the target of cyber-attacks" (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008, p. 502).

Many studies reported that although the perpetrators of cyberbullying were often perceived as anonymous, cyberbullying commonly takes place in the context of young people's ***social groups and relationships*** (Abu Bakar, 2015; Baas et al., 2013; Berne et al., 2014; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Topcu et al., 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Young people in a Belgian study who perpetrated cyberbullying explained that "they had mostly operated anonymously or disguised themselves and that their victims were often people they also knew in the real world" (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008, p. 501). It was noted that victims sometimes discover the identity of an anonymous perpetrator (Baas et al., 2013; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008) and it was suggested that the impact can be more severe if the perpetrator is a familiar person (Baas et al., 2013; Naruskov et al., 2012). Many studies reported that anonymous cyberbullying within peer groups often takes the form of hacking and impersonation (Abu Bakar, 2015; Baas et al., 2013; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2015; Naruskov et al., 2012; Nocentini et al., 2010; Topcu et al., 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008); as described by one ten-year old girl in a Canadian study: *"…sometimes cyber bullying is some friends that are really close to you and they want to get back at you and so…they hack into your account and email and say mean things to other people and other people will think it's you who did it."* (Mishna et al., 2009, p. 1225).

Barriers to Disclosure

Some young people perceived ***anonymity*** and the perpetrators ability to evade responsibility as a barrier to telling parents or teachers, as they make it impossible for the victim to prove the cyber incident or to identify the perpetrator (Mishna et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008; Topcu et al., 2013). Young people highlighted that engaging in anonymous cyberbullying allows perpetrators to use the "excuse that someone had hacked in to their account or used their computer whilst they were still logged in" (Betts & Spenser, 2017, p. 28). This was illustrated by a 13-year-old girl from an urban school in a Canadian study "*If you say it in person, then that's you saying it for sure, but if you say it over MSN or something and they tell on you, you* *can easily just say someone hacked your account or something. It was someone else pretending to be you*" (Mishna et al., 2009, p. 1225).

Several studies highlighted a tension between the desire to disclose their experiences of cyberbullying to adults and young people's ***fear of the consequences of reporting*** (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Burnham & Wright, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008). Young people perceived adults as oblivious to the cyber world and inept in dealing with cyber issues (Baas et al., 2013; Burnham & Wright, 2012; Mishna et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008); as a result, they often remained silent about cyberbullying. A female victim of cyberbullying from a Dutch study shared: "*Most of the time I don't talk about it to no one, really no one and I keep it to myself*" (Jacobs et al., 2015, p. 56). Young people were fearful of parents ill-considered actions in response to a report of cyberbullying, afraid that adult intervention would lead to an intensification of cyberbullying or an escalation to physical violence (Baas et al., 2013; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Burnham & Wright, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008). There was divergence in young people's perception of adults' ability to help when they were informed about cyberbullying. Some young people were satisfied that they had received appropriate support while others reported that they did not get any help (Burnham & Wright, 2012; Topcu et al., 2013). This was articulated by a male victim of cyberbullying in a Dutch study: "*…I went to a teacher; however they hardly did something about it. They only said 'We'll keep an eye out' and even that they didn't do"* (Jacobs et al., 2015, p. 55).

The desire to be constantly connected was a barrier to seeking support (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Pelfrey & Weber, 2014). Some studies highlighted young people's reluctance to report cyberbullying to adults for fear that their access to ICT would be removed. The restriction of access was perceived as a punishment, even if undertaken as a supportive action, as it meant the "loss of their connection with their social world" (Baas et al., 2013; Betts & Spenser, 2017; Mishna et al., 2009, p. 1226). The significance of the removal of the internet in young people's lives was exemplified by an elementary school student in a Dutch study: "*losing your Internet connection is like losing your soul"* (Baas et al., 2013, p. 252).

3.5 Discussion

Efforts to understand and address cyberbullying have been predominantly top-down and rooted in the concept of traditional bullying, with the appendage that the bullying takes place through electronic devices (Tokunaga, 2010). This suggests that the two types of bullying differ only in the medium through which harm occurs and, therefore, does not account for the contextual impact of the cyber world. Findings from this meta-ethnography reveal that the fundamental role of ICT in young people's lives, and the complexity and ambiguity of the cyber world in which they connect, should not be disregarded. This study contributes a bottom-up perspective to the conceptualisation of cyberbullying by channelling and interpreting young people's voices from published qualitative studies. In accordance with the meta-ethnographic method, the "line of argument" presented below extends beyond the findings of the individual qualitative studies included in this review and reflects an overarching interpretation of young people's perceptions of the nature of cyberbullying (Noblit & Hare, 1988). The line of argument is presented graphically in Figure 3.2.

Line of Argument

Cyberbullying, largely, occurs within young people's social groups and relationships and often while young people are in their homes. The prevalence and significance of technology in young people's lives can mean that cyberbullying is a risk to which many young people are exposed. Exposure to the risk of cyberbullying is outweighed by young people's desire for continuous digital connectivity and fear of social disconnection. Cyberbullying is highly complex in nature, characterised by a degree of ambiguity not seen within traditional conceptualisations of bullying and by the intersection of a range of possible components, all of which do not have to be present for it to occur. A power imbalance influenced by the physical, psychological, and social characteristics of perpetrators and victims may exist where the perpetrator is identifiable. However, the nature of the cyber world alters the distribution of power and within cyberbullying power relations can be identified as fluid and changeable. Features such as anonymity, ambiguity, accessibility and public exposure are experienced as disempowering by victims and empowering by perpetrators. Young people believe cyberbullying can occur whether or not there is intent to harm; they conceptualise its occurrence based on the seriousness of victim impact, as well as intent. Intentional cyberbullying is motivated by internal factors including jealousy and revenge and also by the features of the cyber world which serve to empower perpetrators. Negative impact is determined by victims' perception of events as influenced by the same cyber features and by contextual and external factors which shape victims' interpretation of online interactions. These include their relationship with the sender or exogenous factors such as school and family stressors. Repetition may or may not be required for cyberbullying to occur. One action can constitute cyberbullying, due to the degree of rapid and widespread public dissemination facilitated by ICT. Further, negative anticipation regarding the consequences of reporting cyberbullying to adults, such as an escalation of bullying or the restriction of ICT access, can deter victims from seeking social support, thereby, maintaining a cycle of victimisation that in some instances spans the physical and cyber worlds.

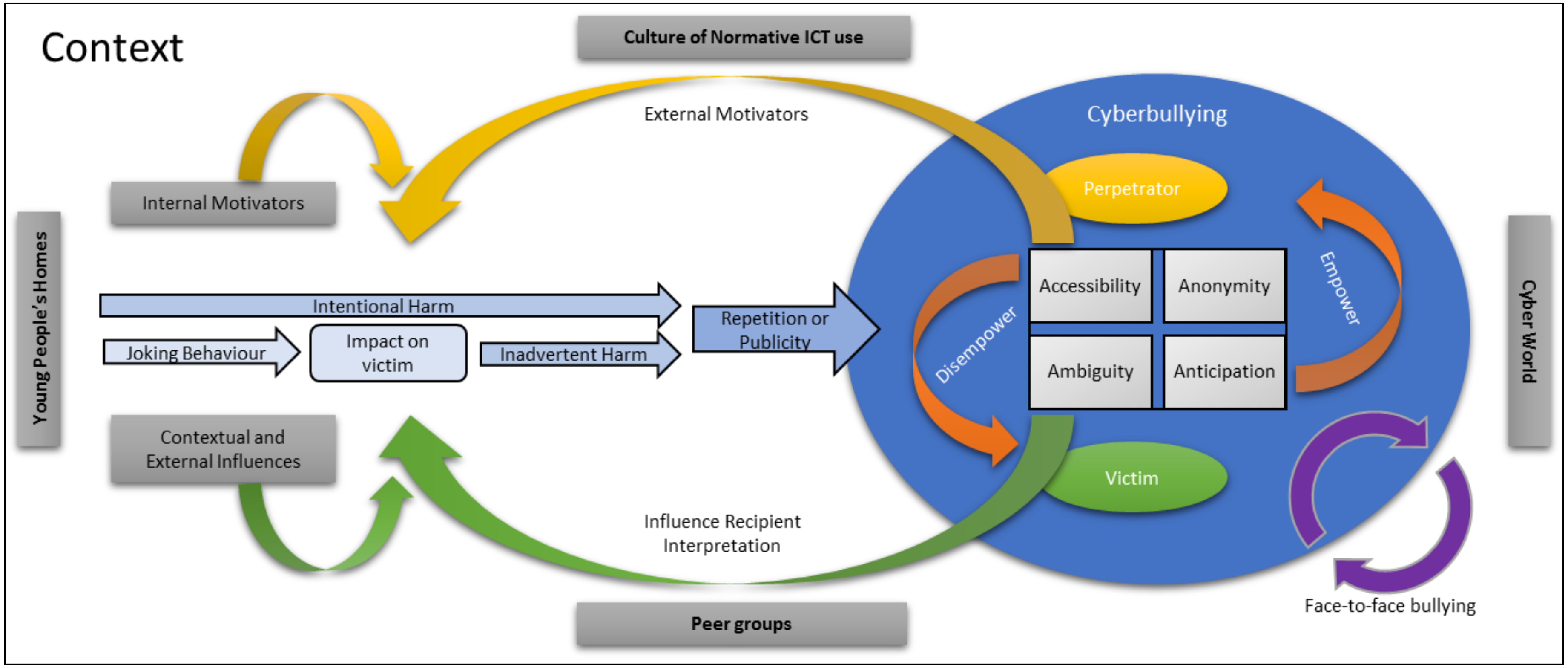
Context
Culture of Normative ICT use
External Motivators
Cyberbullying
Internal Motivators
Perpetrator
Young People's Homes
Accessibility
Anonymity
Empower
Intentional Harm
Repetition or Publicity
Disempower
Joking Behaviour
Impact on victim
Inadvertent Harm
Ambiguity
Anticipation
Cyber World
Contextual and External Influences
Victim
Influence Recipient Interpretation
Face-to-face bullying
Peer groups

Figure 3.2 Young People's Conceptualisation of Cyberbullying

Comparison to previous research

Consistent with previous studies, this meta-ethnography indicates that the unique features of cyber technology increase the severity of cyberbullying and may instil feelings of powerlessness and lack of control in victims (Dooley et al., 2009; Dredge, Gleeson, & de la Piedad Garcia, 2014; Langos, 2012; Nixon, 2014; Sticca & Perren, 2013; Tokunaga, 2010). Cyberbullying may generate a multi-dimensional experience of fear for its victims, including fear based on the nature of abusive content and commonly, the anonymity of the perpetrator; fear of public humiliation arising from the dissemination of negative content; fear of missing out or social isolation if one chooses to digitally disconnect; fear of possible negative consequences if one reports cyberbullying, including escalation to physical bullying or the restriction of ICT access by adults. Such a multi-dimensional experience of fear has the potential to create very negative psychological and physical consequences for young people during the major developmental phase which is adolescence. It is possible that these factors contribute to the exacerbated effect on young people's health over and above that of traditional bullying (Katsaras et al., 2018; Kelly, Zilanawala, Booker, & Sacker, 2019; Kowalski et al., 2014; Sticca & Perren, 2013; van Geel et al., 2014).

Debate regarding the presence of a power imbalance in cyberbullying is ongoing (Peter & Petermann, 2018). The notion that power is constructed by technology has been proposed in previous studies, however, there is no consensus on the factors that contribute to power relations in cyberbullying (Cassidy et al., 2013; Dooley et al., 2009; Dredge, Gleeson, & Garcia, 2014; Kowalski et al., 2014; Langos, 2012; Menesini et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2015; Vaillancourt et al., 2017). Power in the physical world is delineated by the physical, psychological, and social characteristics of perpetrators and victims but consistent with previous studies, findings suggest that in the cyber world the potential for anonymity, including the ability to assume a new persona, means that these characteristics are less relevant (Dooley et al., 2009; Langos, 2012; Thomas et al., 2015; Tokunaga, 2010). This synthesis adds that young people's habitual use of cyber technology and the features of the cyber world can establish and maintain asymmetrical power relations. Brey's (2008) theory of the technological construction of power signals that power relations do not require intentionality but the exercise of power always does. Findings from this synthesis indicate that many young people perceive that the intentional perpetrator has the ability to exercise power at their discretion by engaging the characteristics of the cyber world: anonymity, ambiguity, and accessibility including public access to the victim. Furthermore, as reflected in previous research, findings from this synthesis indicate that young people are reluctant to seek support, particularly from adults who they perceive as ignorant to the cyber world. (Cassidy et al., 2013; Fenaughty & Harré, 2013; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Vaillancourt et al., 2017). This may influence power relations increasing the capacity of perpetrators to sustain harassment without consequence while instilling a sense of powerlessness and lack of control in the victim.

Findings from this synthesis illustrate that young people acknowledge the intent to harm but more strongly judge the impact on the victim when characterising cyberbullying. Intentional harm is common to existing conceptualisations of cyberbullying and to the established definition of traditional bullying on which they are based (Olweus, 1997; Peter & Petermann, 2018; Tokunaga, 2010). However, findings from this synthesis indicate that intent is a subjective concept with problems of interpretation for both victims and perpetrators. The effect on the victim has not been included in popular definitions of cyberbullying which focus on the acts of the perpetrator (Tokunaga, 2010). Echoing a previous review, findings from this synthesis indicate that deciphering intent and impact in the cyber world is complicated by the absence of verbal and visual cues, leading to difficulties in interpretation (Cassidy et al., 2013). Perpetrators inability to witness the victim’s reaction may diminish their empathetic response potentially leading to more harshness in the cyber behaviours that contribute to either intentional or inadvertent harm. Disinhibition in the cyber context encourages young people to say and do things that they would not ordinarily because self-boundaries and norm adherence are reduced in the absence of face-to-face interaction (Suler, 2004; Voggeser et al., 2018).

Repetition is a well-established criterion for traditional bullying, however, debate regarding its nature and importance in characterising cyberbullying is ongoing

(Dooley et al., 2009; Langos, 2012; Olweus, 1997; Tokunaga, 2010). Findings from this synthesis indicate that repetition is key in young people's characterisation, differentiating one-time acts of aggression or joking behaviour from cyberbullying. However, they support the interpretation that the nature of repetition is altered in cyber space where it can occur in the form of direct multiple attacks by the perpetrator and/or through the perpetrators execution of an act in the public domain where one-time actions can have repetitive effects (Cassidy et al., 2013; Cuadrado-Gordillo & Fernández-Antelo, 2016; Langos, 2012). Findings from this synthesis indicate that young people perceive public cyberbullying as more harmful than that which is hidden from others' attention. This echoes previous research which indicates that a victims lack of control over the situation may be a core aspect in the evaluation of bullying severity (Sticca & Perren, 2013).

Implications

This synthesis highlights a number of opportunities for policy and intervention development. The subjectivity of victim impact raises concerns about the appropriateness of this criterion in characterising cyberbullying. However, the significance of negative impact in young people's conceptualisation, which is echoed in previous qualitative research, indicates that it is a key factor in their experience and, therefore, warrants recognition conceptualisation and intervention efforts (Dredge, Gleeson, & Garcia, 2014). Repetition, including public acts of aggression should also be considered in any efforts to understand or address cyberbullying. This synthesis indicates that a power imbalance is not a prerequisite characteristic of cyberbullying but the features of the cyber world can empower perpetrators and disempower victims simultaneously and increase the severity of cyberbullying. Intervention efforts, therefore, should focus on addressing the factors that contribute to asymmetrical power relations: young people's dependence on ICT, the accessibility of victims, the ambiguity of cyber communication, public victimisation, anonymous perpetration and adult responses to disclosure.

Working with young people to understand and navigate the cyber world has been shown to be more effective in protecting them from victimisation than implementing restrictions on ICT access (Elsaesser, Russell, Ohannessian, & Patton, 2017). Enabling young people to engage safely and appropriately with the cyber world, developing cyber communication skills, encouraging empathy, and highlighting the challenge of interpretation in this context, may reduce escalations to cyberbullying. Previous research indicates that social support may mitigate the negative impact of cybervictimisation (Machmutow et al., 2012). Potential support networks require resources to provide an appropriate and effective response to disclosures of cyberbullying. Young people who perceive that they have been victimised should be provided with appropriate support regardless of the prevailing definition of cyberbullying. This synthesis supports the view that efforts should focus on the education and empowerment of young people as well as peers, parents, and school personnel, however, further qualitative research is needed to clarify young people's needs and to establish the best approach (Cassidy et al., 2013; Fenaughty & Harré, 2013). Victims must be enabled to seek support without fear of consequence, they should be listened to and any course of action should be developed collaboratively with them and, importantly, acted upon. Where cyberbullying is motivated by jealousy the promotion of alternative avenues for building self-esteem may be of benefit, while training in conflict resolution and positive coping skills may serve to mitigate the risks of cyber-revenge.

The complexities involved in conducting research with young people are widely discussed. The conduct of ethical and meaningful research is complicated by the power dynamic in the adult-child relationship, informed consent procedures, the context in which research takes place, and the presence of gatekeepers, particularly in the school setting (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Hill, 2006). While word limits imposed by journals may impede the reporting of qualitative research, nonetheless, consideration of these issues was poorly reported in some of the included studies and there was significant variation in the consent procedures employed. Given the potential vulnerability of those involved in cyberbullying, the conduct and reporting of ethical and meaningful research with young people must be a priority in future studies.

Strengths and Limitations

The process of retrieving qualitative studies is a challenge due to inconsistencies in indexing and, therefore, it is possible that a potentially relevant study was omitted (Shaw et al., 2004). However, a comprehensive search strategy was implemented to reduce this risk. A key strength of this review is the systematic and rigorous approach employed, including the critical appraisal of the included studies. Cyberbullying research spans multiple disciplines, hence, searches were conducted in education and social science databases, as well as those with a health focus. Steps were taken to ensure reliability in the retrieval of studies, quality appraisal and analysis. Efforts were made to retain the nature and context of the original studies throughout data extraction, analysis and reporting (Atkins et al., 2008). However, it must be recognised that analysis and interpretation is limited by the contextual and conceptual thinness of some of the included studies (France et al., 2014). As discussed above, this may be influenced by the constraints imposed on the reporting of qualitative research by many journals restrictive word counts.

In this study the collaboration of a multidisciplinary team ensured multiple perspectives were considered. This enhanced the analysis of the included studies, contributing to a novel and in-depth interpretation of young people's perspective which highlights the nuances in their conceptualisations of cyberbullying. This meta-ethnography is, therefore, a useful complement to the existing knowledge base (Peter & Petermann, 2018).

3.6 Conclusion

The novelty of cyberbullying requires that young people, as digital natives, are central to efforts to understand and address it. This synthesis draws from young people's contributions to develop a deeper insight into this phenomenon; it highlights the central role of ICT in young people's lives and how the complexity and ambiguity of the cyber world in which they connect, should not be disregarded. The distinctive features of young people's conceptualisation of cyberbullying identified in this study can be used to inform bottom-up research and intervention efforts in the school setting. Given the potential negative impact on young people's health and wellbeing, further primary qualitative research is needed to expand youth input in this discourse, particularly in regard to intervention design. It is the right of young people to have a say in matters that affect them (United Nations, 1989) and collaborating with young people as co-researchers in cyberbullying research may enhance efforts to ethically and meaningfully channel youth voices. Consideration of the intricacies of research with young people and improved reporting by qualitative researchers, will help to inform best practice in cyberbullying research.

4 Involving young people in cyberbullying research: The implementation and evaluation of a rights-based approach

Authors

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4.1 Abstract

Introduction

Cyberbullying is an international Public Health concern. Efforts to understand and address it can be enhanced by involving young people. This paper describes a rights-based collaboration with young people in a qualitative exploration of cyberbullying. It describes the establishment, implementation and evaluation of a Young Person's Advisory Group as well as identifying the impact on the research process and the young people involved.

Methods

Sixteen post-primary school students met with researchers on five occasions in a youth centre. Sessions focused on building the young people's capacity to engage with the research, designing the qualitative study, interpreting study findings and evaluating the collaboration process.

Results

The Advisory Group highlighted a lack of understanding and appropriate action with regard to cyberbullying but believed that their involvement would ultimately help adults to understand their perspective. Evaluation findings indicate that members were supported to form as well as express their views on the design, conduct and interpretation of the research and that these views were acted upon by adult researchers. Their involvement helped to ensure that the research was relevant and reflective of the experiences, interests, values and norms of young people.

Conclusion

Young people can contribute a unique perspective to the research process that is otherwise not accessible to adult researchers. The approach described in this study is a feasible and effective way of operationalising young people's involvement in health research and could be adapted to explore other topics of relevance to young people.

4.2 Introduction

Cyberbullying is an international public health concern and is a serious problem facing young people today (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015). There is a lack of consensus regarding conceptual and operational definitions of cyberbullying, however, in an attempt to unify definitional inconsistencies in the literature it has been defined as "…*behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others*" (Tokunaga, 2010). It is estimated that 10-40% of children and young people have experienced cybervictimisation (Kowalski et al., 2014). Cyberbullying has a detrimental effect on the psychological, physical and social wellbeing of both victims and perpetrators (Bottino et al., 2015; Kowalski et al., 2014; Nixon, 2014). It is associated with anxiety and suicidal behaviour (fatal and non-fatal) and has a stronger relationship with depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation than traditional bullying (Kowalski et al., 2014; Nixon, 2014; van Geel et al., 2014). Despite the negative impact on the health of young people, evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies are lacking (Cantone et al., 2015; Della Cioppa et al., 2015). Cyberbullying is a contemporary problem facilitated in recent years by a rapid growth in information and communication technology. Adults do not have first-hand experience of being immersed in social media in their youth, therefore, the development of effective interventions requires a thorough understanding of cyberbullying (Craig et al., 2013; Michie et al., 2011) from the perspective of young people (Spears et al., 2011; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Existing research is predominantly quantitative in nature and young people's voice is largely absent from the current discourse. The omission of young people's perspective may lead to a misinterpretation of their needs and misguided prevention and intervention strategies (Spears & Kofoed, 2013; Spears et al., 2011). It has been suggested that collaborating with young people as co-researchers could enhance efforts to understand and address cyberbullying (Cross et al., 2015; Spears & Kofoed, 2013; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013).

Patient and public involvement in research is increasingly expected to be an inherent part of research development. It is defined as "*research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them*" and refers to the active involvement of patients/public in research "*rather than the use of people as participants in research or as research subjects"* (INVOLVE, 2018). It is founded on the principle that people have a right to express their views on matters that affect their lives and it has been shown to enhance the quality, appropriateness and relevance of health research (Brett et al., 2014a; Staley, 2009). Involvement encompasses collaboration which refers to an on-going partnership between researchers and patients/public and shared decision making (Bird et al., 2013). This approach is thought to be more effective than once off consultations or sporadic involvement in the research process (Brett et al., 2014a). As enshrined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), it is the right of young people to have a say in matters that affect them (United Nations, 1989). Collaboration with young people has the potential to increase the relevance of research, enhance methodological rigour, provide rich data on cyberbullying, and positively impact on the young people involved (Bird et al., 2013; Head, 2011; McLaughlin, 2006; Moore et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2002; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015). The way that research is conducted and the methods that are used to access young people's views can impact on those who are involved as research participants and ultimately on health outcomes (Lundy et al., 2011). As competent social actors, and 'digital natives' (Bennett et al., 2008) young people, in the role of co-researchers, can provide a unique perspective on the design, conduct and interpretation of cyberbullying research to facilitate the appropriate and meaningful participation of their peers as research participants (Bennett et al., 2008; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013).

Published examples of collaborations with young people in health research are limited (Bird et al., 2013; Larsson, Staland-Nyman, Svedberg, Nygren, & Carlsson, 2018; O'Hara et al., 2017), particularly in regard to cyberbullying research (Cross et al., 2015; Spears, Taddeo, Barnes, et al., 2015; Tarapdar & Kellett, 2011). Additionally, it has been noted that young people are rarely asked about their involvement in research (Hill, 2006; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Moore et al., 2016), and therefore, insight into young people's views on methods and approaches to collaboration are lacking. This paper presents a rights-based approach to collaborating with young people in a qualitative exploration of cyberbullying. It describes the establishment, implementation and evaluation of a Young Person's Advisory Group as well as identifying the impact on the research process and the young people involved. Young people's involvement in the study is reported in line with guidance for reporting patient and public involvement in research (GRIPP2) (Staniszewska et al., 2017).

4.3 Methods

Rights Based Approach

The study was informed by Lundy's Model of Participation (Lundy, 2007; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Lundy et al., 2011) which conceptualises Article 12 of the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989). This model identifies four key chronological concepts underpinning the effective realisation of young people's participation: (1) *space*-children must be given the opportunity to express a view in a space that is safe and inclusive, (2) *voice*-children must be facilitated to express their views, (3) *audience*-the view must be listened to, and (4) *influence*-the view must be acted upon as appropriate. Lundy's Model highlights that Article 12 does not exist in isolation and should be recognised in line with other children's rights including the right to guidance from adults (Article 5) and the right to seek and impart appropriate information (Article 13) (Lundy, 2007; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). A rights-based approach to collaborating with young people, therefore, requires that young people are supported in not only expressing their views but also in forming them (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012).

Adult Researchers

The adult researchers have experience of working with young people in school and youth work settings, in community and mental health research and in participatory and qualitative research methods.

Recruitment of Schools

The recruitment of schools commenced in spring 2016 with a view to beginning work at the start of the 2016/2017 school year. Four schools from a large town in the Republic of Ireland were invited to participate. These included an all-girls voluntary secondary school (non-fee-paying), an all-boys voluntary secondary school (non-fee-paying), a co-educational private school (fee-paying) with a mix of day students and boarders, and a co-educational vocational school (non-fee-paying) in receipt of additional supports to address educational disadvantage and social exclusion (Department of Education and Science, 2005). An information sheet was sent to the principal of each school and during follow-up meetings all four schools agreed to participate. Written consent was obtained to formalise the agreement. A contact person was elected by each principal to act as a link between the adult research team and the school (Lytle et al., 1994; Shaw et al., 2011).

Establishment of the Advisory Group

Transition Year is an optional one-year programme in the 4th year of post-primary education in Ireland. Taken after the Junior Certificate (1st-3rd year) and before the Leaving Certificate (5th and 6th year), Transition Year promotes the personal, social, vocational and educational development of students without the pressure of state examinations (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). These students were, therefore, considered well-placed to be involved in the Advisory Group. In September 2016 the lead researcher spoke to Transition Year students about the project and distributed information sheets. Students were advised that their membership of the Advisory Group would be known to others. Transition Year Co-ordinators in each school elected four students from those interested to sit on the Advisory Group. 10 female and 6 male students participated, all were 16 years old. Written consent was obtained from both young people and a parent/guardian and forms were returned to the school (Morrow & Richards, 1996; Shaw et al., 2011).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the University Clinical Research Ethics Committee. The study was conducted in line with ethical (Alderson & Morrow, 2011;

Hill, 2005) and child protection guidelines (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011, 2012; Felzmann et al., 2010). It was agreed with schools that any concerns about the safety of a young person during the study would be addressed in line with their school's child protection policy and standard operating procedure (Shaw et al., 2011). The Guidance Counsellor in each school was available as a support, as was the local Youth Service. The lead researcher's contact details and relevant helplines were also provided.

Procedure

The Advisory Group met with adult researchers for five two-hour research sessions in the 2016/2017 school year. These were held in a youth centre and were attended by a Youth Worker and two adult Research Officers. A kitchenette was available to prepare snacks which were provided at each session. The work was conducted in three stages (Figure 4.1). Sessions focused on building the young people's capacity to engage with the research process and the issues surrounding cyberbullying, designing a qualitative study, interpreting the findings of the study and evaluating young people's involvement in the Advisory Group; the latter was informed by guidelines for evaluating participation work with young people (Mainey, 2008a, 2008b).

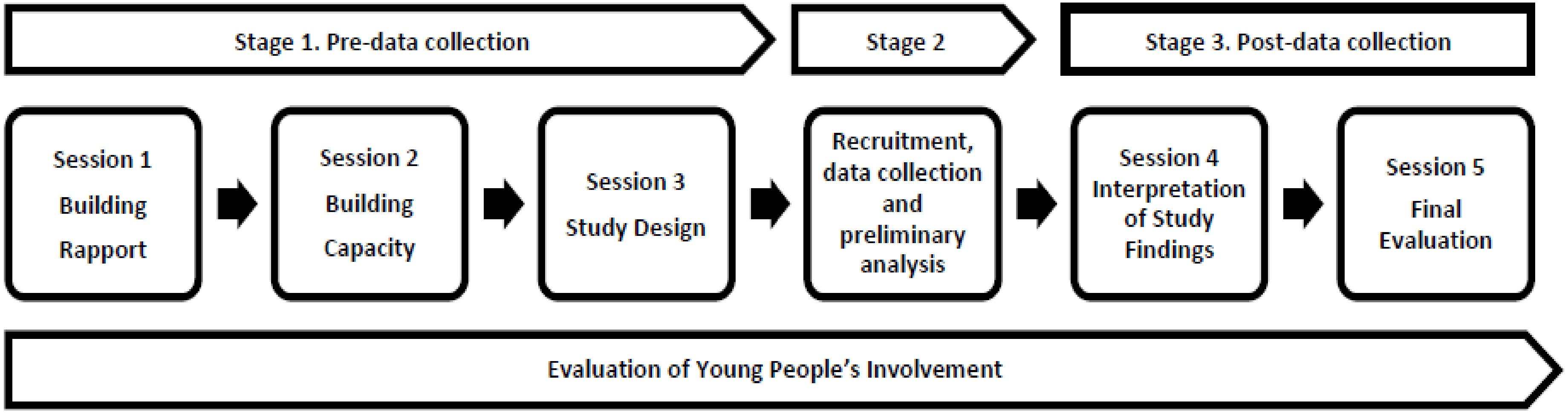
Stage 1. Pre-data collection
Stage 2
Stage 3. Post-data collection
Session 1 Building Rapport
Session 2 Building Capacity
Session 3 Study Design
Recruitment, data collection and preliminary analysis
Session 4 Interpretation of Study Findings
Session 5 Final Evaluation
Evaluation of Young People's Involvement

Figure 4.1 Collaboration Process

Stage 1

Session One - Building Rapport

Session One focused on building rapport among the research team. Icebreakers were used to ease inhibitions, build trust and create an open atmosphere (Chlup & Collins, 2010). In an attempt to alleviate any concerns and manage expectations, the Advisory Group were invited to write their 'hopes and fears' for their involvement on sticky notes which were then discussed. 'Hopes' can reveal motivations for participation, therefore, this information also contributed to the on-going evaluation process (Chambers, 2002; Mainey, 2008a). Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group were reviewed collaboratively and approved. As is good practice in group facilitation (Prendiville, 2008) and in working with young people, a group contract was developed to set out the fundamental rules of the group (Table 4.1) (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2017; Prendiville, 2008). The Advisory Group were reassured that discussion would be confidential and anonymised except in the event of a disclosure of potential risk to a young person or to others (Hill, 2006; Morrow & Richards, 1996). They were reminded on an on-going basis that they were free to withdraw from an activity or from the process as a whole at any time (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Beazley et al., 2009; Lundy & McEvoy, 2009). They selected *'#SocialSesh'* as the name for the Advisory Group as they felt it represented their interest in social media and social research, and demonstrated the social aspect of the group.

Table 4.1 Terms of Reference and Group Contract

Terms of Reference	• Work with adult researchers, youth worker, and other advisory group members as part of a team • Contribute a young person's point of view • Advise on the best ways to talk to post-primary school students about cyberbullying • Comment on the research findings • Identify key issues to be addressed to help those affected by cyberbullying
Group Contract	1. No mobile phones 2. No bullying 3. Participate 4. Maintain confidentiality where appropriate 5. Listen to and respect group members 6. Have fun

Session Two - Building Capacity

Session Two focused on building the Advisory Group's capacity to engage with the research and the issues surrounding cyberbullying (Dunn, 2015; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). It aimed to enable the Advisory Group to express their existing views or form new ones based on the interaction with the information generated, their peers and the adult researchers (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). Brief training in Public Health research was delivered to enable them to make informed contributions to the study design (Brett et al., 2014a). Key topics included "What is public health?", "What is research?", "The cycle of a research project", "Research methods", and "Research ethics".

Strategies to enable the Advisory Group to reflect on and discuss cyberbullying were informed by the literature on capacity building and participatory methods (Dunn, 2015; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Mc Menamin et al., 2015b). A topic guide developed at the University of Toronto to explore cyberbullying with young people was used to inform discussion topics, which included defining cyberbullying, cyberbullying behaviours, motivations, consequences and coping, and reporting (Mishna et al., 2016). Participatory enabling techniques were implemented to stimulate thinking and to facilitate the Advisory Group to refine and express their views (Ritchie et al., 2013). These techniques provided further insight into the nature of the research and allowed for adaptation of the topic guide for use later in the project. The nature of cyberbullying and its relationship to traditional bullying was discussed. Walking debates, a tool to encourage discussion and the formation of views (Gowran, 2002; National Women's Council of Ireland, 2014), were conducted to enable reflection on the role of gender and setting in cyberbullying, to identify the characteristics of those impacted by victimisation and perpetration and to explore current prevention and intervention efforts. 'Flexible Brainstorming' (Mc Menamin et al., 2015a) and 'Sorting and Ranking' (Chambers, 2002; Mc Menamin et al., 2015a) facilitated discussion about the media through which cyberbullying takes place and the Carousel technique (Chambers, 2002) was used to enable the Advisory Group to consider motivations for cyberbullying and the impact on those involved. At the end of the second session the Advisory Group wrote their thoughts about the day on sticky notes as part of the on-going evaluation.

Session Three - Study Design

In the third session the Advisory Group advised on the recruitment of study participants and data collection tools and strategies. At the end of Session Two each member of the Advisory Group was given a draft copy of an information sheet and a consent form to review at home. They brought these to the third session where they presented their feedback on the accessibility of the content before approving the documents for use.

The Advisory Group suggested that the sample should include 2nd (aged 14), 4th (aged 16) and 5th year students (aged 16-17). They recommended excluding those preparing for state exams (3rd and 6th year) as they would have constraints on their time and also 1st year students. They felt that as 1st year students were new to the school and still "*getting used to their environment*" they might be intimidated by the process or would not take the process seriously. One member stated: "*I feel if you ask a first year any of that he wouldn't take it seriously, like he wouldn't get the seriousness of it".* The Advisory Group decided that they would like to be involved in the recruitment process suggesting that they would be better able than adult researchers to encourage the participation of their peers.

The Advisory Group debated the merits of various approaches to collecting qualitative data from the students in their schools. They suggested that focus groups would be less *"intimidating"* for students than one-to-one interviews. They stressed that school staff should not be in attendance at the focus groups as they felt it would compromise the openness of the conversation with one member highlighting: "*you wouldn't feel like you could be completely honest, it would have to be with like people who are not in the school*". It was agreed that the participants in each focus group should be from the same year group to promote comfortable discussion. The Advisory Group recommended that ice-breakers and group contract development should be included at the beginning of each focus group.

Having developed an understanding of cyberbullying and related issues during the capacity building session the Advisory Group reviewed the topic guide and adapted it for use with participants in the Irish post-primary school setting. As the topic guide was originally used in one-to-one interviews, the questions were re-phrased to suit a focus group setting. To ensure confidentiality and encourage openness it was decided that participants would not be asked directly about their personal experiences. Prompts related to the taking and distribution of "*nude images*" through social media were added to the topic guide as the Advisory Group viewed this as a key issue for Irish young people.

The final task with regard to study design was to agree a protocol for the provision of support to any participant experiencing distress. Initially the Advisory Group wanted to make themselves available in their respective schools. However, the adult researchers believed that this may deter participants from seeking support, put a vulnerable participant at risk or create an unnecessary burden for Advisory Group members. With reference to Article 19 (right to be safe) and Article 3 (best interests of the child) of the UNCRC, it is the responsibility of adult researchers to ensure the safety of the young people involved in the research and to make decisions in their best interests (United Nations, 1989). Therefore, given the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behaviour and the potential risk of harm to the young people involved, the adult research team decided that participants seeking support would be directed to the lead researcher, their Guidance Counsellor or the Youth Worker involved in the study. Relevant helplines would also be provided. The reasoning for the decision was discussed openly with the Advisory Group and they accepted the rationale. At the end of the session, as is custom on a popular social media platform, the Advisory Group were invited to write their thoughts about the day in 140 characters or less. This concise feedback contributed to the on-going evaluation.

Stage 2: Recruitment and Data Collection

The next stage involved recruitment to the focus groups. The lead researcher visited individual 2nd, 4th and 5th year classes with Advisory Group members in their respective schools. Members explained the nature and purpose of the study and encouraged their peers to participate. Interested students were provided with an information sheet and asked to return completed consent forms, in an envelope provided, to the school contact person. These were collected by the lead researcher. The Advisory Group, therefore, were not aware of the identity of the participants. In total, 64 students (30 male and 34 female, aged 14-17) agreed to participate and subsequently 11 focus groups were conducted across the four schools using the format co-designed with the Advisory Group.

Stage 3

Session Four - Interpretation of Findings

Audio from the 11 focus groups was transcribed and a qualitative analysis was conducted by adult researchers. Consensus was reached on the identified themes and preliminary findings were presented to the Advisory Group during Session Four. They were asked if they believed the research findings to be reflective of young people’s experience of cyberbullying and to identify what they perceived to be the key issues within the findings. The Carousel technique (Chambers, 2002), was used to facilitate the Advisory Group in considering what needs to change to address cyberbullying and how this change can be achieved.

Session Five - Final Evaluation

In Session Five the final evaluation of the Advisory Group's involvement in the research process was conducted. Participatory techniques generated qualitative data which were co-analysed with the Advisory Group using the principles of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Discussion topics included; motivations for involvement, the role and impact of the Advisory Group, the suitability of the approach and the impact on the young people involved. A framework approach (Gale et al., 2013) was later applied by adult researchers to structure the findings and to establish if the elements of Lundy's Model of Participation were present (Lundy, 2007). This enabled the exploration of a priori objectives but allowed themes to be identified through the Advisory Group's interpretation of the data. Handwritten data, photographs, interpretations and summaries produced throughout the sessions were recorded electronically along with notes taken by adult researchers. NVivo 11 was used to manage the data. Open-coding was conducted and codes were grouped according to identified themes. Themes were mapped onto a framework informed by Lundy's Model of Participation which outlines the four elements necessary for meaningful participation in accordance with Article 12 of the UNCRC: Space, Voice, Audience and Influence (Lundy, 2007; United Nations, 1989). Findings were sent via email to the Advisory Group for 'member-checking' (Birt et al., 2016). Five members responded; all five were in agreement with the findings and no changes were suggested. At this point Advisory Group members had completed Transition Year and had commenced preparation for their state examinations, therefore, researchers did not follow up with those who chose not to engage.

Recognition of Involvement

Advisory Group members were awarded personalised Certificates of Participation. Additionally, members requested and were provided with help to formulate details of their new experience, training, and skills for inclusion in their curricula vitae and Transition Year Portfolios (Department of Education and Skills, 2017).

4.4 Results

All 16 members of the Advisory Group remained involved for the duration of the process; on only one occasion was a member absent due to a conflicting commitment. The Advisory Group's input is summarised in Table 4.2; findings from the evaluation of their involvement are presented with supporting quotes in Table 4.3.

Table 4.2 Summary of Young People's Contribution

Young Person's Advisory Group	Development of Terms of Reference and Group Contract for Young Person's Advisory Group
	Selection of name for Young Person's Advisory Group e.g. #SocialSesh
Study Design	Identification of key issues of relevance to Irish young people with regard to cyberbullying
	Development of study materials e.g. information sheet, consent form, helpline information
	Development of data collection tools and strategies e.g. use of focus groups to collect data, use of ice-breakers and group contract at the beginning of focus group sessions
	Adaptation of topic guide for use in focus groups with students in post-primary schools
	Selection of study sample e.g. 2nd, 4th , and 5th year post-primary school students
	Development of recruitment strategy
Study Conduct	Recruitment of peers to participate in focus groups
	Interpretation of findings from focus groups with post-primary school students
	Identification of key issues for consideration in intervention development
Young Person's Advisory Group	Co-analysis of data collected during final evaluation of Young Person's Advisory Group
	Review of evaluation findings

Motivations for Involvement

The Advisory Group were motivated primarily by the relevance of the research topic to their lives. They highlighted that cyberbullying was an on-going concern and that many live in fear of cybervictimisation. Members believed that there was a lack of understanding and appropriate action from parents and schools with regard to cyberbullying and that this was affecting efforts taken to address it. They highlighted that they could not relate to the content of existing cyberbullying interventions but believed that through their involvement they would help adult researchers understand the reality of the situation faced by young people and incite relevant action. Altruism was a key motivating factor. They articulated the hope that through their involvement they would raise awareness of cyberbullying and help both victims and perpetrators. While all of the members were enthusiastic about their involvement some were cynical about the value of their contribution, unsure about how they could help with the project and concerned that their views might not be taken seriously.

Space

Efforts to create a safe and appropriate physical and social space appear to have been successful. The Advisory Group reported that they felt comfortable in the youth centre. They reported that they were facilitated to express their views on cyberbullying, stating that it was easy to put forward ideas because of a non-judgemental space, and an encouraging environment that fostered open discussion. They valued the opportunity for involvement and the space to discuss a topic that was of interest and relevance to young people.

Voice

Findings indicate that Advisory Group members were supported to form, as well as express, their views. While research training was provided during the capacity building session it was the knowledge generated through the interaction with their peers and adult researchers that they valued more in supporting their involvement in the design, conduct and interpretation of the research. They highlighted that this had given them a deeper understanding of the issues under research.

Audience

The Advisory Group reported that they were listened to by their peers and adult researchers throughout the process. They perceived that their thoughts and opinions were valued and appreciated and that their position on cyberbullying and related issues had been recognised by the adult researchers. They highlighted that this was not normally their experience when interacting with adults about the issues facing young people.

Influence

The Advisory Group members reported that their views had been acted on during the course of the research. They believed that they had contributed directly to the study design and that the decisions they made were implemented in the conduct of the research. They claimed their involvement as co-researchers had improved the research process and made the findings of the qualitative study more accurate than if only adults were involved in the research. A sense of achievement was described based on a belief that they had made a difference to the study but also in being a voice for young people and ultimately in helping those affected by cyberbullying.

Personal Impact on Advisory Group Members

All members described a positive social and learning experience during which they made new friends and had fun. They highlighted increased knowledge and understanding with regard to cyberbullying. Many members applied this learning to their own lives articulating that they now felt more equipped to cope with cyberbullying and to help others affected by it. They reported that they felt more confident because of their involvement, and described satisfaction in stepping out of their comfort zone and trying something new.

Table 4.3 Illustrative Quotes from an Evaluation of Young People's Involvement

Themes	**Quotations to illustrate young people's experience**
Motivations	
Relevance of the research topic	"the research is relevant to people my age" "we are going through it and it is something that concerns us"
Fear of cyber-victimisation	"getting hurtful comments [online]" "being judged [online]" "being afraid in your own home" "everyone laughing at you online" "It [cyberbullying] is with you 24/7"
Lack of understanding from parents and schools	"people [adults] think it's [cyberbullying] something different" "the difference between what adults and young people think [about cyberbullying], that is a problem" "I think sometimes with your parents they might find it hard to understand what you are going through because they didn't have phones or anything they had like...bicycles" "help you understand what it [cyberbullying] means to us"
Lack of appropriate action from schools	"They [school] just don't care much…they care more about the school's reputation than the actual mental wellbeing of their students" "They are just so out of touch with everyone like. The cyberbullying campaign was like a cartoon of someone sending like a text on a Samsung like "I hate you" sad face. Like that just doesn't happen" "It is not like anything that actually happens, it is not realistic and you can't relate to it" "They were like how many people have their Facebook private and then like the hands went up and they didn't count them like, they didn't say why you should have your account on private or anything like that " "Like when we had a talk it was kind of just like OK now tell everyone you have had your cyber-talk" "we need to find ways to prevent cyberbullying instead of ignoring it"
Altruism	"make people more aware of cyberbullying" "to help people cope and deal with cyberbullying" "to help bullies understand the impact of their actions"
Learning Opportunity	"to understand the impact cyberbullying has on people" "to get a better knowledge of cyberbullying and cyberbullies" "to share my view on cyberbullying and see if other people have the same view"
Cynicism	"not helping at all with the project"

Space	
Physical Environment	“comfy couches around and stuff and bean bags” “nice and cosy”
Social Environment	“a good experience to talk about things that we hadn’t talked about in as much detail before” “an important topic that we could be open about” “it was easy to put forward ideas” “you do not have any previous opinion of who we are so we can just be completely open and honest and that is how you see us”
Voice	
Understanding of the issues being researched	“I feel that I have a better understanding of cyberbullying, better on a whole new level” “The focus group helped to give an insight into cyberbullying”
Peer Interaction	“I found it interesting to share and see others views”
Audience	
Feeling listened to	“everyone is listened to” “we were listened to”
Feeling valued	“they [adult researchers] greatly appreciate your thoughts and opinions”
Recognition of young people’s perspective	“We told you how it [cyberbullying] happens” “you [adult researcher] kind of know how we feel, how it [cyberbullying] works, a lot of older people wouldn’t”
Influence	
Views acted upon	“you designed it [the study] around what we were saying”. “I think it [young people’s involvement] made the results more accurate than if only an adult were to do it”
Making a difference	“I feel like I have really changed something” “Really good way to make a difference”
Personal Impact on the Young Person’s Advisory Group	
Positive Experience	“Memorable” “Really good fun experience” “It was lit fam” “Made new friends and had loads of fun” “I really enjoyed contributing”
Knowledge and understanding	“I understand how not to take cyberbullying personally as I know the reasons behind it” “Taught me ways to help” “I told loads of people what I learned” “Amazing information learned”
Personal Development	“Increased confidence” “Getting out of my comfort zone” “Good to try different things” “I can’t wait for what will come next”

Recommendations of the Advisory Group for Future Use of this Model

As they attended the sessions during school hours the Advisory Group were required to wear their school uniforms. They suggested that it would have been preferable to wear their own clothes as this made it easier for them to express themselves. They recommended that an additional session between Session Three (Study Design) and Session Four (Interpretation of Findings) would be useful as they found the time gap of five months too long. They suggested that the added session could provide an update on recruitment and data collection. Members felt that the rights-based, participatory approach was successful and suggested *"expanding the topics of conversation"* to explore other areas of relevance to young people.

4.5 Discussion

This paper presents a rights-based approach (Lundy, 2007; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Lundy et al., 2011) to collaborating with young people as co-researchers in a qualitative study of cyberbullying. It contributes a worked example to the limited body of knowledge on collaborating with young people in cyberbullying research (Cross et al., 2015; Spears & Kofoed, 2013; Spears, Taddeo, Barnes, et al., 2015; Tarapdar & Kellett, 2011) and in health research more broadly (Bird et al., 2013; Larsson et al., 2018; O'Hara et al., 2017). It reports a systematic evaluation of young people's involvement in the research process, an area which has been neglected in previous studies (Brett et al., 2014b; Hill, 2006; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). Findings suggest that collaboration with young people is feasible and beneficial to the research process and those involved.

Echoing findings from previous research (Kirby & Bryson, 2002), at the outset of the process, some Advisory Group members expressed cynicism about the value of their contribution. This is likely as a result of experiencing tokenistic participation in which young people are apparently given a voice but in fact have little or no choice within the space provided or opportunity to formulate their own opinions (Hart, 1992; Spears et al., 2011). Findings indicate that the elements necessary for the effective realisation of young people's participation were present in this study (Lundy, 2007;

Spears et al., 2011). The implementation of a rights-based framework (Lundy, 2007; Lundy et al., 2011) strengthened young people's involvement and assured their right to have a say on an issue that affects them (United Nations, 1989). Supporting the Advisory Group to form as well as express their views on cyberbullying ensured that their involvement, and the involvement of their peers as research participants, was meaningful (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). The study was adult-initiated and involved shared decision making with the Advisory Group, placing it at Level Six of Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation (Hart, 1992). Given the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behaviour and the potential risk to the young people involved in the Advisory Group, and as research participants (Bottino et al., 2015; Kowalski et al., 2014; Nixon, 2014; van Geel et al., 2014), this was found to be an appropriate level of participation. In keeping with a rights-based approach, shared-decision making enabled adult researchers to give due weight to the views of the Advisory Group but also to make decisions, when necessary, in their best interests (Article 3) and to ensure their safety (Article 19) (Lundy, 2007; United Nations, 1989).

Motivations for participating in the Advisory Group were similar to those reported in a previous account of young people's participation (Hill, 2006). Members were motivated primarily by the relevance of the research topic to their lives. Effective intervention development requires a thorough understanding of the behaviours associated with cyberbullying (Craig et al., 2013; Michie et al., 2011) from the perspective of young people (Spears et al., 2011; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015). However, the advisory group highlighted a lack of understanding and appropriate action from parents and schools. Concurring with previous research (Spears et al., 2011), findings suggest that the omission of young people's voice in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying has led to a misinterpretation of their needs and misguided prevention and intervention strategies, particularly in the school setting. The present study underlines the importance of involving young people in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying (Spears & Kofoed, 2013). It is reportedly difficult to maintain young people's involvement in research (Kirby, 2004; McLaughlin, 2006), however, all 16 members of the Advisory Group remained involved for the duration of the process and reported a fun and memorable experience. It is likely that their on-going involvement was enabled by the nature of Transition Year and the conduct of sessions during school hours. Findings from this study indicate that the use of participatory enabling techniques contributed to open and honest discussion and to the positive experience reported by the Advisory Group. This supports previous research which indicates that young people enjoy activity-oriented methods and that these can facilitate the discussion of difficult topics (Colucci, 2007; Hill, 2006). The collaboration was also an enjoyable and beneficial process for the adult researchers. The knowledge co-constructed during the capacity building session enabled adult researchers to approach data collection and analysis in a more informed manner. The Advisory Group's involvement in the interpretation of study findings, an area which is often neglected in efforts to involve young people in research (Coad & Evans, 2008; Nind, 2011), revealed a unique perspective on the issues to be considered in the development of cyberbullying interventions.

The local youth service provided a safe, appropriate, and youth friendly space for the Advisory Group sessions at no cost to the project. Monetary costs associated with the process were low and related to the purchase of refreshments and materials. Due to a limited budget it was not possible to pay members for their time, however, there was no expense involved for the Advisory Group. Similar to an Advisory Group in another Irish study (O'Hara et al., 2017), members requested help in updating their CV's to reflect their new skills and experience, suggesting that this is a valued practice for young people. As in previous accounts of patient and public involvement (Brett et al., 2014a), the practical aspects of involving young people were time consuming with the process described in this paper taking 15 months from inception. The initial recruitment of schools to the project was a challenge, however, commencing recruitment in the school year prior to the school year when the study began proved beneficial as it allowed researchers adequate time to negotiate access with gatekeepers without impacting on the time spent working with the Advisory Group. Also, the option to appoint a contact person for the study was welcomed by principals as it assured them that their workload would not be increased, thereby, facilitating their participation (Lytle et al., 1994).

Strengths and Limitations

The implementation of a rights-based model to frame young people's involvement strengthened this study and the experience and skills of the adult research team contributed to its safe and effective conduct (Lundy, 2007; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Lundy et al., 2011; United Nations, 1989). Recruiting through schools is more likely to result in a representative sample than recruiting via youth services or other channels. However, young people's behaviour in schools is influenced by the expectations and norms of that environment which may encourage them to contribute perspectives considered socially desirable in that context (Hill, 2006). Holding the Advisory Group sessions in the youth centre facilitated the meeting of students from four different schools and enabled members to express their views freely. While focus groups were held in schools, the involvement of the Advisory Group in designing the study helped to create a safe and appropriate space within this setting, allowing for the meaningful participation of their peers as research participants. The Advisory Group evaluation was conducted with the adult researchers involved throughout the project and this may have influenced responses. However, the strong rapport built over the course of the collaboration and the use of participatory methods in the evaluation, which anonymised the personal contributions of the members, may have contributed to more honest feedback.

4.6 Conclusion

Young people can provide a unique perspective on the design, conduct and interpretation of research that is otherwise not accessible to adult researchers. Collaboration can help to ensure that the research process and resultant outputs are reflective of the experiences, interests, values and norms of young people thereby increasing the relevance and appropriateness of intervention and policy development. The approach described in this paper enabled the meaningful participation of young people as co-researchers and as research participants. It is a feasible and worthwhile way of operationalising young people's involvement in health research and could be adapted to explore other topics of relevance to young people. It is intended that the findings from the ongoing qualitative study conducted with the Advisory Group will inform the development of relevant and appropriate interventions to tackle cyberbullying in young people.

5 Cyberbullying Through the Non-Consensual Distribution of Nude Images: Young People's Perceptions of the Context, Motivations, and Consequences

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5.1 Abstract

Sexting is associated with cyberbullying through the non-consensual distribution of explicit images with negative mental health outcomes for victims. Information about the context, media, motivations, consequences, and decision-making related to this behaviour, particularly from the perspective of young people, is required to inform intervention development. This paper reports findings related the non-consensual distribution of explicit images from eleven focus groups with 64 young people aged fourteen to seventeen (53% female), across four secondary schools. Thematic analysis indicated that non-consensual distribution involves a complex process that is produced by, and also reinforces, gender power dynamics. Young males, under pressure to conform to social constructs of masculinity, coerce females to send explicit images which are intentionally distributed, without consent, to male peers in exchange for social kudos. School-based prevention and intervention efforts should aim to address the underlying social issues and support young people to safely navigate the cyber world.

5.2 Introduction

Young people have a strong desire to connect with peers, to stay in touch, express themselves, and share experiences (Livingstone & Brake, 2010) and cyber technology has become integral to young people's interactions and relationships (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Mishna et al., 2009; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). Through social media, internet-based networks that enable users to interact with others verbally and visually (Carr & Hayes, 2015), young people can easily and regularly communicate with family and friends, they can maintain existing interpersonal relationships as well as develop new ones (Betts & Spenser, 2017; David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007; Kowalski et al., 2014). Smartphone (internet enabled mobile phones) ownership is now commonplace among young people (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Dempsey et al., 2019; O'Neill & Dinh, 2015). These devices enable users to connect to one another, and to the world, through a range of social and visual media. A sharp increase in smartphone use in recent years has allowed young people instant, ongoing, private, and less supervised access to the internet (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Everri & Park, 2018; Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014; Škařupová et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2017). In recent years ephemeral messaging app Snapchat has become popular among young people (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Everri & Park, 2018; Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014). This social media application, accessible through a smartphone, facilitates the sending of images, videos, or text to recipients who can view messages for between one and ten seconds before the content self-destructs and becomes permanently inaccessible. It is possible for the receivers of snaps to take a screenshot on their device and save the photo. The sender receives notification when a snap is saved (Vaterlaus et al., 2016). Social media platforms such as Snapchat, facilitate the development of individual and collective identity and self-expression, including sexual expression and exploration (Cooper et al., 2016). As such many of the normal developmental dynamics, conflicts, and stages of adolescence, are now experienced in the context of the cyber world (Barth, 2015; Patton et al., 2016). While this creates many positive social and learning opportunities it also presents contemporary risks and challenges which have not been experienced by previous generations, one of which is cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying, defined as intentional and repeated harm through electronic devices, is a contemporary public health concern facilitated in recent years by the proliferation of smartphones and social media (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). It is estimated that 10-40% of young people experience cyberbullying and evidence indicates that females are more likely to report cybervictimisation (Kowalski et al., 2014; OECD, 2019). Systematic reviews and meta-analyses consistently demonstrate the negative impact of cyberbullying on the mental health and wellbeing of young victims (Fisher et al., 2016; John et al., 2018; Katsaras et al., 2018; Kowalski et al., 2014; van Geel et al., 2014) and a number of studies report stronger associations between cyberbullying and anxiety, depressive symptomology, self-harm, and suicidal ideation than traditional bullying (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Bottino et al., 2015; Campbell et al., 2012; Gini & Espelage, 2014; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; John et al., 2018; van Geel et al., 2014). Young people are especially vulnerable to mental health difficulties during the transition from childhood to adulthood (Kessler et al., 2005) and so the risk posed by cyberbullying is a serious concern.

According to Willard (2007) there are seven types of cyberbullying behaviours namely: flaming, online harassment, cyberstalking, denigration, masquerading, exclusion, and trickery and outing. Trickery and outing occur when the perpetrator tricks an individual into providing embarrassing, private, or sensitive information and posts or sends this information for others to view. Willard (2007) notes that trickery and outing can include the attainment and non-consensual sharing of sexually explicit images. Research indicates that gendered and sexualised bullying are commonplace among young people (Mishna et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2013) and sexting, the creating, sharing, and forwarding of sexually suggestive images (including nude or semi-nude photographs), through a mobile phone or over internet, has been identified as a risk factor for cyberbullying (Gámez-Guadix & Mateos-Pérez, 2019; Lenhart, 2009).

Evidence demonstrates that sexting can occur within consensual relationships, or in pursuit of romantic attention, as a form of flirting, as part of adolescent sexual experimentation, or in response to pressure from a partner or a peer (Cooper et al., 2016; Lippman & Campbell, 2014). However, sexts are sometimes intentionally redistributed without the knowledge or permission of the original sender (Lippman & Campbell, 2014; Medrano, Lopez Rosales, & Gámez-Guadix, 2018). In a meta-analysis of sexting behaviour among young people aged 11-17 years, Madigan et al. (2018) estimate that 15% have sent and 27% have received explicit images. The study indicates that 12% of young people have distributed an explicit image and 8% have had their images distributed without consent. Evidence indicates an increase in sexting with age but suggests that the non-consensual distribution of explicit images is more prevalent in adolescence (Everri & Park, 2018; Madigan et al., 2018; Patchin & Hinduja, 2019; Walker & Sleath, 2017).

The literature positions sexting within a sexualised and gendered culture in which female bodies are objectified (Ringrose & Harvey, 2015). Evidence indicates that although young women are viewed as sexual objects they are commonly criticised and chastised for engaging in sexual expression while in contrast young males are revered for their sexual prowess (Ringrose, Harvey, Gill, & Livingstone, 2013). Research indicates that young males stand to gain value and reputational reward from the possession of images of the female body (Ringrose & Harvey, 2015). Correspondingly in a study of over 5500 students age 12-17 in the United States, Patchin and Hinduja (2019) found that males were more likely than females to request sexually explicit images from others and were also more likely to share these images without the permission of the original sender.

The non-consensual distribution of explicit images impacts negatively on the mental health of victims. Similar to research focused on cybervictimisation more broadly, studies indicate that victimisation through the non-consensual distribution of explicit images is associated with depression, anxiety, and suicidal behaviour (Klettke, Hallford, & Mellor, 2014; Krieger, 2017; Medrano et al., 2018; Mori, Temple, Browne, & Madigan, 2019). Reviews highlight a need for targeted evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies to tackle cyberbullying and associated behaviours (Della Cioppa et al., 2015; Hutson et al., 2017; Walker & Sleath, 2017). A number of researchers have explored the nature of sexting in young people (Cooper et al., 2016; De Ridder, 2019; Lenhart, 2009; Lippman & Campbell, 2014; Van Ouytsel, Van Gool, Walrave, Ponnet, & Peeters, 2017; Van Ouytsel, Walrave, & Ponnet, 2018; Walker et al., 2013). However, little is known about the context, media, motivations, consequences and decision-making related to the non-consensual distribution of nude images as much of the related research has been quantitative and focused on prevalence (Barrense-Dias, Berchtold, Surís, & Akre, 2017; Cooper et al., 2016; Madigan et al., 2018; Patchin & Hinduja, 2019; Van Ouytsel et al., 2018; Walker & Sleath, 2017). Adults do not have first-hand experience of using cyber technology in their youth, therefore, the development of appropriate prevention and intervention strategies requires engagement with young people (Spears et al., 2011; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015). As ‘digital natives’ young people are experts in their technology-rich lives and as such can provide unique insights. Omission of their perspective may lead to a misinterpretation of their needs with regard to cyberbullying and subsequently to misguided prevention and intervention strategies (Bennett et al., 2008; Cross et al., 2015; Mishna & Van Wert, 2013; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Qualitative research offers the opportunity to gain in-depth insights into young people’s thoughts and feelings, allowing for their subjective definitions, meanings and experiences to be brought to the fore (Mishna & Van Wert, 2013). With a view to informing the development of appropriate interventions, a qualitative study was conducted with young people to explore their perspectives on cyberbullying. Findings demonstrate that young people characterise the non-consensual distribution of nude images as a serious form of cyberbullying and this paper reports young people’s perceptions of the context, motivations, and consequences related to the behaviour.

5.3 Methods

Study Setting

The study was conducted in all four second-level schools in a large town in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). These included School A: an all-female voluntary secondary school (non-fee-paying), School B: an all-male voluntary secondary school (non-fee-paying), School C: a co-educational vocational school (non-fee-paying) in receipt of additional supports to address educational disadvantage and social exclusion (Department of Education and Science, 2005), and School D: a co-educational private school (fee-paying) with a mix of day students and boarders. In ROI, secondary education is undertaken over a six-year period and includes junior a junior cycle spanning first to third year (age 13-15 years) and a senior cycle comprising years four to six (age 16-18 years).

Study Design

Researchers were cognisant of the complexities of conducting research with young people and the need to address the power imbalance in the adult-child relationship (Morrow & Richards, 1996; Punch, 2002). The manner in which research is conducted and the methods which are used to access young people's views can impact on research participants and ultimately on research outputs (Lundy et al., 2011). In efforts to address this and informed by a children's rights-based framework, this study was conducted in collaboration with a purposefully constructed Young Person's Advisory Group comprised of 16 fourth-year students (ten female, six male; aged 16), four from each of the participating schools (Lundy, 2007). The Advisory Group members, in the role of co-researchers, provided a unique perspective on the design, conduct and interpretation of this research, to facilitate the appropriate and meaningful participation of their peers as research participants in a qualitative exploration of cyberbullying (Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). The collaborative methodology is described in detail in Chapter 3.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in line with ethical and child protection guideline (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011, 2012; Felzmann et al., 2010; Hill, 2005). Ethical approval was granted by the University Clinical Research Ethics Committee. Consent for young people's participation was obtained from young people and parents/guardians. A protocol for reporting any concerns regarding participant welfare was agreed with each participating school in keeping with local child protection policies and standard operating procedures.

Adult Research Team

The adult research team members have experience of working with young people in school and youth work settings, in community and mental health research, and in participatory and qualitative research methods. First author, a female Ph.D. candidate with experience in qualitative research and youth work, led the research. A female Master of Public Health student assisted in note taking during the focus group sessions and in data analysis. Researchers were cognisant of the potential impact of their age and gender on interactions with participants and were mindful of this in data collection and analysis. Positively, the Advisory Group indicated that participants would likely be more open to contributing to focus groups, as the researchers were perceived as young (early thirties and mid-twenties) and relatable.

Sampling and Recruitment

The Advisory Group and researchers decided to purposively sample second year (aged 14), fourth year (aged 16), and fifth year (aged 16-17) students. The Advisory Group recommended excluding those preparing for state exams (third and sixth year) and first-year students as they perceived students new to the school would be intimidated by the research process.

The first author visited the relevant class groups with Advisory Group members in their respective schools to introduce the study and distribute information sheets. Students were informed that the Advisory Group would not be aware of the identity of participants. Written consent was requested from parents/guardians and young people and forms returned to the school were collected by the first author. In total, 72 students were recruited to participate. Due to curricular commitments eight of these students were unable to take part. Ultimately, eleven focus groups were conducted with 64 participants across the four schools in Spring 2017; just over half of the participants were female (53%). Focus groups comprised between three and eight participants.

Data Collection

Focus groups were conducted within the four participating schools in line with Advisory Group recommendations to ensure a safe physical and social space for participation. Members perceived that this method of data collection, and the absence of school staff, was the most conducive to open and honest conversation among participants. Research supports this format indicating that the presence of peers reduces the emphasis on the adult-child relationship. No consensus exists on the merits of single or mixed-sex groupings, therefore, focus groups comprised participants from the same year group, and were single or mixed-sex based on the population of the respective school (Gibson, 2007; Heary & Hennessy, 2002; Shaw et al., 2011). An existing topic guide developed by Mishna et al. (2016) was adapted and piloted for use with the Advisory Group. An ice-breaker was conducted at the beginning of each session and a group contract was developed collaboratively and displayed on the wall for the duration of the discussion. This contract set out the fundamental rules for participation in the focus group as suggested by the participants. At this point the limits of confidentiality were outlined to participants, they were reminded that reports of the discussion would be anonymised, and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without consequence (Hill, 2006; Morrow & Richards, 1996). Open-ended exploratory questions were used to generate conversation on the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying as well as coping mechanisms. To promote open discussion and reduce the potential for socially desirable responses, young people were not asked to share their personal experiences but were not discouraged from doing so if they offered the information freely. Nametags were provided to all participants, and to researchers, allowing the facilitator to invite by name those that were less vocal than others to comment. A de-briefing was conducted with participants at the end of each focus group to ensure their wellbeing prior to leaving the focus groups. Participants were reminded that School Guidance Counsellors and the local youth service were available for support if needed and first author’s contact details and relevant helplines were also provided. Focus groups lasted an average of 94 minutes, with a range from 66 to 112 minutes. Discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymised.

Analysis

An inductive thematic analysis was conducted enabling researchers to analyse the data in a manner which was accessible to the Advisory Group (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Transcripts were imported into NVivo 12 (2016) and read repeatedly. The first author conducted open-coding to organise data into meaningful groupings and similar codes were categorised. A second researcher coded four transcripts. Differences in interpretations were considered before related categories were grouped and the research team reached consensus on potential themes. Identified themes were presented to the Advisory Group to assess the validity of the findings. Members identified the non-consensual distribution of nudes as a key finding and one that is a priority area for intervention. Subsequently, researchers refined the themes related to this domain which are presented here.

5.4 Findings

Participants did not use the term "sexting" as is commonly used in academic literature but instead referred to the sending of *"nudes*". They described the non-consensual distribution of nudes as a serious form of cyberbullying among young people in the *"junior cycle*" (age 13-15). Younger participants (age 14 and 16) discussed this issue spontaneously while probes were used to elicit the perspectives of older participants (age 17), who reported that they had "*grown out of*" the behaviour. Four central themes were identified: Media Used; Motivations for Sexting and Distribution; Sexual Double Standard; and School-Based Intervention. Themes are presented in bold with sub-themes highlighted in italics. Text in inverted commas conveys participants own words. Additional illustrative quotes are presented in tables for each theme.

Media used: Snapchat, Screenshots, and Group Chat

The majority of participants reported that they use *"accessible"* and *"convenient"* smartphones (internet enabled mobile phones) "*constantly*", to interact with peers through "*social media*". Traditional phone calls and SMS messages are reserved for parents who were perceived as less knowledgeable about cyber communication.

Some participants remarked that the prohibition of phones in schools restricts their use in this setting. Additionally, the opportunity to engage with friends in school was perceived to mitigate young people's need for cyber interaction. Consequently, social media is used mostly at home in the evenings, where there is access to free Wi-Fi, and often in young people's bedrooms before sleep. Female participants from School A (age 14), revealed that this is the context in which girls are likely to receive requests from male peers to send "*nudes*".

Participants outlined that the creation, sharing, and distribution of nudes is enabled by smartphone and social media capabilities, particularly the ephemeral messaging application "*Snapchat*" which facilitates the sending of images, videos, or text to recipients who can view the message for between one and ten seconds before the content self-destructs. Many participants described how nudes are created by girls at the request of a male peer and shared with the expectation that the "*Snap*" will disappear. However, they reported that images are often "s*creenshot*" by recipients, thereby creating a digital copy of the content. Participants highlighted a unique Snapchat feature which notifies the sender when a screenshot has been taken. Some female participants revealed that receiving this notification generated fear of further distribution and feelings of shame and powerlessness. Alternative means of distributing Snapchat images without generating a screenshot notification were also described including in-app features along with underhanded strategies requiring technological know-how (Table 5.1). A male participant from School B (age 16) described how '*screenshotting*' the "*Snap*" while in "*flight-mode*", an offline setting in which all connectivity is disabled, allows for a screenshot to be taken covertly.

Participants indicated that screenshots are often widely distributed through "*group chats*" facilitated by Snapchat or instant messaging application Facebook Messenger. Younger males (age 14) indicated they would not share nudes publicly as they "*would definitely get in trouble*", suggesting that they perceive wrongdoing in the act of distributing the images. They also highlighted that social network policies on nudity and sexually suggestive content restrict the posting of nudes on public platforms.

Participants remarked on the virality and permanency of nudes indicating that they often spread far beyond the intended recipient.

Table 5.1 Media Used: Snapchat, Screenshots, and Group Chat-Illustrative Quotes

P3: It [Snapchat message] is just for ten seconds but you can screen shot it if you wanted
P5: Yeah that's what happens they screen shot it and then they pass it onto all their friends and then they pass it on (School A, females, age 17)

"Like all you have is their word like. If they ask you for [nude image] you can just say don't screen shot it but like it's just two clicks of a button and he has it and you get the notification so you know he is after doing it but like there is nothing much you can do about it then"
(School A, female, 17).

"…like say on Snapchat, like it only really happens in Snapchat like, but like if you screenshot something on Snapchat it pops up, like that you just took a screenshot. But I know a way that I could show you now where I can screenshot something and they [girls] will never even know that I have it" (School B, male, 16).

*"And you wouldn't even know who has it [nude image] like, probably even a first year could have it on their phone like, you know. Like, you wouldn't know how far it's spread sometimes" (*School B, male, age 17).

Motivating Factors for Sexting and Non-Consensual Distribution

Disinhibition in the cyber world

A majority of participants described how young people's behaviour is altered when communicating through social media asserting that they felt "*more confident*" in this context of the cyber world. They distinguished between the real world and the "*virtual world*" with some highlighting a dissociation from reality when interacting with peers from "*behind a screen*". Many females claimed that when communicating in the virtual world they were unlikely to consider the potential "*repercussions*" of sharing nude images. In particular, they indicated that the supposed short lifespan of a "*Snap*" means that little consideration is given to content shared through Snapchat. The expectation of time-limited content on this platform appears to further lower inhibitions and provide a sense of "*security*" thereby reducing girls' perception of risk in sending nude images (Table 5.2).

Constructs of Masculinity and Male Peer Pressure

Some female participants believed that boys solicit nudes *for* sexual gratification while others reported that nudes were used to "*make fun*" of or to "*judge*" female senders. Males in School B (age 17) discussed a peer who distributed explicit images of his ex-girlfriend in what was perceived to be an act of revenge. However, participants described a context in which the male possession of nude images of the female body is considered "*the norm*" and indicated that the solicitation of nudes, and their subsequent distribution, occurs predominantly in response to peer pressure to conform to social constructs of masculinity. Older male participants (age 16 and 17) believed that younger boys are motivated by the desire to impress their male peers and develop their social position. They discussed how this leads to "*competition*" to acquire nudes indicating that images of females' bodies are used as currency in exchange for popularity. Bodily images of girls perceived as "*popular*" or "*pretty*" are considered more valuable (Table 5.2).

Males in School B (age 17) expressed "*regret*" over their past involvement in the distribution of nudes explaining that they now had a greater awareness of "*right and wrong"* and are more likely to consider the impact of their actions on others. They suggested that their earlier decision-making and behaviour was influenced by their susceptibility to peer pressure, as well as “*immaturity”* and impulsivity which they now recognise in their younger peers.

Male Tactics and Female Responses

A majority of participants discussed how boys engage in coercion to obtain nudes. Female participants noted that requests for nudes are often made by boys who are considered *“popular”.* They revealed that fear of potential exclusion by this popular peer makes it difficult to *“say no”* to requests. Coercion was also identified in the context of romantic relationships. Female participants described how boys sometimes threaten to end a relationship if their girlfriend does not comply with their requests; distribution of nudes from within a romantic relationship was perceived as a significant breach of “*trust*”.

Participants noted that boys sometimes feign romantic interest or compliment girls’ appearance in attempts to convince them to send nudes. Female participants in School A age 14) referred to this behaviour as *“grooming”*. Some participants believed that girls perceive requests for nudes as an indication of their desirability and comply in hope the hope that the male recipient will *“get turned on”,* which is understood to be validation of their attractiveness. The desire to impress a male peer and establish a romantic relationship was perceived to motivate girls to consent to sending nudes, despite participants indicating that they often “*don’t want to do it*”. It was reported that once boys have the images in their possession they cease contact with the female sender (Table 5.2). Female participants noted that the realisation that “*he…only wanted to talk to you for that reason*” leaves girls feeling embarrassed and regretful.

Many participants further explained that boys sometimes send unsolicited nudes to female peers to persuade them to reciprocate. Females described reacting negatively to receipt of these images describing it as “*weird*” and “*creepy”* with some claiming that they would “*block*” the male sender from their social media. Alluding to the sexualisation of the female body, participants perceived that girls are not attracted to the male physique in the same way that boys are to the female form. They argued, consequently, that girls are unlikely to screenshot and distribute the nudes which they receive.

Female participants in School A (age 17), indicated that the physical maturation of romantic relationships negated the need to exchange nudes to facilitate sexual expression. They also considered older girls to be less impulsive and more assertive and, therefore, less likely to given in to pressure from male peers.

Table 5.2 Motivations for Sexting and Non-Consensual Distribution-Illustrative Quotes

Sub-Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Disinhibition in the Cyber World	*"I would consider it is OK to send a ten second picture or video of myself, sure in my mind it is gone after ten seconds" (School A, female, 17)* *"…the way I act online is definitely different to the way I act in person. I just, like, the way I talk is just a lot more confident. I feel like I'm in my element if I'm online or on technology, but in real life, like, I'll be really shy to say anything" (School D, male, age 14)* *"I think over social media you forget that it's real. Like I think face-to-face you kind of remember like, oh my God this is an actual person that I'm sending this to but like over social media it's kind of like-it's that barrier" (School D, female, 17)*
Constructs of Masculinity and Peer Pressure	*P3: Some of the boys might get so many nudes of somebody and then they would say it to their friends 'oh you have only two of two girls, you need to get more' or 'I have more then you' and then the boys could be like 'oh I have to get more because he has more'. It's like a competition, 'I need to be more popular than him so I need to get more'.* *RD: And why do you think that makes them popular?* *P6: Well like especially if it was like a really pretty girl they would be like 'oh you are so lucky you got nudes off her' and stuff like that.* *P5: Like it's kind of something to be proud of with the lads, like they kind of think it's good that it's so cool if you have one (School A, females, 14)* *P4: [Boys distribute nudes] just mostly to impress their friends.* *P6: You kind of think you're a man. You're like 'awh lad pictures of her lad', like you're a man if you're asking that* *P7: Yeah, you have power like (School B, males, 17)* *"As soon as a lad will get them they put it straight into a group chat, boasting, saying 'oh look who I got nudes off'" (School B, male, age 17).* *"Like, lads might have a competition to see like who could get the most or who could get them off like the best-looking girl. Like if you get it off a popular girl like, for a lad, everyone then would be like whoa what the hell…Like if everyone knew the girl, they'd be like, 'Oh, I got it off her last night' and then like…it'd probably get sent around everyone again like" (School B, male, 17)*

Male Tactics and Female Responses	*"With guys nowadays you are not going to send it to someone, like you could see them face to face like" (School A, female, 17)*
	"They are kind of like 'oh you are so pretty and I've liked you for ages' and it's just like 'oh I liked him' and then you kind of want to do it [send nude image] like" (School A, female, age 14)
	"Am I think that before you send them he could say that 'oh you're really pretty' or whatever and then after you would immediately regret it because then he could stop texting you" (School A, female, age 14)
	"If a girl likes you and you keep asking her [to send nude] she's obviously going to like want to because she obviously wants to be with you like in that kind of way" (School B, male, age 16)
	"Like, if you're with like a girl…like properly like, and then she sends you one like, she probably trusted you but then, like, say if you were to text a girl once-off like, she could think that you were just being genuine, that you actually wanted to kind of like start speaking to her like. But then like, you wouldn't want to and you'd just like drop her then the next day, like after you get it [nude image]. It's a bit like that" (School B, male, 17)
	"I feel they're [female] pressured into sending them [nude images]. I don't think they actually really want to like" (School B, male, age 17)
	"Girls wouldn't find naked lads as attractive as lads would find naked girls if you know what I mean like…like you can't really compare, like it's not really the same. The girls wouldn't be bothered…girls are more likely to have a giggle about how big or small it is or something like that like" (School B, male, age 16).
	"Usually the guy is like asking you and like most girls don't want to do it but they're like…like they will like literally beg you and like sometimes they act like they like you and you might actually think they like you…some people will like send it then [nude image] because like I don't know, sometimes teenagers like these days they like the feeling of somebody liking them" (School C, female, age 14).
	"…sometimes if you're in a relationship then like your boyfriend would keep asking you and then they might say 'If you don't send them I'm going to break up with you,' and then

	like you'd feel all the pressure and you'd be like okay, I'll just send it. But then they screenshot it…" (School C, female, age 14). *"I've heard some people send them first, just so the girl has to send one back" (School C, male, 16).* *"But I feel like sometimes girls don't know they're going to get a nude and then they open it up and they're just like, 'Oh, god, what is this?'" (School C, female, 16)*

Sexual Double Standard

Participants demonstrated a sexual double standard whereby girls are shamed for expressing their sexuality through sexting, and held accountable for the non-consensual distribution of their nude images while boys are not (Table 5.3). Despite indicating that boys often repeatedly ask girls for nudes, the majority of male participants conveyed a lack of *"respect"* for girls who create and send them revealing that this was not in keeping with their constructs of how girls should behave. Female participants highlighted that girls are often labelled as uptight for refusing to sending nudes images when requested, indicating a no-win situation.

Male participants highlighted that the absence of negative consequence for non-consensual distribution through social media enabled the behaviour while female participants emphasised the social repercussions for female victims. They described how male perpetrators behaviour is often disregarded while girls are blamed for their own victimisation and branded as *"sluts".* They indicated that victims are further vilified online and also by female peers at school through *"dirty looks"* and exclusion. Although they highlighted that nudes are often sent under the guise of promised privacy or deletion, both male and female participants felt that girls who fall victim to non-consensual image distribution are *"stupid"* as they should expect that their mages will be circulated. In contrast the majority of participants described how boys who send or receive nudes are hailed as "*legends*" among their male peers, revered for demonstrating their sexual prowess through the objectification and exploitation of girls. Of note, some male participants in School B (aged 16) proposed that the public distribution of nude images may be benefit to the girls involved given the success of reality television star Kim Kardashian which they attributed to the release of a video of her engaging in sexual activity.

Participants indicated that while boys *"boast"* about their involvement in sexting, young women are unlikely to tell anyone that they were asked to send nudes, or had received nudes, to avoid the assumption that they were complicit in the behaviour. Further, participants indicated that females are unlikely to confide in a friend about sending a nude image or further distribution of such images because of their likely critical and accusatory reaction (Table 5.3)

Interestingly, male participants in School B (age 17) did not blame a male peer when his nude images were redistributed by female peers. Instead, in an expression of empathy that was not extended to girls in similar situations, they perceived that the perpetrators were calculated in their behaviour, and had pressurised and "*tricked*" a "*vulnerable*" boy into sending nudes which they then wrongfully distributed without his consent. These participants conveyed disbelief at the absence of consequences for the female perpetrators despite describing a lack of repercussions for male involvement in similar behaviour. While they held the females accountable in this case, in another example provided by the group, a male peer who intentionally distributed sexually explicit images of his ex-girlfriend following the end of their relationship was judged sympathetically and portrayed as having made a "*mistake*".

Table 5.3 Sexual Double Standard-Illustrative Quotes

"As for now I think everyone has gotten more respectful as a girl, like she is going to send it like that is on her own back you know it's nearly not her fault for sending it but…" (School A, female, age 17) *P3: It [distribution of nude image] wouldn't cause that much damage really like* *P1: Their [female victim] reputation would be ruined.* *P3: Not really, not really.* *P4: Well, it wouldn't be ruined it would definitely be lessened to a degree.* *P3: Kim Kardashian's only famous because she had a sex tape and look at her now, she's one of the biggest celebrities in the world.* *P1: That's very true (School B, males, 16)* *"People shouldn't kid themselves into thinking that it's [nude image] not going to get shared…like so to kid yourself into thinking that no-one's ever going to see it and it's just private between the two of us, nonsense" (School B, male, 16)* *"I don't know, it's hard to say it, but I just don't think girls should do that [send nudes]". (School B, male, 17)* *"…the lads don't really like get like bad attention like even like if you sent [nude image] to a certain lad people won't even remember who you sent it to. They'll focus on the girl more than the lad and like it's like you just put the picture on public rather than sending it to like a lad or something because nobody really cares about the lad that actually spread it. Like they see, they just see you as a bad person not the person that screenshotted it and sent it to everyone else" (School C, female, 14)* *"Like everyone will be talking about that person and in a way, it's like sort of bullying that one person because if you see the person you might give her like dirty looks. You'd talk about her to other people and you'd spread it more so it's like literally everyone against that one person that that just happened to" (School C, female, age 14)* *"Like even if she's not a slut and stuff like that, people will call her that, those kinds of names and stuff and like she won't like – sometimes even if parents will find out and they'll be like oh, don't hang out with this girl because I heard this about her" (School C, female, age 14)* *"But I think it just solidifies kind of like gender roles, like men are…it's okay for men to have like sexual urges and stuff, but as soon as women act on them, it's like, "What are you doing?" And it's just like the whole idea that women's bodies are objects for men to please themselves…and then shaming the girls for being those objects, like it makes no sense" (School C, female, 16)* *Like if you sent a nude and told your friend about it she wouldn't ask you, 'Oh, how do you feel about it, do you regret it?' She'd be like, 'Why did you do that? Like why*

are you being such a slut?' They kind of attack your character (School C, female, age 16)

"If a guy sends a nude he is a legend, if he gets a nude he is a legend, if a girl does it is like "Why would you do that?" It's just, yeah, they call her a slut and stuff" (School C, female, age 16)

Role of School-Based Intervention

The majority of participants perceived a role for schools in addressing the non-consensual distribution of nude images. They indicated that school efforts have tended to focus on the legal ramifications associated with the behaviour. Participants from School C (age 16-17) described how they acquired an understanding of the law related to the non-consensual distribution of nudes through "*eye opening*" talks delivered in their school by guest speakers. They outlined their understanding that they could be prosecuted for "*distributing child pornography*" and appear on a "*sex offenders list*". Equipped with this knowledge, they indicated that the potential negative impact on future prospects including job opportunities serves as a deterrent to the behaviour. However, in contrast, male participants from School B (age 16) expressed a disregard for the law, articulating that it is not perceived as a deterrent due to unlikely enforcement (Table 5.4).

The majority of participants emphasised that telling young people to refrain from sending or distributing nudes to stop non-consensual distribution was insufficient and inappropriate, indicating a preference for open, deferential discussions that focus on the underlying social drivers of the behaviour. They suggested that given the sensitivity of the topic any in-school efforts to address the issue should be facilitated by an external party rather than a teacher, and someone "*young*" to whom young people can relate. Many stated that the small group format used in the research process would be an effective way to engage with young people on this topic.

Table 5.4 Role of School-Based Intervention-Illustrative Quotes

"You don't really get in trouble though like. There was a whole thing in England as well like where it's all like the police tried to like clamp down on like people sharing them, like people my age say sharing a picture of a girl my age like and the courts they just suspended it, they just said like if it's people that age we're not interested, we're not prosecuting at all like, it's done. And it's the same in Ireland, it's just…you're never going to get prosecuted for it, say if I showed a picture that a girl had sent to me like realistically the guards aren't going to come round to my house and I'm not going to get locked up" (School B, male participant, 16)

"Like if you're caught with a photo on your phone it is child pornography like and you can be on the child offenders list and the amount of jobs you're not going to be able to do and like you wouldn't be let into America or anything because you've got a criminal record like" (School C, male, 16)

"you understand and you're taking all these opinions and you're getting us to open up here and we're getting a conversation going you know? This is the perfect kind of thing to do." (School C, female participant, 17).

5.5 Discussion

This study contributes to the knowledge base on cyberbullying and specifically to our understanding of unwanted consensual sexting and the non-consensual distribution of nude images among young people (Barrense-Dias et al., 2017; Bindesbøl Holm Johansen, Pedersen, & Tjørnhøj-Thomsen, 2018; Drouin & Tobin, 2014; Spears & Kofoed, 2013; Walker & Sleath, 2017; Walker et al., 2013). Young people involved in this study characterised non-consensual image distribution as a serious form of cyberbullying and highlighted the complex and gendered social dynamics which influence the behaviour. Findings from this study complement existing efforts to understand and address the issue by privileging youth voice on the context, media, motivations, consequences and decision-making related to this behaviour (Barrense-Dias et al., 2017; Cooper et al., 2016; Madigan et al., 2018; Patchin & Hinduja, 2019; Van Ouytsel et al., 2018; Walker & Sleath, 2017).

Echoing recent research by Bindesbøl Holm Johansen et al. (2018), our findings indicate that nudes are commonly created and shared by girls through Snapchat. The online disinhibition effect whereby behaviour is altered because of reduced self-boundaries and norm adherence in the absence of face-to-face interaction, appears to be magnified by the expectation of time-limited content on this platform (Suler, 2004). Nude images, often obtained through coercion, are screenshot by male recipients and intentionally forwarded in closed group chats which allow perpetrators to bypass social network policies on nudity or sexually suggestive content and avoid repercussions (Facebook, 2019). However, group chat members have the potential to further distribute the images enabling an infinite number of witnesses to personal content which was never intended for public consumption resulting in negative consequences for predominantly female victims. Sexting in response to coercion has been associated with depression, anxiety, stress symptoms, and low self-esteem (Klettke, Hallford, Clancy, J. Mellor, & W. Toumbourou, 2019).

Findings from this study support the view that gendered and sexualised cyberbullying are linked to societal norms which put girls at risk of harassment, abuse, and discrimination (De Ridder, 2019; Lippman & Campbell, 2014; Mishna et al., 2018; Ringrose, Gill, Livingstone, & Harvey, 2012). While young males are sometimes targeted it is more often young females who are victimised by the non-consensual distribution of nude images through a complex process which is produced by, but also simultaneously reinforces, social structures and gender power dynamics (Richardson, 2010). Consistent with previous qualitative research (Bindesbøl Holm Johansen et al., 2018; Ringrose et al., 2012; Walker et al., 2013) findings from this study indicate that nude images are obtained using coercion and exchanged, without consent, for social kudos on the masculinity market, where images meeting socially constructed standards of female attractiveness are more valuable (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). As such, young males under pressure to conform to social constructs of masculinity, engage in a premeditated process of sexual exploitation, objectification, and cybervictimisation.

In concurrence with Drouin and Tobin (2014), findings from the current study indicate that females desire to establish or maintain a romantic relationship or validate their attractiveness to male peers, motivates compliance with male requests for nude images despite females' preference not to engage. This reflects research findings related to sexual activity in the face-to-face context which indicates that women often consent to sex, even though they do not want to (Drouin & Tobin, 2014). This study has found, additionally, that the perceived popularity of the males involved in solicitation contributes to a power imbalance which further pressures female adolescents to engage in unwanted consensual sexting. Female victims are further disempowered by the capabilities of cyber technology which facilitate the public distribution of nudes far beyond their intended recipient. Research indicates that young people perceive each recipients viewing of harmful content as an additional incident thereby exposing females to repeated victimisation (Medrano et al., 2018; Nocentini et al., 2010).

Walker and Sleath (2017) reported that non-consensual distribution is more prevalent in adolescents than adults owing to the proliferation of cyber technology in this population. However, our findings indicate that the prevalence of the behaviour in this age group may be attributable to young males' endeavours to meet societal expectations which are facilitated by the available technologies. In concurrence with previous qualitative research, our findings position non-consensual distribution as a form of homosocial bonding in which young males engage in heterosexual practices that tap into a collective understanding of what it means to be a man (Richardson, 2010). It has been suggested that for young males, becoming sexually active is the ultimate marker of social inclusion and acceptance, a means of establishing popularity and credibility with male peers (Richardson, 2010). Our findings indicate an escalation in physical intimacy among older participants (age 17) which reportedly reduces their engagement in sexting. In the ROI, the study setting, the majority of young people initiate sexual activity at age 17 (UNICEF Ireland, 2011). It is possible that the acquisition and distribution of nude images among adolescent males is used as a substitute to demonstrate sexual prowess until becoming sexually active negates the need to do so, which may explain the increased prevalence of the behaviour in this age group.

Consistent with previous research our findings report the presence of a harmful sexual double standard in sexting and in response to the non-consensual distribution of nude images (Lippman & Campbell, 2014; Ringrose et al., 2013). Females are blamed and vilified in response to victimisation while male perpetrators are rewarded with social credibility. This study demonstrates that young female victims of non-consensual distribution are subjected to further abuse through verbal, psychological, and social bullying, particularly from female peers. Apportioning blame to the predominantly female victims of non-consensual distribution reflects broader societal responses to the sexual abuse of women which posit that women contribute in some way to their own victimisation and are, therefore, responsible for its occurrence (Moor, 2010). In concurrence with Ringrose et al. (2012), this research found that the stigma associated with sending nude images silences female victims and prevents them from seeking social support. It is possible that an accumulation of these negative outcomes contributes to the negative mental health outcomes for victims of non-consensual distribution and cyberbullying more broadly (Kowalski et al., 2014; Medrano et al., 2018; Nixon, 2014; van Geel et al., 2014).

Strengths and Limitations

The involvement of young people as co-researchers in the design, conduct, and interpretation of this study is a significant and novel strength, as well as the inclusion of different school types and gender balance. The Advisory Group provided a unique perspective on the design, conduct, and interpretation of this research thereby facilitating the appropriate and meaningful participation of their peers as research participants. To protect those involved in this research participants were not asked directly about their personal experiences and, therefore, while some offered this information freely this study focuses on young people's perspectives rather than first-hand accounts. Young people in both single and mixed-sex groups spoke freely about the non-consensual distribution of nude images. However, fifth year participants in the all-male school revealed more about the motivations for involvement in non-consensual distribution than those in mixed-sex groups. Future research should consider using both single and mixed sex groupings as well as individual interviews to garner all perspectives. The concept of non-consensual distribution was raised by young people in the context of cyberbullying and, therefore, focus group discussion focused on the negative aspects of sexting. There is some evidence to suggest that many young people have positive experiences of this behaviour (Cooper et al., 2016; Lee & Crofts, 2015), however, an exploration of this was outside the remit of this study. Discussions explored heterosexual practices only and did not include the experiences of sexual minority youth. Finally, as with all qualitative studies, the generalisability of our findings is limited. However, the findings concur with those in related literature which indicates that these phenomena are also being experienced elsewhere (Bindesbøl Holm Johansen et al., 2018; Lippman & Campbell, 2014; Ringrose et al., 2013).

Implications

Evidence indicating the potential negative impact on young people's mental health warrants the need for greater attention to this issue in research, policy, and practice (Klettke et al., 2019; Klettke et al., 2014; Kowalski et al., 2014; Medrano et al., 2018; Mori et al., 2019; van Geel et al., 2014). Research highlights that strategies to address the non-consensual distribution of nude images have relied primarily on scare scenarios, stress the risks of bullying and criminal prosecution, engage in female victim blaming, and recommend complete abstinence from sexting (Döring, 2014). In concurrence, our findings indicate that school efforts have focused on providing information on the legal ramifications of engaging in non-consensual distribution. Young people in this study characterised non-consensual distribution as a serious form of cyberbullying, hence, framing the behaviour in this way may enhance the relevance of prevention and intervention strategies for young people. As recommended by our Young Person's Advisory Group (Table 5.5) efforts should attempt to challenge the underlying social dynamics as identified in this study. This approach is supported by Ringrose et al. (2013) who highlighted the need to explore the power dynamics which enable the commodification of female bodies.

Prevention strategies should aim to build young people's self-esteem and empower both males and females to cope positively with peer pressure, in the cyber and in the 'real' world. This study found that if young people are to avoid cybervictimisation and express themselves safely through cyber technology, including sexual expression, they require opportunities to constructively explore the underlying social determinants and power relations. Echoing recommendations from a qualitative study on cyber sexual violence in youth by Pashang, Khanlou, and Clarke (2018), our findings indicate that young people perceive a role for schools in facilitating this exploration. Evidence indicates that gender-transformative interventions may be effective in improving gender relations and equality and this approach has been implemented with young males in efforts to tackle sexual violence against women, with a view to improving health outcomes (Banyard et al., 2019; Kato-Wallace et al., 2019). Gender-transformative interventions actively challenge harmful stereotypes and norms, including male adherence to narrow and constraining definitions of masculinity, and seek to transform underlying gender inequalities (Banyard et al., 2019; Dworkin, Fleming, & Colvin, 2015; Kato-Wallace et al., 2019). Future research should explore the application of gender-transformative intervention models in efforts to address the non-consensual distribution of nude images. The initiation of sexting and non-consensual distribution in early adolescence, as indicated in this and other studies (Pashang et al., 2018), warrants action in the early years of second level education.

Table 5.5 Young Person's Advisory Group Recommendations

Prevention and Intervention Strategies	• Discuss gender norms with young people • Help girls and boys to better cope with peer pressure • Enable girls to engage in safe bodily and sexual expression if desired • Educate young people on consent practices, bodily integrity, and the right to say no
Adult Education and Communication	• Educate and train adults on cyber technology and communication with young people
Programme Delivery	• Provide practical information on cyber safety at primary-school level • Treat young people as equals and with respect • Engage external party to deliver any in-school programmes • Facilitate small group work in an informal environment • Use youth accessible language but adults should not try to appear "cool"

5.6 Conclusion

The non-consensual distribution of nude images involves a complex process which is produced by, but also reinforces, gender power dynamics. The negative mental health impact of non-consensual distribution on predominantly female victims warrants the need to address the social factors underpinning this practice in research, policy, and practice. Future research should consider the application of gender-transformative interventions in addressing this issue. Involving young people in the development of intervention and prevention strategies will ensure informed efforts to tackle this important public health issue.

6 The Mental Health Impacts of Cybervictimisation and Barriers to Seeking Social Support: Young People's Perspectives

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6.1 Abstract

The negative impact of cyberbullying on the mental health of victims is well established. However, qualitative research related to the mental health impacts of cybervictimisation and how these are experienced by young people is scarce. In particular, little is known about young people's perceptions of the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behaviours. This paper reports findings on the mental health impacts of cyberbullying, and barriers to seeking social support, from eleven focus groups with 64 young people aged fourteen to seventeen (53% female), across four secondary schools. Thematic analysis identified two central themes: The Psychological Nature of Cyberbullying (sub-themes include Trapped by the Omni-Presence of Cyber Technology; Negative Overthinking; The Impacts of Negative Overthinking on Young People's Lives; and Suicide as a Means of Escape) and Barriers to Help-Seeking (including sub-themes Needing Help Regarded as Sign of Weakness; Young People Unable to Identify and Express Feelings; Lack of Confidence in Parents Ability to Provide Support; and Inappropriate School Intervention). Cyberbullying was described as more psychological in nature and impact than traditional bullying with increased deleterious effect on the mental health and wellbeing of victims. Victims experience rumination and worry which is fuelled by the omni-present, pervasive, and permanent nature of cyber interactions. Participants perceived suicide as a viable escape route for young victims defeated and entrapped by cybervictimisation and their own negative thoughts. Interventions should address emotional competence and mental health literacy in young people, as well as empowering support networks including parents, peers, and school personnel, to foster an environment that promotes help-seeking.

6.2 Introduction

Traditionally bullying, defined as intentional aggressive behaviour, carried out repeatedly in peer relationships characterised by an imbalance of power, has been confined to the physical spaces frequented by young people such as schools (Olweus, 1997). However, in recent years the proliferation of information and communication technology (ICT), including smart phones and social media, has created a new arena for bullying behaviour, the cyber world (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

Cyberbullying is now well established as a public health problem (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007). Research indicates that 10-40% of young people experience cybervictimisation (Kowalski et al., 2014). It is a serious issue for young people whose lives are increasingly immersed in technology and presents complex challenges for parents, school personnel, and policy-makers (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Cassidy et al., 2013; Deschamps & McNutt, 2016; Livingstone et al., 2011; Marées & Petermann, 2012; Sigal et al., 2013; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). The debate regarding conceptual and operational definitions of cyberbullying is ongoing. However, it is commonly defined using the traditional bullying criteria with the addition that aggression is conveyed through electronic media (Kowalski et al., 2014; Tokunaga, 2010). Several studies report overlapping characteristics between the two phenomena, however, cyberbullying has a number of unique factors stemming from the features of the cyber world and the sometimes complex and ambiguous nature of the communications which take place within it (Cassidy et al., 2013). Cyber technology is integral to young people's interactions and their relationships (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Mishna et al., 2009; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). Continual engagement with social media increases young people's accessibility to perpetrators potentially facilitating relentless victimisation beyond the reach of traditional bullying which is largely confined to the school day (Pelfrey & Weber, 2014; Smith et al., 2008; Tokunaga, 2010). Another distinguishing feature of cyberbullying is the potential for anonymous perpetration. Approximately 50% of victims do not know the identity of their aggressor (Kowalski & Limber, 2007) and research with young people indicates that this contributes to fear, distress, and feelings of powerlessness in cyber victims

(Dooley et al., 2009; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2008). Further, evidence of victimisation can remain online indefinitely as a permanent reminder to victims while the global reach of cyber technology enables an infinite number of witnesses (Campbell, 2012; Langos, 2015; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Slonje & Smith, 2008).

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses consistently demonstrate the negative impact of cyberbullying on the mental health and wellbeing of victims (Fisher et al., 2016; John et al., 2018; Katsaras et al., 2018; Kowalski et al., 2014; van Geel et al., 2014). Cybervictimisation is linked with psychosomatic symptoms and internalising problems. It is associated with sleep disturbances, school avoidance, reduced confidence and self-esteem, worry, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behaviour; fatal and non-fatal (Fisher et al., 2016; Hamm et al., 2015; Katsaras et al., 2018; Kowalski et al., 2014). A number of studies report stronger associations between cyberbullying and anxiety, depressive symptomology, and suicidal ideation than traditional bullying (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Bottino et al., 2015; Campbell et al., 2012; Gini & Espelage, 2014; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; John et al., 2018; van Geel et al., 2014). The reasons for the negative impact on young people's mental health have not been clearly established. It has been suggested that the persistent, pervasive, and sometimes anonymous nature of cyberbullying contributes to feelings of hopelessness which are in turn associated with depression and suicidal behaviours (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Hawton et al., 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; John et al., 2018).

Seeking social support is consistently identified as an effective strategy in response to cybervictimisation (Perren, Corcoran, Cowie, Dehue, Garcia, Mc Guckin, Sevcikova, Tsatsou, & Vollink, 2012; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015). This refers to actively seeking help from other people including family, peers, teachers, or health professionals. It involves communicating with others to gain understanding, advice, information, and support in response to a distressing experience (Rickwood et al., 2005). Young people themselves have suggested seeking support as a way of coping with cyberbullying, however, evidence shows that cybervictimisation goes largely unreported (Cassidy et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010). Further, research indicates that cyber victims are less likely than victims of traditional bullying to disclose victimisation (Dooley et al., 2012; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). Young people's reluctance to report cyberbullying has been attributed to difficulty in proving cybervictimisation, fear of loss of access to cyber technology, fear of retaliation or intensification of bullying, lack of confidence in adults' ability to help, and a belief that little can be done to stop cyberbullying (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Cassidy et al., 2013; Hamm et al., 2015; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Parris et al., 2012; Šléglová & Černá, 2011; Smith et al., 2008).

Young people are vulnerable to mental health difficulties as they experience biological and social change during the transition from childhood to adulthood (Kessler et al., 2005). The risk to the mental health and wellbeing of young people exposed to cybervictimisation requires action to address this issue and systematic reviews of cyberbullying interventions highlight a need for evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies to tackle cyberbullying (Della Cioppa et al., 2015; Hutson et al., 2017; Mishna, Cook, Saini, et al., 2010; Walker & Sleath, 2017). Adults do not have first-hand experience of using cyber technology in their youth and, therefore, the development of appropriate prevention and intervention strategies can benefit from youth engagement (Spears et al., 2011; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, et al., 2015). Young people are experts in their technology-rich lives and as such can provide unique insights (Bennett et al., 2008). Cyberbullying research has been largely quantitative; in particular, there is little qualitative research related to the mental health impacts of cybervictimisation and how these are experienced by young people. Omitting their perspective risks misinterpretation of their needs and misguided prevention and intervention strategies (Bennett et al., 2008; Cross et al., 2015; Mishna & Van Wert, 2013; Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Qualitative research involving young people allows researchers to step outside the bounds of adult thinking (Mishna et al., 2004). It offers the opportunity to gain rich insights into young people's thoughts and feelings, allowing for their subjective definitions, meanings and experiences to be brought to the fore (Mishna & Van Wert, 2013). A qualitative study was conducted with young people to explore their perspectives on the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying as well as coping strategies, with a view to informing the development of relevant and appropriate interventions. This paper reports study findings relating to young people's perceptions of the mental health impacts of cybervictimisation and contributes to the existing literature on the barriers that deter cyber victims from engaging in help-seeking behaviour.

6.3 Methods

Study Design

In collaboration with a purposefully formed Young Person's Advisory Group, a qualitative study was conducted in all four secondary schools in a large town in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Focus groups were used in data collection and data were analysed thematically.

The Adult Research Team

The multidisciplinary adult research team comprised clinical and social researchers with experience of working with young people in school and youth work settings, in mental health and suicide research, and in participatory and qualitative research methods. The research was led by the first author, a Ph.D. candidate. Data collection and analysis were supported by a Master of Public Health student. Engaged in reflexive research, researchers were mindful of their position in the research process, the complexity of undertaking research with young people, and of the power relations between adult researchers and the young people involved (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018; Morrow & Richards, 1996; Punch, 2002). Consequently, and as described below, efforts were made throughout this study to ensure that the research process and outputs were representative of young people's interests, needs, and experiences.

Young Person's Advisory Group

Authentic research with young people gives power and voice to participants and provides insights into young people's subjective world (Grover, 2004). In efforts to facilitate the ethical, appropriate, and meaningful involvement of young people, as well as addressing the power imbalance in the adult-child relationship, this study was conducted in collaboration with a purposefully formed Young Person's Advisory Group (Morrow & Richards, 1996; Punch, 2002). The group comprised of 16 students (ten female, six male; all aged 16), four from each participating school, provided a unique perspective on the design, conduct, and interpretation of the research. The collaborative methodology, informed by Lundy's rights based model of youth participation (Lundy, 2007), is described in detail elsewhere (Reference: undisclosed for review purposes).

The safety and wellbeing of participants was a priority throughout the research process. Child protection and ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout the whole research process (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Banks et al., 2013; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011, 2012; Felzmann et al., 2010; Hill, 2005; Mishna et al., 2004). Ethical approval was granted by the University Clinical Research Ethics Committee (Ref: ECM3 (uuu)). Written consent for young people's participation was obtained from schools, parents/guardians and young people. A protocol for reporting concerns regarding participant welfare was agreed with each participating school in keeping with local standard operating procedures.

Participants

Supported by the local youth service, this study was conducted with all four secondary schools in a large town in (ROI). Participating schools included a non-fee-paying all-female secondary school (School A), a non-fee-paying all-male voluntary secondary school (School B), a non-fee-paying co-educational vocational school in receipt of additional supports to address educational disadvantage and social exclusion (School C) (Department of Education and Science, 2005), and a fee-paying co-educational private school with a mix of day students and boarders (School D).

Sampling and recruitment decisions were made in collaboration with the Advisory Group. Secondary education in ROI consists of a junior cycle (first-third year, age 13-15) and a senior cycle (fourth-sixth year, age 16-18). Second (aged 14), fourth (aged 16), and fifth-year (aged 16-17) students were purposively sampled. Those preparing for state examinations (third and sixth-year) and first-year students new to the school were excluded. The study was introduced to individual class groups and information sheets were distributed by the first author and Advisory group members in their respective schools. Students were advised that the Advisory Group would not be aware of the identity of participants. Consent forms signed by young people and parents/guardians and returned to the schools were collected by the first author. Seventy-two students were recruited. Eight of these students (fourth-year students in School D) were unable to take part as they were undertaking work experience outside of school when focus groups were conducted and efforts to reschedule were unsuccessful. Ultimately, in Spring 2017 eleven focus groups were conducted with 64 participants across the four schools; and just over half of the participants were female (53%).

Data Collection

A topic guide developed by Mishna et al. (2016) was adapted for this study and piloted with the Advisory Group. Focus groups were conducted in schools in the format agreed with the Advisory Group (Reference: undisclosed for review purposes). Members favoured focus groups, and the absence of school staff, to generate open and honest dialogue among participants. Research supports this approach indicating that the presence of peers reduces the emphasis on the adult-child relationship between the participant and the researcher (Heary & Hennessy, 2002). As the merits of single or mixed-sex groupings are not established, focus groups included participants from the same year group, and were single or mixed-sex based on the population of the respective school (Gibson, 2007; Heary & Hennessy, 2002; Shaw et al., 2011).

At the outset of each session, an icebreaker was conducted and a group contract was developed to establish the accepted conditions of participation. The remit and limits of confidentiality were outlined, researchers reiterated that reports of the discussion would be anonymised and that participants could withdraw from the study at any point without consequence (Hill, 2006; Morrow & Richards, 1996). Exploratory, open-ended questions centred on the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying as well as coping mechanisms. In attempts to avoid socially desirable responses, participants were not asked to share their personal experiences (Mishna et al., 2009). However, if participants volunteered personal accounts they were not restricted from doing so. Name-tags were provided to all participants, and to researchers, allowing the facilitator to invite by name those that were less vocal than others to comment. A de-briefing was conducted with participants at the end of each focus group to ensure their wellbeing prior to cessation. Participants were reminded that School Guidance Counsellors and the local youth service were available for support if needed and the first author's contact details and relevant helplines were also provided. Focus groups lasted an average of 94 minutes, with a range from 66 to 112 minutes. Discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymised.

Analysis

An inductive thematic analysis was conducted (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach allowed researchers to analyse the data systematically in a manner which was accessible to the members of the Advisory Group (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Transcripts were imported to NVivo 12 (2016) and read repeatedly. The first author open-coded each transcript to organise data into meaningful groupings and similar codes were categorised. A second researcher coded four transcripts. Differing interpretations were considered before related categories were grouped and the multidisciplinary research team reached consensus on potential themes. These themes were presented to the Advisory Group to assess the validity of the findings. the members identified the mental health impacts of cyberbullying as an important finding and a priority area for intervention. Subsequently, researchers refined the themes associated with this domain which are presented here.

6.4 Findings

Advisory Group members identified the mental health impacts of cyberbullying as an important finding and a priority area for intervention. Subsequently, researchers refined the themes associated with this domain which are presented here. Thematic analysis identified two core themes: The Psychological Nature of Cyberbullying and Barriers to Help-Seeking. Cyberbullying was described by participants as *"more psychological"* in its nature and impact and more harmful than traditional bullying. While participants perceived that victims of traditional bullying can recover and move on, cyberbullying was viewed as a *"dangerous"* and *"constant burden"* that infiltrates victims' *"brains".* Core themes are presented in bold with sub-themes highlighted in italics. Text in italics conveys participants own words and further illustrative quotes are presented in Table 6.1 and 6.2.

The Psychological Nature of Cyberbullying

Trapped by the Omni-Presence of Cyber Technology

A majority of participants perceived that while victims of traditional bullying can choose to avoid perpetrators, find some respite in their homes after school, or even move school if necessary, the omni-presence of cyber technology in young people's lives means that victims of cyberbullying are exposed to relentless and invasive victimisation with, they believe, no means of *"escape".* Some participants described cyberbullying as an *"extension of traditional bullying"* with cyber technology allowing perpetrators to access victims even after the school day. They emphasised that for victims it feels like their abuser is always with them leaving them with *"no safe place to go"*.

Participants discussed how young people, motivated by a fear of missing out *("FOMO")* on peer interactions, use smartphones (internet enabled mobile phones) *"constantly"* to engage with peers through *"social media"* applications, primarily Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook. They indicated that although young people carry their phones with them at all times social media is mostly used at home in the evenings where there is free access to Wi-Fi and little restriction on phone use. They revealed that it is in this context, at "*home*", at "*night"*, and when "*alone*" in the "*dark"* that young people are most vulnerable to cyberbullying.

Negative Overthinking

Analysis indicated that young people exposed to cybervictimisation are consumed by thoughts of their victimisation. Participants described this experience as *"overthinking"* an ongoing and negative internal dialogue which intensifies when victims are alone (Table 6.1),. They explained that without the distraction of school, and in the absence of family or peers to provide perspective or a sense of protection, victims anguish over the causes and consequences of their victimisation and nervously anticipate the next episode of aggression.

Participants depicted victims being *"taunt[ed]"* by negative thoughts long after the cessation of cyberbullying, as perpetrators words and actions remain *"stuck in [their] heads".* Further, they indicated that while young people are likely to forget the intricate details of hurtful comments made during face-to-face interactions, online content serves as a *"typed"* and *"constant reminder"* of victimisation thereby maintaining its position at the forefront of victims minds. Participants described how cyber victims repeatedly read and analyse perpetrators' disparaging posts explaining that each engagement with the content causes victims to *"re-live the pain"* experienced on initial receipt.

It was believed that perpetrators post ambiguous comments on social media with the intention of hurting a certain individual while evading accountability. Victims were described as spending considerable time "*analysing"* ambiguous social media content in attempts to decipher if disparaging messages were in fact directed at them or if they were *"over-reacting"* and making a *"big-deal"* out of nothing. Participants highlighted that victims also agonise over anonymous messages, particularly those which threaten victims or their families, in attempts to discern perpetrators identity and the sincerity of their threats. They indicated that consequently victims exist in a state of anxious expectation as without evidence to the contrary, they anticipate that threats will be followed through.

The public nature of social media content appears to increase the humiliation experienced by victims and fuel negative thoughts. Participants articulated that while it was unlikely that remarks made in a face-to-face interaction would be brought to the attention of others, the often public nature of social media content means that there are almost always witnesses to perpetrators' comments. Victims were believed to be preoccupied with the possibility that perpetrators' views were supported by others and that, consequently, they would be ostracised by their peers. Participants highlighted that the ability for others to engage with perpetrators' comments, such as the ability to *"like"* or *"comment"* on a post, increases victims' concerns regarding consensus.

The Impacts of Negative Overthinking on Victims Lives

Female participants in particular discussed the impact of enduring victimisation and negative overthinking on young people (Table 6.1). They articulated that victims' negative thought processes often extended beyond thoughts of cyberbullying to other aspects of their lives. Worn down by negative thoughts, victims were thought to be at risk of eventually believing perpetrators' claims with negative consequences for their *"confidence"* and *"self-esteem".* Victims were described as over-analysing day-to-day experiences and interactions and assuming negative intent in the words and actions of others. Participants remarked that victims "*fear being judged"* and worry excessively about saying or doing the wrong thing or dressing in a way that might provoke perpetrators. They indicated that ultimately victims with low *"self-worth"* tend to *"close themselves off"* from their peers.

Additionally, negative overthinking was believed to interfere with victims' sleep leading to chronic tiredness. Participants perceived that this fatigue and a preoccupation with thoughts of cyberbullying make it difficult for victims to concentrate in school. It was noted that some victims of cyberbullying avoid attending school altogether because they fear meeting perpetrators, anticipate the next cyber-attack, and/or worry that their peers *"might not like them"* having engaged with perpetrators' public and disparaging comments.

Suicide as a Means of Escape

Participants believed that *"omni-present"* cyberbullying and incessant overthinking, which often continues long after the direct actions of the perpetrator, generates a deepening *"depression"* in victims until it becomes *"too much"* for victims to cope with (Table 6.1). They emphasised that the burden of cyberbullying increases *"bit by bit"* until victims cannot *"take it anymore".* Participants perceived that there is *"no way out"* for victims and they articulated that for some, the *"only escape is to just commit suicide".* Some participants believed that victims used suicide as a way to express to others the *"pain"* they had experienced as a result of cyberbullying and to convey the damage that their perpetrators had caused.

Many participants viewed cyberbullying as an additional burden for young people who also struggled in other areas of their lives and that the accumulated impact on victims' mental health pushed them toward suicide. Further, they believed that in some cases cyberbullying exacerbated existing mental health problems such as anxiety and depression thereby increasing victims' vulnerability and reducing resilience. Participants articulated that it was common for perpetrators to tell victims to kill themselves, and some perceived that this had the potential to "*reinforce*" suicidal thoughts in victims already at risk of suicide.

On the other hand, a small minority of male participants, aged 17, perceived that youth suicide is often incorrectly attributed to cyberbullying. They believed that other factors contributing to suicide are ignored while cyber technology is villainised by those looking for something to blame for young people's deaths. In contrast, a majority of participants perceived that suicide among victims of cyberbullying was common, particularly among young women. They referred to the recent suicide of a female peer in their locality with sadness and disbelief and many attributed this and the suicides of other young people to cybervictimisation. Information about cyberbullying and suicide was garnered from schools, the news, television talk shows, and also through social media. Participants articulated how they had seen details of the motives and methods for cyberbullying-related suicide on Facebook and they also discussed the live-streaming of suicides on this social media platform. Some female participants in School A, aged 16, discussed the suicide of a young female in response to the non-consensual distribution of her explicit images on Facebook remarking that this type of cyberbullying was particularly harmful to females as *"they get really badly abused over it".* Many participants referred specifically to the well-publicised cases of Phoebe Prince and Amanda Todd, young females from the United States of America and Canada respectively, who experienced cyberbullying before taking their own lives. Some participants perceived that the media's tendency to focus on the more serious cases of cyberbullying, those resulting in suicide, caused victims to question the validity of their cyberbullying experience and contributing to feelings of paranoia.

Table 6.1 The Psychological Nature of Cyberbullying -Illustrative Quotes

Sub-Themes	Illustrative Quotes
	I would say that [cyberbullying] would definitely be worse mentally, having to put up with it like in your head (School A, female, aged 17) *Like, if someone hits you, you're obviously going to get better from that, but like, if someone like, scarred you mentally like, you'll always be thinking about it. It's always lingering in the back of your mind like. (School B, male, aged 17)* *It's [cyberbullying] constantly in your head. It's way more psychological. (School C, female, aged 16)* *Like normal, well not normal, but traditional bullying is, kind of like…you can say it's kind of, 50 physical, 50 mental, you know, and so you almost have that half-and-half… but with cyberbullying like, they can't hurt you, so they just 100% have to go through your mind, and your mind is what controls your emotions, you know. They might break your body [with traditional bullying], but at least you can, kind of, think straight. (School D, male, aged 14)*
Trapped by the Omni-Presence of Cyber Technology	*I think with the old types of bullying like if you were being bullied in school you would go home and know you were safe whereas with cyber bullying you have your phone on you all the time, like you take it to bed. So like if someone was getting bullied like there is no way unless you turned off your phone that you can escape from it so I think that's why it is so dangerous and it effects so many people…there is no way out like you know (School A, female, aged 17)*

	If it [bullying] was happening in school, I could just move to another school but if it’s cyberbullying, then it’s going to always be there. (School B, male, aged 14) *Like when I was in primary school, I wouldn’t say I was bullied, but I was picked on for a while, and I feel like there was a moment where I was like I can either let this really affect me or I can just let it go over my head, whereas with like cyberbullying, it is constantly there like. Like I can choose to interact with those people, but I can’t help it if something pops up on my phone (School C, female, aged 16)* *P2: Cyberbullying is, from my experience, an extension of traditional bullying and it’s when the person goes home, it’s a way to still get at them.* *P3: Because you always have your phone on you, really, so it’s like they’re always with you, I guess.* *P2: I just think it means there's no escape, really.* *P4: Yeah. For cyberbullying, it’s a lot more dangerous because…* *P2: Because they’re always there, like.* *P4: Now we always have, like, our phones on us or a computer or something. Like, there's always something, you know. So, it’s a bit harder to escape.* *P3: You're always going to feel like it’s there, just like it doesn’t go away. Like, even if it’s normal bullying, like, you're going to get a chance after school or at school if that’s what the case is, but, like, with cyberbullying, it’s so hard.* *P2: As easily as you can block someone, they can make a new account. And I think that’s the worst bit of it because you block someone and then, hey, they have a new account and they get at you from Viber, from WhatsApp and Skype, and they just find every kind of pinprick to get at you.* *P4: Like, if they want to get at you on social media, they will. Like, they’ll go for you. And, like, I've seen accounts of people that are, like, literally making up fake identities of the person that they’re bullying, saying that’s like a new account or something like that, and then saying just a bunch of terrible stuff. Like, if somebody really wants to destroy you, they can. Like, if somebody has that hate in them… (School D, male and female participants, aged 14)*
Negative Overthinking	*P8: …whenever people say things to me online like I tend to kind of like relive, I don't know like, I read the message and I kind of relive the pain I went through like, if I read the message it just hurts…* *P5: Ya over and over and over and over like overthinking about it like why did they say that about me what did I do to make them say that stuff*

	P6: But like, you would be thinking like I don't even talk to them like so why would they say it *P4: And like if they were saying it face to face you could just try and avoid them and keep away from them but like you always have your phone with you like and its always there* *P8: Ya it's there forever* *P5: Ya like even though you can delete it's still like there kind of (School A, females, aged 14)* *Ya your just like 'oh it's not nothing I am overthinking it, it's making me sad but it shouldn't make me sad' (School A, female, aged 16)* *It's worse because you're thinking 'what did I do wrong', is it something I did?' And it's in your brain, like you're distracted. (School B, male, aged 14)* *You don't have anyone really to talk to…you just think about it by yourself and like you keep thinking about it and like you overthink everything and like you start thinking that like 'oh, one person said this like maybe everyone is thinking this?' (School C, female, aged 14)* *P4: Like, you're constantly thinking, like, who's here trying to hurt me, you know? What did I do to get this person to try and, like, ruin me?* *P2: It's the fear of the unknown (School D, male participants, aged 14)* *When you don't know who it is like you just have the worst thoughts like, oh my God, that could be say my best friend like that's saying that to me. You don't know so you're automatically thinking the worst. (School D, female, aged 17)*
The Impact of Negative Overthinking on Victims Lives	*I think you overthink everything like not even on the subject of bullying but even if you are in a shop and you bought something then you are like 'oh I should have bought something else'…it's just part of your life (School A, female, aged 14)* *You probably wouldn't be able to sleep at night because you wouldn't stop thinking about it and you would be like tired… I will just keep thinking about it and I won't sleep or anything (School A, female, 16)* *If someone is saying something to you like constantly and it like is repetitive then you are going to start believing it is true yourself so like you probably shut yourself off from everybody because you feel like that is the best thing to do. You know you are nearly in*

	their way or like a burden if you are around like you know (School A, female, aged 16) *Yeah, and like the person that they're bullying is like, they're going to feel like more insecure about themselves because they don't know who's saying it about them. Like if it's like one person or like a whole group of people and like they might be like scared to go to like school the next day or something because they might not think that – they might think that people might not like them and stuff (School C, male, aged 17)* *Well, I guess they want to remain inconspicuous, kind of, like they don't want to be in the spotlight. And if their bully has been telling them that they're, like, small and they're not relevant and that kind of thing, like, they're going to believe that. Like, you're going to start eventually believing what your bully has been telling you. (School D, male, aged 14)* *Lose their self-confidence by like a huge amount and their self-image. And like they'd find it really hard to make friends because like they'd been hurt before by people and they wouldn't trust people. They wouldn't really go out of their comfort zone, I'd say. (School D, female, aged 17)*
Suicide as a Means of Escape	*The people who have committed suicide you would see it on Facebook that they have hung themselves and killed themselves, so like it must be from [cyber] bullying (School A, female, aged 14)* *And like it's so common with suicides like and young people…if you hear that someone has died from suicide you just automatically think that it was [cyber] bullying (School A, female, aged 16)* *They're thinking all day, oh, did he actually mean it, did he not, and then it gets stuck in your head the whole day. It's going around and around, and it might stay there for a week and then you might forget about it for a day and it'll come back and you're just - after a while it just gets too much. (School B, male, aged 14)* *Like if it was really bad, some people could commit suicide and stuff (School B, male, aged 14)* *If you say like kill yourself and you don't know he's suffering from depression then they could actually have been considering it before and that could reinforce that like (School B, male, aged 16)* *All three of them are linked, like, the cyberbullying and depression and suicide like, because like we said, cyberbullying, like, they*

don't know when to stop and like, they say depression is like a dark tunnel with no light, so basically, it just keeps getting worse and worse, like you can't find a way out, like and then, do you know, like, it might get so bad that the person might just, like, worst case scenario, like is…[suicide] (School B, male, aged 17)

There are so many horrific actions like suicide and depression occurring from [cyberbullying] so we need to try and help that, you know (School B, male, aged 17)

I've seen one there before, she took a picture of her in her underwear in front of the mirror and a load of the lads started sharing it around on Facebook and her dad's seen and then she just took her life because her dad's seen (School C, male, aged 16)

P3: People always say when someone dies, when something like that happens, it comes out people are saying, "Oh, he killed himself because he was being bullied," and they don't look at home life, his mental state, how – they don't look at anything else bar what someone said on the internet. It might even have been one isolated taken out context situation that is completely and utterly taken out of context and they blame that even though it might have been something completely different
P6: Their dad might have been beating them, they might have been depressed, they might have had suicidal thoughts other than that one time someone said on the internet.
P4: But they need to have blame, it's pinned on that, and there's the big, you know, committee "oh the internet is evil we need to censor it". (School C, males, aged 17)

Yeah, some people don't even mean half the stuff online…they'll just go at you and like basically try to say stuff to get you rattled up, but online they keep on doing it, bit by bit, until you just burst practically. (School C, male, aged 16)

P4 (male): Like, if you're going to go out, go with a bang, I guess. Make sure everybody knows, everybody can see. Like, see what you've done to me. See what you've made me do
P3 (female): So, really, maybe letting everyone else have a look at the pain that she's [cyber victim] felt. Like, how much everything's-how mean everyone's been to her and now she's gone (School D, aged 14)

Barriers to Help-Seeking

Participants highlighted that although young people are instructed to *"tell someone"* if they are affected by cyberbullying, "*it is not that easy*" to ask for help. While they demonstrated a desire among young people to seek support, they identified a number of barriers that constrain them from doing so. They articulated that, therefore, victims are forced to carry the burden of cyberbullying alone with negative consequences for their mental health and wellbeing (Table 6.2).

Needing Help Regarded as a Sign of Weakness

Analysis indicated that victims of cyberbullying experience a deep sense of shame which discourages them from seeking support. Participants stated that it is *"embarrassing"* for young people to admit that they have been targeted and *"upset"* by perpetrators of cyberbullying as this is viewed as an admission and disclosure of personal insecurities. They remarked that in spite of being hurt, victims often make light of perpetrators' actions in the company of their peers, in attempts to give the impression that they are unconcerned. Participants demonstrated a belief that young people should be able to cope with such problems independently. Needing adult intervention to deal with cyberbullying was viewed as a sign of *"weakness".*

Participants articulated that it was especially difficult for young males to admit that they struggled with victimisation. They indicated that young males put on a *"brave face"* and acted *"the hard man"* in response to cyberbullying as they were expected to appear capable and *"strong".* Some male participants stated that as young males were raised to convey a *"macho"* persona it was unfair and unrealistic to expect them to *"drop it"* and show emotion or admit to a mental health condition. They specifically mentioned feeling too embarrassed to initiate discussions about cyberbullying or mental health with male family members as they feared being perceived as *"soft"* or as a *"pussy".*

Young People Unable to Identify and Express feelings

Older participants, those aged 16-17, indicated that young people are unable to recognise or *"express"* the impact that cyberbullying had on their mental health. They admitted that they did not have the knowledge to make sense of or to articulate the negative thoughts and feelings that they experienced as a result of cybervictimisation. Participants admitted that they were aware of mental health terms such as *"anxiety"* and *"depression"* but struggled with defining them and with identifying the associated *"symptoms and signs".* They described how this lack of understanding generated fear in young people as they worried whether their feelings were normal, were in fact something more serious, or if they were overreacting. Further, many participants expressed concern about the wellbeing of their peers, and a desire to offer support. However, they indicated that young people did not have the capacity to recognise signs of distress in others, to broach the subject of mental health if necessary, or to respond appropriately to peers' requests for help.

Lack of Confidence in Parents' Ability to Provide Appropriate Support

A lack of confidence in parents' ability to provide appropriate support to victims was expressed. Given that parents did not have first-hand experience of growing up with cyber technology, it was perceived that they could not comprehend the significant role it played in young people's lives. Participants remarked that parents could not *"empathise"* with young people's experience of cyberbullying and often dismissed the *"reality"* and *"extent"* of cybervictimisation and its impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing. Participants indicated that in response to young people's attempts to discuss cyberbullying parents advised young people "*not to look at it"* or to *"just put [their] phone away".* They also highlighted that young people fear confiscation of their mobile phones by parents in attempts to resolve cyberbullying and that this deterred young people from disclosing to them.

Many participants perceived that parents were disinclined to discuss mental health and as a result were dismissive of young people's attempts to voice concerns. They articulated that their parents were not *"sympathetic"* to young people's day-to-day struggles with mental health as they only considered the extremes of mental illness to be an issue. Participants attributed this *"old-fashioned"* approach to their parents' upbringing during a time when mental health struggles were *"brushed over".*

A minority of participants expressed a desire to protect their parents from the pain of knowing that their child was in *"terrible pain"* as a result of cyberbullying. These participants were reluctant to report cyberbullying to their parents as they perceived that their lack of knowledge about the cyber world and inability to protect their child would cause them undue upset and worry.

Inappropriate School Intervention

Participants anticipated that cyberbullying will worsen with the expansion of technology and expressed a desire to "*learn how to cope"* and talk about their experiences and feelings *"more openly*". The majority of participants articulated that young people look to their school for support and guidance with regard to cyberbullying and mental health as this is the setting where their day-to-day lives play out; however, they did not believe that young people's needs were being met in this context. In particular, participants aged 16-17 were frustrated that schools focused on topics which they perceive as irrelevant to their lives while ignoring those considered of importance to young people including *"sex education, mental health, and cyberbullying".* They were disillusioned that in spite of discussions about cyberbullying and suicide in the *"news"* and in *"politics",* in schools, where young people had an expectation of support, mental health was the *"elephant in the room".* Participants expressed disbelief at their schools lack of action to support young people with their mental health particularly following the suicide of their female peer. They indicated that silence on these issues contributed to young people's paranoia that they were *"overreacting"* and *"making a big deal"* out of nothing.

Across the different schools and year groups, participants indicated that the education they received on cyberbullying in school was inadequate and unhelpful as it focused on cyber security and covered *"the same boring thing over and over again".* They experienced this process as *"patronising"* as it ignored young people's proficiency in technology and social media. They argued that advice to *"block"* perpetrators or not to *"add people you don't know"* was inconsistent with and ignorant of young people's use of social media. Further, many articulated that school efforts to address cyberbullying were *"awkward"* as in-class discussions were often delivered by teachers or by guidance counsellors who also had a teaching role. Participants indicated that they did not feel comfortable discussing personal or sensitive issues with someone who would be teaching them at another time and emphasised that their openness in the focus group discussion was facilitated by the absence of school staff.

Teachers' efforts to intervene in episodes of cyberbullying were described as "*quick-fix*" and superficial. Participants expressed little confidence in the sincerity of their offers of help or their ability to provide meaningful support. The majority highlighted that in attempts to *"move the situation on fast"* teachers were likely to encourage young people to *"be friends"* in response to a disclosure of cyberbullying. Participants emphasised that this is an unfair and unrealistic expectation which belittles victims' experiences. Further, they also highlighted that this form of intervention often results in victims being labelled as *"rats"* for reporting cyberbullying to an adult and leads to an intensification of victimisation when the disclosure is brought to the attention of perpetrators.

Table 6.2 Barriers to Help-Seeking -Illustrative Quotes

Sub-Themes	Illustrative Quotes
	Like I just feel like they just put it behind them and feel that they can get rid of it themselves and that there is no point in telling people because it is not really a big deal (School A, female, age 16) You need to tell someone but at the same time you can't (School B, male aged 14).
Needing Help Regarded as a Sign of Weakness	P5: Because you don't want to be known that you are weak or that you have been bullied or stuff RD: So if you admit that you are feeling hurt by it you see that as a weakness, why? P6: Because like you can't cope with it, you're not dealing with it, you have to get adults into it (School A, females, age 14) I think the fear of telling someone is like what mostly stops people from coping with it. There is a fear of being judged (School A, female, age 16) P4: It's like a whole weight on your shoulders until you tell someone. Like it would be really hard to tell someone. RD: Why is it so hard? P6: Because you're meant to deal with it yourself. It's almost like you're kind of weak if you can't sort something like this out. P1: It's just the initial thing of saying 'I am being bullied'. It's just that initial sentence, going to your parents. P6: It's embarrassing as well. P1: It kind of hurts you because it's become like a real reality you know (School B, male, aged 14) Yeah, because there's no protection. There's nobody there. Well, your parents are there but you don't want to go to them and say you're being bullied because then you sound, you don't want your parents to know you're not capable of defending yourself I guess, you know (School B, male, aged 14) P2: Yeah, they [boys] put on a brave face, like. RD: Why do you think boys do that? P4: You just act the hard man, like. P1: It's the way we were brought up. P4: Do not show emotion, like. P2: It's just you're seen as, like, weak if you do, like, it is the status of men, kind of, like… P4: So society has looked at it for so long like that, if men show emotion like that like, it shows them as weak and just 'oh, he's

	not really as much of a man as this person' like that. You could go through the same thing, like (School B, males, aged 17) But you've also been putting on this face, like the big, macho person for the last how many years? And now, all of a sudden, you just expect them to drop it and say, 'Oh, I actually have depression' (School B, male, aged 17) You don't want to be damaged…You don't want people to think you're small or you're weak or you're insecure or you're easy to attack. You want to look big, you want to look strong (School D, female, aged 17) I'd say you'd tell your friends but you'd be kind of like messing. You'd be like oh, look what your man said to me and you'd try and like make it light and make it funny, you wouldn't let your friends know how much it had hurt you (School D, female, aged 17)
Young People Unable to Label and Express Feelings	Or like a lot of people can't put into words how they feel, like express how they feel (School A, female, age 16) I don't exactly know how to know if I have anxiety or how you know you have something. Like no one knows if they have anxiety or not (School A, female, age 16) It is very hard to put it into words like you may be feeling a certain way and it is hard to describe how you are feeling to someone else because they are not going through what you are going through so I think that it is important that people learn how to be able to express their feelings (School A, female, age 16) Like, I don't really know, like, depression, is it different, like? I don't, like, understand, like, is it different, like, for everyone else? I don't even know how to ask the question, like (School B, male, age 17) People our age don't know what depression is (School B, male, age 17) It's hard to know if someone is depressed though, if there were symptoms or signs, I just wish there were, I don't know like. We should know, like, the symptoms or the signs of someone with depression. If a person's hand was broken, you could see it, like, but if their mind was, kind of, broken, you'd never see it, like. It just doesn't work like that (School B, male, age 17)

	Or even like because mental health is such a huge thing at the moment, for the past few months so I think that like even for us to learn about signs you know the signs, you know on social media, a lot of people can be like, you know, Tweet things [about mental health] and you're kind of like 'oh my God'. And then you'd say to someone and they're like, no, I think they're okay. It's just probably spur of the moment. Like signs like that (School D, female, 17)
Lack of Confidence in Parents' Ability to Provide Appropriate Support	I feel like [parents] could nearly judge, they don't understand the reality of it because OK like my mother might be on Facebook but she has like ten friends like you know, but they don't see the reality of it whereas that is our life. My life is on social media (School A, female, aged 17) And if you told your parents it would make them feel bad that they didn't protect you from it like (School B, male, age 14) And the thing about depression, people always think depression is like severe depression. They don't think about moderate depression and mild depression. So, you could go to your parents and say, "Oh, I feel like I am depressed," and they're like, "No, you're not depressed. Depression is when you can't get out of bed". It's not always! (School C, female, aged 16) We grew up through it all and they didn't really. They didn't have cyberbullying when they were young. They don't know the extent of that like (School B, male, aged 17) I don't think people have realised the effect of cyberbullying yet, like, older people, how bad it actually is. Like, we sort of understand more because we might not have experienced it, but we've seen like aspects around it. I don't think older people realise it's happening as bad as it actually is, because, like, every day we could just go on Facebook and we see these things happening, but the older generation wouldn't really, like (School B, male, aged 17) Some parents would just be like, "Oh, just put your phone away so, like, just don't look at it." (School B, male, aged 17) When it affects you, like when [parents] do something that actually has an impact on you and what people think of you. You're like 'okay, no. Please don't do this'. It's like I don't want my mum to like take my phone and that affect me, I'd be bored (School C, female, aged 17)

	P5: I think like even if you were to be bullied or if you were like upset about a comment or something from someone and then like you went to sit down with your mum or whoever, your dad, whatever, and talked about it, I think like my mum would be very like, ‘oh, you’re so stupid. Why would you be upset about something like that? Why would that affect you?’ And then – P3: That really makes it worse then. P5: They wouldn’t get to the point that like they won’t realise that you’re really upset about this. They kind of dismiss it and just be kind of like ‘why would you be so stupid enough to let that affect you?’ P5: They don’t understand. P1: My mum would always say, ‘Oh, you should be focussing on your school and on your studies and shouldn’t be like – ‘ P1: Take your phone then like (School D, male and female participants, aged 14) And you, kind of, don’t want your parents to know that you're in terrible pain. Like, no parent wants to hear that…that their child is being bullied and is struggling mentally and it’s, like, crippling depression. Like, you know that that would probably ruin them (School D, male, aged 14) Yeah, like I know that like if I told my mum or something, she’d go ballistic and absolutely take my phone away from me and all that. And I’m like no, that’s my phone (School D, female, aged 17)
Inappropriate School Interventions	Because in like all these talks [in schools] they make it sound so easy like that just tell someone like it so easy but it is not that easy (School A, female, aged 14) P1: [Mental health] is just like an elephant in the room and no one wants to address it so they just leave it and sugar coat it and no one sees how much of a big deal it actually is P2: And it's becoming a big problem P1: It's so common P2: Everyone is talking about how bad it is but no one is doing anything about it. RD: Who talks about how bad it is? P1: Like even in politics and stuff you would at least hear someone say 'there is so much suicides'. P2: On the news it would be like 'oh this person' P1: And there's so much bullying and mental health and like people being down in themselves and so much teenagers on anti-depressants and stuff because they are being bullied.

RD: So you are kind of hearing it in the news, in the media that mental health is a big issue but then at the same time you feel like no one is doing anything about it?
P8: But there was like a tweet, I read it and it was like am teachers are more concerned about, because we have like a week for World Book Day but when mental health day comes along no one did anything about it.
P2: And you have a week for like, what is it Irish week, Seachtain na Gaeilge [Irish language week] and then it's just then there is nothing on bullying or anything
P1: All they care about is our Irish language, they are trying to get back all the 'culchies' and stuff but yet there are people that are feeling so down in themselves and people are like 'oh you will be grand.' (School A, females, aged 16)

P3: I'd be afraid in case that [teachers] went off and told people…In case if the teachers started gossiping because you wouldn't know like because if it was kind of serious she would obviously have to tell someone.
P1: I don't know I think the guidance counsellor in the school, she is a teacher also so
P3: Ya I feel like it should be someone outside the school.
P2: I would rather if it was someone from outside the school.
P3: It's hard to talk to a teacher who is also a guidance counsellor (School A, aged 16)

It [educational talk] was like if you’re being bullied go straight to your teacher and tell your parents. It was misinformative like it made it seem like it was that easy…It’s not that simple (School B, male, aged 14)

Yeah. I feel like a lot of the time [victims] keep it to themselves until it’s too bad and then you tell the teacher. Like I feel like sometimes like teachers don’t know what to do about it. Like they just – like they tell the person stop but like it never really stops (School C, female, aged 14)

I feel like they try to move the situation like on fast like get it over like in a day and like just say like okay, guys. They just hear the story and honestly, it’s okay guys. You guys should be friends. They don’t really say what like what this person should have done. They just say be friends. (School C, female, aged 14)

[Cyberbullying] is just one of those things that like is always going to happen like, that’s why it’s only going to get worse in a way because technology’s always building, so I think coping, and like teaching people the effects of what can help people and outcomes and what can actually happen to you (School C, female, aged 16)

You need the coping skills need to be taught, not like in the way that we were told about cyberbullying which was basically, ‘It’s bad, don’t do it’…You need to teach people, ‘This is how you cope with it, this is how you talk to people’ (School C, male, age 17)

P4: I want somebody to talk to me like you're [focus group facilitators] talking to us, like, you're letting us speak and you're letting us speak maturely. Like, I don’t have to listen to you, like, giving me a whole lecture on how to, like… we’re talking one-to-one, like, we’re in a small room. We can just talk and it’s simple (School D, male, aged 14)

P2: Yeah, we need someone to talk to us instead of someone saying, “This is Fa-ce-book. Fa-ce-book is bad.”
(Group laughing)
P4: It’s true, though. It’s true.
P3: That’s actually true (School D, male and female participants, aged 14)

P2: It [cyberbullying talk in school] was, kind of, patronising, kind of assuming that we didn’t know anything about technology, and it was going over the basics when we already learned that when we were five, you know?
P4: Yeah, like, I knew all of that from a young age.
P3: It was the exact same one as last year.
RD: So, what would you have preferred?
P2: Something more adult.
P4: Yeah.
P2: Like, actually treat us the way we are and realise that we actually know a lot more than you think we do.
P4: Yeah, like, it’s a serious problem.
P3: It’s like they were showing us like Snapchat and Instagram and we were like we all have it so we know how to block somebody. (School D, male and female participants, aged 14)

Like if this was a teacher here now we wouldn't say half the stuff we are saying to you now (School A, female, aged 16)

6.5 Discussion

This study contributes to the limited qualitative research on cyberbullying. Specifically, it gives voice to young people's perceptions of the mental health impacts of cybervictimisation and the barriers that prevent victims from seeking social support. Young people's perspectives on the impact of cybervictimisation vary in the literature (Cassidy et al., 2013). This study supports the view that the unique features the of cyber world increase the severity of cyberbullying over and above that of traditional bullying and contribute to considerable psychological distress in victims (Dooley et al., 2009; Langos, 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Nocentini et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2008; Tokunaga, 2010). Cyberbullying was described by participants as more psychological in its nature and impact than traditional bullying with increased deleterious effect on the mental health and wellbeing of victims. Findings indicate that the negative impact of cyberbullying on young people's mental health manifests as a negative and enduring internal dialogue fuelled by the omni-present, pervasive, and permanent nature of cyber interactions. Participants reported a lack of confidence among young people regarding their ability to cope and identified several perceived barriers to seeking social support. They believed that suicide is a viable escape route for cyber victims entrapped by cybervictimisation and the ensuing negative thought process. Findings are considered in the context of existing evidence and theory and recommendations are made for research, policy, and practice.

The Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping provides a framework to understand young people's experience as described in this study (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). This theory suggests that when faced with a stressor, such as cybervictimisation, an individual first evaluates the situation to ascertain if it is a threat and second assesses the changeability of the situation and their coping resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Decisions made at each stage determine the implementation of either problem-focused or emotion-focused coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Problem-focused strategies, such as seeking support, address the problem and prevent it from reoccurring while emotion-focused approaches direct the issue inward and can take the form of avoidance, escape, or feelings of helplessness (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987; Parris et al., 2012; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015; Völlink et al., 2013). Active or problem-focused strategies have been shown to mitigate the negative impacts of cybervictimisation while passive or emotion related coping is associated with depressive symptoms and is detrimental to victims health and wellbeing (Machmutow et al., 2012; Parris et al., 2012; Perren, Corcoran, Cowie, Dehue, Garcia, Mc Guckin, Sevcikova, Tsatsou, & Vollink, 2012). In line with previous research, findings from this study indicate that victims of cyberbullying experience hopelessness in the face of cybervictimisation. Feeling powerless to change their situation they commonly internalise problems and engage in ineffective emotion related coping (Völlink et al., 2013). It is of note that young people in this study described negative emotional reactions in response to the receipt of ambiguous messages online. It is possible that because of uncertainty regarding the intent of the sender, young people are unable to establish if the situation is threatening. Therefore, they remain stuck at this stage of the Stress and Coping framework and are restricted from engaging effective coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Further, participants perceived that parents, school staff, and the media are primarily concerned with extreme cases of cyberbullying and are, therefore, dismissive of episodes considered less serious. The absence of validation appears to encourage rumination in victims as they try to determine if they are right to be upset or are just overreacting. The literature supports the notion that adults lack of validation regarding young people's bullying experiences contributes to their distress (Mishna & Alaggia, 2005)

This study indicates that cyber victims perceived inability to seek support maintains and exacerbates feelings of distress, hopelessness, and entrapment. Seeking social support is consistently identified as an effective strategy in response to cybervictimisation (Perren, Corcoran, Cowie, Dehue, Garcia, Mc Guckin, Sevcikova, Tsatsou, & Vollink, 2012; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015). However, in support of previous research, this study demonstrates cyber victims reluctance to report cyberbullying (Dooley et al., 2012; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). Participants reiterated a number of barriers to help seeking behaviour previously identified in the literature (Betts & Spenser, 2017; Cassidy et al., 2013; Hamm et al., 2015; Jacobs et al., 2015; Mishna et al., 2009; Parris et al., 2012; Šléglová & Černá, 2011; Smith et al., 2008). Of note, this study's findings indicate that embarrassment at being targeted by cyberbullying and shame due to needing mental health support discourage young people from disclosing victimisation. Young males in particular were viewed as unlikely to report victimisation as male expressions of vulnerability were perceived to be in contrast with societal ideals of masculinity. Stigma is widely reported in the literature as a barrier to help seeking for mental health (Gulliver, Griffiths, & Christensen, 2010; Rickwood et al., 2005).

An important contribution of this study is its identification that a lack of emotional competence may prevent help-seeking in victims of cyberbullying. Emotional competence is the ability to identify, describe, understand, and manage emotions in an effective way (Rickwood et al., 2005). Reflecting the experience of participants in this study, young people with low emotional competence are unlikely to have the language and skills to recognise, interpret, and disclose emotional experiences thereby restricting opportunities for the provision of support and maintaining negative effect (Rickwood, Deane, & Wilson, 2007).

In previous studies young people reported that they delete, avoid, or block disparaging messages as a way of coping with cyberbullying and these coping strategies are recommended by young people and researchers alike (Cassidy et al., 2013; Jacobs et al., 2015; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Tokunaga, 2010). In contrast, findings from this study indicate that young people are unlikely to avoid social media due to their *"fear of missing out"* on peer interactions. Disengaging from social media in response to cybervictimisation was not raised as a potential coping strategy in any of the focus groups. This highlights the integral role of cyber technology in young people's lives and the influence that it has on their health and wellbeing. This study indicates that rather than distance themselves from harmful content, cyber victims revisit it obsessively in attempts to establish the causes and consequences of their victimisation. This behaviour is facilitated by the omni-present, pervasive, and permanent nature of cyber interactions. Findings indicate that cyber victims internalise their problems in the form of both rumination and worry, unproductive and negative thought processes which exacerbate and maintain negative effect (Hong, 2007; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Rumination involves repetitively and passively going over past events, wondering why they happened, and trying to establish meaning; it serves to convince the individual that they are in a hopeless position and so they remain in a negative state unable to take action to address the issue (Hong, 2007; Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008). Rumination is considered to be a significant factor in the onset and maintenance of depression. The literature indicates that a focus on negative thoughts prevents problem solving in stressful situations and as such sustains a depressed mood (Hong, 2007). Cyberbullying is strongly associated with depression (Bottino et al., 2015) and findings from this study support research with college-age adults which found that rumination mediates the association between cybervictimisation and depressive symptoms (Feinstein, Bhatia, & Davila, 2014). Participants in the current study described a *"deepening depression"* in adolescent cyber victims in response to inescapable negative thoughts fuelled by the features of cyber technology.

Worry, although a similar process to rumination, is future oriented, and is described as a negative chain of thoughts focused on anticipated negative outcomes (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2008); it is a defining feature of anxiety disorders which are common in victims of cyberbullying (Fisher et al., 2016; Hong, 2007; Kowalski et al., 2014). Worrying unearths ways to avoid or cope with future negative occurrences, such as the realisation of threats made by anonymous perpetrators or the potential negative outcomes of seeking social support as identified in this study. In concurrence with symptoms of social anxiety, participants in the current study also indicated that cyber victims worry about inciting criticism by saying or doing the wrong thing and alter their behaviour accordingly or withdraw from their peers to avoid making mistakes (Pabian & Vandebosch, 2016). In line with previous research, this study indicates cyber victims experience sleep disturbances, concentration difficulties, and school avoidance in victims of cyberbullying (Hamm et al., 2015; Sourander, Brunstein Klomek, Ikonen, & et al., 2010). According to the evidence, sleep plays a crucial role in the regulation of emotion among adolescents (Shochat, Cohen-Zion, & Tzischinsky, 2014); it is possible, therefore, that sleep disturbances, caused by rumination and worry, exacerbate psychological distress in victims of cyberbullying. It is of note that previous research demonstrates increased suicide attempts in young people who sleep less than eight hours per night (McMahon, 2017).

The association between cyberbullying and suicidal behaviours is well established in the literature (John et al., 2018; Katsaras et al., 2018; Kowalski et al., 2014; van Geel et al., 2014). This is a serious concern as suicide is the second most common cause of death in young people worldwide (Hawton et al., 2012). Research shows that depressive symptoms mediate the relationship between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation, particularly in females who are more likely to internalise negative situations than their male peers (Medrano et al., 2018; Mitchell et al., 2016). This study highlights young people’s perception that suicide becomes a viable option for cyber victims who experience depression in response to internal entrapment in the form of incessant rumination and worry and external entrapment in the form of inescapable victimisation (Gilbert & Allan, 1998). According to the integrated motivational–volitional model of suicidal behaviour (O'Connor & Kirtley, 2018) entrapment drives the emergence of suicidal ideation and intent. Using this theory as a framework, findings from the current study suggest that defeat and humiliation in response to cybervictimisation are maintained by the emotion focused coping strategies adopted by cyber victims. Relentless victimisation, facilitated by the omni-presence of cyber technology, and incessant rumination and worry, fuelled by the ambiguous, pervasive and permeant nature of cyber interactions, contribute to feelings of entrapment. The sense of entrapment is bolstered by cyber victims’ sensitivity to the perceived social evaluation of others and their inability to seek social support. With no prospect of escape, cyber victims may perceive suicide as the only way out. O'Connor and Kirtley (2018) hypothesise that exposure to inappropriate representations of suicide via traditional and new media channels may increase the likelihood that suicidal ideation will escalate to suicidal behaviour. Of note, findings from this study indicate that young people are frequently exposed to accounts of suicide in young victims of cyberbullying via the media, including news outlets, television talk shows, and social media platforms. This may contribute to modelling or imitation of suicidal behaviour in cyber victims (Luxton et al., 2012; O'Connor & Kirtley, 2018).

Strengths and Limitations

The involvement of young people as co-researchers is an important and novel strength of this research. The Advisory Group provided a unique perspective on the design, conduct, and interpretation of this study thereby facilitating the appropriate and meaningful participation of their peers as research participants. To avoid socially desirable responses in the focus group setting, participants were not asked about their personal experiences of cybervictimisation, however, many participants volunteered this information. It is likely that this is a direct result of the safe physical and social space created through the involvement of the Advisory Group. However, it was not known if participants were victims of cyberbullying and, therefore, findings should be interpreted as representing young people's general perceptions of the mental health impacts of cybervictimisation. One-to-one interviews with cyber victims, although not favoured by young people, may produce different results. It is important to note that participants in this study had experienced the suicide of a female peer in the months prior to data collection. It is possible that this influenced the strong focus on suicide during the focus groups and so related findings should be interpreted with this in mind. However, the link between cybervictimisation and suicide is well established in the literature and this study provides insight into young people's perceptions of the pathways leading to this outcome. As with all qualitative studies, the generalisability of our findings is limited. However, this studies concurrence study with much of the related literature suggests that they are not unique to this location.

Implications

The risk to the mental health and wellbeing of young people exposed to cyberbullying warrants greater attention in research, policy, and practice. Findings from this study suggest that schools are not meeting young people's needs regarding cyberbullying and mental health, highlighting instead inappropriate and ineffective cyberbullying intervention efforts. There is a need for school-based interventions which improve young people’s coping skills and reduce feelings of entrapment. Interventions should focus on the removal of barriers which prevent young people from engaging in help-seeking behaviours. The young people involved in this study expressed a need for mental health education, specifically, to learn more effective ways of coping with distress. Strategies to increase young people’s emotional competence should be implemented within the school setting to empower young people to identify, describe, understand, and manage their emotions (Rickwood et al., 2005). Further, efforts should be made to improve young people’s mental health literacy, that is their “*knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition, management, or prevention*” (Jorm et al., 1997). The literature recommends that these skills should be taught before the need for them arises (Rickwood et al., 2005). As findings from this study indicate that young people in the junior cycle are vulnerable to cyberbullying, efforts should be initiated at primary school level.

Popular anti-bullying programmes involve components delivered by school staff (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). However, in support of previous research (McMahon, 2017), findings from this study indicate that this approach may discourage the meaningful participation of young people. Future research should explore the role and impact of the facilitator in the implementation of school-based interventions. Including external facilitators, rather than teachers or guidance counsellors, in their delivery may enhance existing efforts. In addition, young people indicated a preference for non-judgemental participatory initiatives involving peer discussion groups, accessible language, and in which young people are treated with respect.

Interventions should also be targeted at potential support networks particularly peers, parents, and school staff to foster an environment that encourages help-seeking and to ensure appropriate and effective responses to disclosures of cyberbullying. As noted in previous research with school principals there is a need for training, resources, workshops, and guidelines for school staff (Foody et al., 2018). Additionally, parents must be empowered to understand and engage with the cyber world. Focusing on emotional competence and mental health literacy in schools, as mentioned above, will empower peers to support each other. In the knowledge that victims are currently unlikely to report victimisation, those in contact with young people must be enabled to identify and take steps to remedy signs of distress. As well as peers, parents, and school personnel, this may include primary care services including general practitioners, families, youth services, communities, sporting organisations, and/or other clubs or outlets in which young people are involved. Findings from this study suggest that social withdrawal, lack of concentration, school avoidance, and fatigue may indicate distress in young people. It is worth noting that participants in this study used the term "*overthinking*" to describe the mental health impact of cybervictimisation. Adults should be mindful that the terms used by young people to describe their emotions may not obviously indicate distress. In the instance of a disclosure it is important that adults listen to and validate victims' experiences. Young people should be reassured that their concerns are legitimate, significant, and deserving of attention and support (Vaillancourt et al., 2017). Any course of action should be developed collaboratively with the victim and, importantly, acted upon.

Finally, it is vital that media outlets adhere to guidelines for the safe reporting of suicide in victims of cyberbullying to reduce the likelihood of imitative suicidal behaviour (Etzersdorfer & Sonneck, 1998). Also, social media platforms must ensure the monitoring and removal of content that inappropriately represents or glamorises suicidal behaviour or cyberbullying.

6.6 Conclusion

Young people in this study described cyberbullying as more psychological in nature and impact than traditional bullying with increased deleterious effect on the mental health and wellbeing of victims. Participants perceived suicide as a viable escape route for young victims defeated and entrapped by cybervictimisation and their own negative thoughts. Future research should explore school-based interventions to develop young people's emotional competence and mental health literacy, and empower potential support networks including peers, parents, and school personnel. Involving young people in the development of any prevention and intervention strategies will ensure informed efforts to address cybervictimisation and youth mental health.

7 Discussion

7.1 Chapter overview

This concluding chapter summarises and integrates the main findings presented within this thesis. The findings are considered in the context of the existing evidence-base, the strengths and limitations of the research are outlined, and implications for research, policy, and practice are discussed.

7.2 Summary of Research Findings

Positioned within the 'Development' stage of the MRC framework for intervention development (Craig et al., 2008), the overall aim of the research within this thesis was to explore young people's perspectives on cyberbullying in order to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon and inform the development of effective and appropriate prevention and intervention strategies. While young people are experts in their technologically enhanced lives, their voice is largely absent from the current discourse on cyberbullying (Cross et al., 2015; Spears & Kofoed, 2013).Therefore, this research makes a valuable contribution to the existing knowledge base in that it privileges youth voice on the nature, causes, and consequences of the phenomenon and highlights young people's priorities with regard to intervention content development namely: the non-consensual distribution of nude images (Chapter five) and the mental health impact of cybervictimisation (Chapter six).

7.2.1 The Nature of Cyberbullying

The meta-ethnography presented in Chapter three provides an in-depth interpretation of young people's perceptions of the nature of cyberbullying. Within young people's conceptualisation cyberbullying can occur whether there is intent to harm or not as young people determine the occurrence of cybervictimisation based on victim impact, as well as intent. Repetition is key in their conceptualisation, it serves to differentiate one-time acts of aggression or joking behaviour from cyberbullying. However, the findings support the interpretation that repetition is altered in cyber space where it can occur in the form of direct multiple attacks by the perpetrator and/or through the execution of an act in the public domain where one-time actions can have repetitive effects (Cassidy et al., 2013; Cuadrado-Gordillo & Fernández-Antelo, 2016; Langos, 2012). Within young people's conceptualisation of cyberbullying a power imbalance influenced by the physical, psychological, and social characteristics of perpetrators and victims may exist where the perpetrator is identifiable, but this is not a prerequisite factor. The notion that power is constructed by technology has been proposed in previous studies, however, there is no consensus on the factors that contribute to power relations in cyberbullying (Cassidy et al., 2013; Dooley et al., 2009; Dredge, Gleeson, & Garcia, 2014; Kowalski et al., 2014; Langos, 2012; Menesini et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2015; Vaillancourt et al., 2017). This research indicates that young people's habitual use of cyber technology and the features of the cyber world serve to establish and maintain asymmetrical power relations between perpetrators and victims. Perpetrators have the ability to exercise power at their discretion by drawing on the affordances of the cyber world. As identified in Chapters three, five, and six, these include the potential for anonymous perpetration, ambiguous interactions, the permanency of online content, public victimisation, constant access to victims, and the evasion of responsibility for cyberbullying behaviour. Further, the research within this thesis identified several barriers which prevent victims from seeking support thereby empowering perpetrators to maintain a cycle of victimisation that in some instances traverses the physical and cyber worlds.

The meta-ethnography (Chapter one) found that young people perceive visual cyberbullying as particularly damaging. This was reflected in the co-designed qualitative study (Chapter five) which found that young people characterise the non-consensual distribution of nude images as a serious form of cyberbullying deserving of attention in intervention development. This behaviour involves a complex process that is produced by, and reinforces, gender power dynamics and peer pressures (Richardson, 2010). Young males coerce their female peers to send nude images which on receipt are screenshot and intentionally and non-consensually redistributed in group chats. Owing to the sharing capabilities of social media, group chat members have the potential to further distribute the images enabling an infinite number of witnesses and facilitating repeat victimisation. Consistent with previous research, findings from the co-designed study indicate the presence of a harmful sexual double standard in response to cybervictimisation through the non-consensual distribution of nude images (Chapter five) (Lippman & Campbell, 2014; Ringrose et al., 2013). Female victims are blamed and vilified while male perpetrators are rewarded with social credibility. In concurrence with the meta-ethnography (Chapter three), which demonstrated that in some cases victimisation spans the physical and cyber worlds, findings in Chapter five that girls victimised through non-consensual distribution are often subjected to further abuse online and in school in the form of verbal, psychological, and social bullying, particularly from female peers.

7.2.2 The Factors Associated with Cyberbullying

The meta-ethnography revealed that intentional cyberbullying can be motivated by internal factors including jealousy and revenge or the desire to impress peers and obtain a higher social status (Chapter three). Again, this finding was reflected in the Irish context specifically in regard to the non-consensual distribution of nude images (Chapter five). Findings indicate that this behaviour is sometimes motivated by revenge but more often this premeditated process of sexual exploitation, objectification, and cybervictimisation is motivated by boys' desire to impress their male peers. The meta-ethnography (Chapter one) further indicates that intentional cyberbullying may also be externally motivated by the features of the cyber world as they allow perpetrators to cause harm while evading responsibility for their actions. In particular, the potential for anonymity serves to empower and motivate those who are unlikely to engage in perpetration in the physical world.

In young people's conceptualisation, inadvertent cyberbullying is determined by victims' perception of events as influenced by the contextual and external factors which shape their interpretation of online interactions (Chapter three). These include their relationship with the sender or exogenous factors such as school and family stressors. The capabilities of the cyber world also influence victims' perceptions of harm. This research indicates that public content is perceived as particularly harmful due to the potential scale of the audience and subsequently the potential for widespread humiliation and reputational damage (Chapter three, five & six). In this way behaviour intended as jocular can progress to cyberbullying if it is executed in the public domain and is perceived as damaging by the subject.

Findings from the meta-ethnography (Chapter three) indicate that victims are intentionally targeted because of physical and social characteristics including appearance, sexuality, personality, friends (or lack of), and popularity. Young people perceived perpetrators as insecure and recognised cyberbullying acts as attempts to enhance their self-esteem. This is reiterated in findings related to the non-consensual distribution of nude images (Chapter five) which indicate that girls perceived as attractive are more likely to be victimised in this way as their images are viewed as more valuable on the masculinity market. Further, it is possible that for male perpetrators achieving the desired credibility from male peers following the distribution of an image contributes to increased self-esteem.

7.2.3 The Consequences of Cyberbullying

There is little qualitative research related to the mental health impacts of cybervictimisation and how these are experienced by young people. The co-designed study (Chapter six) found that cyberbullying was described by participants as more psychological in its nature and impact than traditional bullying with increased deleterious effect on the mental health and wellbeing of victims. Findings from this thesis indicate that the negative impact of cyberbullying on young people's mental health manifests as a negative and enduring internal dialogue. They demonstrate that rumination and worry are fuelled by the same features of cyber technology which contribute to asymmetrical power relations between victims and perpetrators as identified in the meta-ethnography (Chapter three): pervasive, public, anonymous, and ambiguous perpetration. This research identified several barriers which prevent victims from seeking social support. The inability to escape the situation maintains or exacerbate victims distress and young people involved in this research believed that the resultant feelings of hopelessness and entrapment lead to suicide among young victims of cyberbullying (Chapter six), a view which is supported by theoretical models of suicidal behaviour (Hawton et al., 2012; O'Connor & Kirtley, 2018). These findings provide useful insight into the to the increased negative health impact of cyberbullying over and above that of traditional bullying (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Bottino et al., 2015; Campbell et al., 2012; Gini & Espelage, 2014; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; John et al., 2018; van Geel et al., 2014).

7.2.4 Coping Mechanisms

Findings from this thesis (Chapter six) indicate that victims of cyberbullying commonly internalise their experiences and engage in ineffective emotion related coping in the form of rumination and worry rather than problem-focused strategies which may address cyberbullying and prevent it from reoccurring (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987; Parris et al., 2012; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015; Völlink et al., 2013). Young people themselves have suggested seeking social support as a way of coping with cyberbullying, however, in concurrence with previous research, this study demonstrates cyber victims reluctance to reach out for help (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987; Parris et al., 2012; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015; Völlink et al., 2013). This allows perpetrators to evade responsibility for their actions and continue their harmful behaviour without repercussion (Chapter three).

The research within this thesis identified several barriers which prevent young people from seeking social support. The meta-ethnography (Chapter three) and the co-designed study (Chapter six) indicate that in some instances the anonymous and ambiguous nature of cyberbullying makes it difficult for young people to prove cyber victimisation and as such acts as a deterrent to disclosure. A common theme throughout the research findings was young people’s lack of confidence in adults’ ability to provide appropriate support for cybervictimisation. Young people perceived that parents and teachers lack of first-hand experience with cyber technology in their youth encourages ill-considered actions to understand and address cyberbullying. Negative anticipation regarding the consequences of reporting cyberbullying to adults, such as an escalation of bullying or the restriction of access to cyber technology deters victims from seeking social support. Young people’s desire to be constantly connected to peers and fear of missing out appears to outweigh the risk and negative impact of cyberbullying highlighting the significance and power of this technology in young people’s lives (Chapter three and six).

Mental health stigma, the perception that individuals with mental health disorders are weak, flawed, and socially incompetent, is widely reported in the literature as a barrier to help seeking (Chandra & Minkovitz, 2007; Gulliver et al., 2010; Rickwood et al., 2005). Echoing this societal issue, findings from the co-designed study (Chapter five and six) indicate that embarrassment at being targeted by cyberbullying and shame due to needing mental health support discourage young people from disclosing victimisation. Highlighting the role of gender norms and expectations, young males were viewed as particularly unlikely to report victimisation as male expressions of vulnerability were perceived to be in contrast with societal ideals of masculinity (Chapter six). Similarly, female victims of non-consensual distribution were deemed unlikely to report victimisation due to the stigma associated with female expressions of sexuality. Females are blamed and vilified in response to victimisation through non-consensual distribution while male perpetrators are rewarded with social credibility (Chapter five). The co-designed study also indicates that low emotional competence and poor mental health literacy among young people prevent cyber victims from identifying, describing, understanding, and managing their emotions in an effective way thereby reducing their ability to engage social support (Chapter six).

7.2.5 School-Based Intervention

The research within this thesis highlights a dissatisfaction among young people with current prevention and intervention strategies. Schools play a key role in developing and enhancing young people’s wellbeing as they spend a large proportion of their time in school during their formative years (Department of Education and Skills, 2018). However, findings from the co-designed study (Chapter four, five and six) indicate that while young people perceive a role for schools, efforts in this setting are lacking, particularly in regard to mental health and wellbeing. Young people reported that the cyberbullying focused strategies they experienced were irrelevant, repetitive, and patronising and were not reflective of young people's reality of cyberbullying. Mirroring previous research in Ireland, young people felt that the predominantly teacher-led efforts were inappropriate and awkward (McMahon, 2017).

7.2.6 Communication is the Root Issue

Based on their interpretation of the findings from the co-designed study, the Young Person's Advisory Group identified the non-consensual distribution of nude images (Chapter five) and the mental health impact of cybervictimisation (Chapter six) as key issues for young people and priorities for consideration in intervention development. Using the participatory processes described in Chapter four, members were encouraged to think about what needs to change to support young people with these problems. Members identified three target groups including peers, parents, school personnel, as well as programme delivery. In reference to their peers, members suggested that practical information about cyber safety should be introduced at primary school level. With regard to the non-consensual distribution of nude images they recommended that prevention efforts should challenge the underlying social dynamics as outlined in Chapter five. Specifically, they expressed a preference for discussions around gender norms, peer pressure, bodily integrity, sexual expression and consent practices (Appendix B). In reference to mental health, members suggested that young people should be support with coping techniques to help them to better understand and process their emotions. Members recommended that parents and teachers undertake education and training in the nature and use of cyber technology. However, in adult efforts to support young people with cybervictimisation they concluded that for parents, teachers, and the delivery of prevention and intervention strategies "communication is the root issue" (Appendix B). Members recommended participatory sessions, akin to those utilised in Chapter four, on cyberbullying and mental health in which young people's perspectives are validated by adults. While the Advisory Group members perceived a role for schools in supporting young people, they expressed a preference for external parties, rather than teachers or guidance counsellors, to facilitate any in-class initiatives.

7.2.7 Young Person's Advisory Group

As young people are rarely asked about their participation in research (Hill, 2006; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012; Moore et al., 2016), young people's involvement as co-researchers in this project was evaluated to establish the effectiveness and acceptability of the approach (Chapter four). Findings indicate that young people were motivated to participate in the Advisory Group due to the relevance of the research topic to their lives, a lack of understanding and appropriate action from parents and schools with regard to cyberbullying, the desire to help others, and the opportunity to learn something new. The evaluation indicates that the elements necessary for the effective realisation of young people's participation (space, voice, audience, and influence) were present in this study (Lundy, 2007; Spears et al., 2011; United Nations, 1989). Young people reported a positive experience, improved knowledge and understanding with regard to cyberbullying, and personal development. It appears that the rights-based approach implemented in this research enabled the meaningful participation of young people as co-researchers and as research participants. Findings indicate that this is a feasible and worthwhile way of operationalising young people's involvement in health research which could be adapted to explore other topics of relevance to young people.

7.3 The Contribution of this Research

The research within this thesis reveals that the fundamental role of cyber technology in young people's lives, and the complexity and ambiguity of the cyber world in which they connect, should not be disregarded in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying. A number of studies report stronger associations between cyberbullying and anxiety, depressive symptomology, self-harm, and suicidal ideation than traditional bullying (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Bottino et al., 2015;

Campbell et al., 2012; Gini & Espelage, 2014; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; John et al., 2018; van Geel et al., 2014). However, the reasons for the increased negative impact have not been fully established. Using O'Connor and Kirtley's (2018) 'integrated motivational–volitional model of suicidal behaviour' to frame the findings within this thesis, it can be hypothesised that cybervictimisation (including the non-consensual distribution of nude images), facilitated by the unique features of the cyber world, leads to feelings of distress and defeat in victims. These negative feelings are bolstered by young people's tendency to engage emotion-focused coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) and their inability/reluctance to seek social support. This model suggests that these factors lead to suicidal ideation and intent which with exposure to volitional moderators such as inappropriate representations of suicide or access to means may result in suicidal behaviours. Therefore, in contribution, this research indicates that efforts should focus on the underlying social issues that motivate cyberbullying as well as addressing the factors which contribute to asymmetrical power relations and the negative impact on young people's mental health: the accessibility of victims, the ambiguity of cyber communication, public victimisation, anonymous perpetration, and the barriers which prevent victims from seeking social support.

7.4 Implications for Practice

This research supports the view that efforts to prevent and intervene in cyberbullying should focus on the education and empowerment of young people as well parents and school personnel to foster an environment that promotes the safe and appropriate use of cyber technology, encourages help-seeking and ensures appropriate and effective responses to disclosures of cyberbullying (Cassidy et al., 2013; Fenaughty & Harré, 2013; Foody et al., 2018).

The meta-ethnography (Chapter three) indicated that the absence of face-to-face communication complicates the interpretation of interactions in the online context so that behaviour with no malicious intent can escalate to cyberbullying based on the recipients' perception. Similarly, findings indicate that it may be difficult for perpetrators to recognise the negative impact of their actions due to the absence of physical cues leading to increased harshness in joking behaviour or intentional harm. Enabling young people to understand and navigate the cyber world safely and appropriately, developing cyber communication skills, encouraging empathy, and highlighting the challenge of interpretation online, may reduce escalations to cyberbullying (Elsaesser et al., 2017). This strategy can be facilitated by parents and schools; however, this will require advance education and training for adults in order to develop their cyber literacy. With regard to public victimisation and the permanency of online content the providers of the social media platforms on which damaging content is circulated have a responsibility to protect their users given the potential negative impact on victims' mental health and wellbeing identified in this research and elsewhere (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Bottino et al., 2015; Campbell et al., 2012; Gini & Espelage, 2014; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; John et al., 2018; van Geel et al., 2014).

The promotion of positive opportunities for building self-esteem may be of benefit in reducing cyberbullying that is motivated by jealousy, while training in conflict resolution and positive coping skills may serve to mitigate the risks of cyber-revenge. Regarding cyber-victimisation through the non-consensual distribution of nude images and the sexual double standard in response to female expressions of sexuality, gender-transformative interventions may be effective. As noted in Chapter five, these interventions actively challenge harmful stereotypes and norms, including male adherence to narrow and constraining definitions of masculinity, and seek to transform underlying gender inequalities (Banyard et al., 2019; Dworkin et al., 2015; Kato-Wallace et al., 2019). Evidence indicates these interventions may be effective in improving gender relations and equality and ultimately health outcomes (Banyard et al., 2019; Kato-Wallace et al., 2019).

Seeking social support is consistently identified as an effective strategy in response to cybervictimisation (Perren, Corcoran, Cowie, Dehue, Garcia, Mc Guckin, Sevcikova, Tsatsou, & Vollink, 2012; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015).This thesis indicates that intervention strategies should focus on dismantling the barriers that prevent victims of cyberbullying from disclosing victimisation and seeking help. Findings from this research reveal that young people negatively anticipate the consequences of reporting due to the likely dismissive or ill-considered responses of adults which may impact negatively on victims. Young people lack confidence in adults' ability to provide appropriate support to victims of cyberbullying (Chapter three, five, and six). It is of note that school personnel have also reported that they do not feel competent in dealing with this behaviour (Barnes et al., 2012; Foody et al., 2018). Therefore, this research supports the view that parents and school personnel require resources to provide appropriate and effective responses to disclosures of cyberbullying which validate young people's experiences (Cassidy et al., 2013; Fenaughty & Harré, 2013; Foody et al., 2018; Mishna & Alaggia, 2005). In particular, young people involved in this research indicated that improvements are needed in adult communication with young people. This research indicates that a rights-based approach to interactions with young people facilitates meaningful communication in which they feel heard and respected (Chapter four). Drawing on Lundy's rights-based model of participation (2007) young people should be provided with a safe physical and social space in which they are enabled to seek support without fear of consequence, they must be listened to and reassured that their concerns are legitimate, significant, and deserving of attention and support, any course of action should be developed collaboratively with victims and, importantly, acted upon. It is the right of young people to have a say in matters that affect them and involving them in the decision-making regarding action to address cyberbullying will ensure appropriate and safe responses (United Nations, 1989).

Young people anticipate that cyberbullying will worsen with the expansion of technology and subsequently expressed a desire to learn how to cope and express themselves more effectively (Chapter six). Findings from this research indicate that young people's inability to identify and express their feelings is a significant barrier to seeking support. The young people expressed a need for mental health education to enable them to support themselves as well as their peers. Efforts should focus on developing young people's emotional competence, specifically they must be supported to identify, describe, understand, and manage their emotions (Rickwood et al., 2005). Further, efforts should be made to improve young people's mental health literacy to aid the recognition, management, and/or prevention of mental health disorders (Jorm et al., 1997). These strategies may also serve to reduce the stigma associated with help seeking for mental health (Chandra & Minkovitz, 2007). As findings from this thesis indicate that young people in the junior cycle are vulnerable to cyberbullying, this education should be initiated in an age-appropriate manner at primary school level.

Popular anti-bullying programmes involve components delivered by school staff (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). However, echoing previous research (McMahon, 2017), findings from this thesis indicate that teacher-led initiatives related to personal or sensitive issues including mental health and wellbeing are unacceptable to young people. Employing external facilitators, rather than teachers or guidance counsellors, to deliver any in-school interventions may enhance existing and future efforts to support young people. There is potential to involve professionally trained youth workers in this role as they are equipped to provide the participatory, non-judgemental, informal, and deferential space that young people require (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2019). Future research should explore existing models. An example includes YOUCAN Youth Services in Canada who employ youth workers in the school setting to support young people with personal and social issues (YOUCAN Youth Services, 2020).

Research suggests that many teachers do not perceive cyberbullying as a problem in their schools (Barnes et al., 2012; Eden et al., 2013; Green et al., 2017; Li & Li, 2009). However, given young people's reluctance or inability to report cyberbullying school personnel, as well as parents must be made aware that it is a hidden and silent issue. In the knowledge that victims are currently unlikely to report victimisation (Dooley et al., 2012; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008), those in contact with young people must be enabled to identify and take steps to remedy signs of distress. As well as peers, parents, and school personnel, this may also include primary care services including general practitioners, families, youth services, communities, sporting organisations, and/or other clubs or outlets in which young people are involved.

Findings from this thesis suggest that social withdrawal, lack of concentration, school avoidance, and fatigue may indicate distress in young people.

7.5 Implications for Policy

As outlined in Chapter one, cyberbullying is recognised as a serious, complex, and multifaceted problem by policy-makers (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, 2015; UNESCO, 2017). The research within this thesis is supported by international and national policies initiatives which recommend the participation of young people in efforts to understand and address the phenomenon. In turn the findings of this work have the potential to enhance existing and future policy strategies as they provide insight into the nature, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying from young people's perspectives and highlight a number of potential prevention and intervention strategies which are grounded in young people's experience, values, and norms. In keeping with the public health perspective of this thesis, findings make the case for policy strategies which involve the empowerment of multiple and involvement of multiple stakeholders and sectors including health, education, technology, and community as well as families (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014; UNESCO, 2017).

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making and the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People in the Republic of Ireland (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014) advocate for the inclusion of youth voice in decision-making. The rights-based approach developed for use in this thesis (Chapter four) could be adapted and used to operationalise young people's participation in decision-making and priority setting.

As noted in Ireland's 'Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice' schools play a key role in developing and enhancing young people's wellbeing as they spend a large proportion of their time in school during their formative years (Department of Education and Skills, 2018). However, while this policy mentions bullying, it does not refer specifically to cyberbullying. Findings from this research could be used to update and improve this policy as they highlight the unique features of cyberbullying, the negative effects of cyber victimisation on victims' health and wellbeing, and importantly young people's belief that schools have a role to play in preventing and intervening in this issue.

The Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2013) focus specifically on the establishment of mandatory procedures in schools to deal with bullying, including cyberbullying. Research with school principals on the implementation of the procedures in schools indicates the provision of support for those affected by bullying (Foody et al., 2018). However, in contrast, findings from this research highlight young people's perception that current efforts to support victims are scarce, inappropriate, and ineffective (Chapter four, five and six). The findings of the research within this thesis highlight the deleterious impacts of cybervictimisation on the mental health and wellbeing of young people including their schoolwork and attendance and provide a number of potential strategies which could be employed to support young people. These findings have the potential to motivate improvements in these procedures and their increased implementation in schools. The mandate requires the provision of training for school staff and the appointment of a designated person to deal with cyberbullying although research indicates that less than half of schools have put this in place (Foody et al., 2018). Findings from this thesis reiterate the need for the education and training of school personnel but also indicate young people's preference that it would be beneficial if the designated support person was not a member of teaching staff but rather an independent party with whom young people can be open and honest without fear of judgement or repercussion.

'Connecting for Life' Ireland's National Strategy for the Reduction of Suicide 2015-2020 (Department of Health, 2015) also advocates for the implementation of the anti-bullying procedures (Department of Education and Skills, 2013). In support of this strategy our findings highlight cyberbullying as a potential risk factor for suicide and emphasises the need for attention to this issue in suicide prevention efforts. Of relevance, media outlets in recent years have given significant coverage to cases of suicide among young victims of cyberbullying (Vandebosch et al., 2013) and findings from this study indicate that young people are frequently exposed to such accounts via news outlets, television talk shows, and social media platforms (Chapter six). O'Connor and Kirtley (2018) hypothesise that exposure to inappropriate representations of suicide via traditional and new media channels may increase the likelihood that suicidal ideation will escalate to suicidal behaviour. Media outlets should, therefore, carefully consider their policies with regard to the reporting of cyberbullying and cyberbullying related suicide. It is vital that they adhere to guidelines for the safe reporting of suicide in victims of cyberbullying to reduce the likelihood of imitative suicidal behaviour (Etzersdorfer & Sonneck, 1998; Luxton et al., 2012; O'Connor & Kirtley, 2018; Samaritans, 2013). Also, social media platforms must ensure the monitoring and removal of content that inappropriately represents or glamorises suicidal behaviour or cyberbullying.

Finally, this research has the potential to make a significant impact at local level in the youth organisation which supported the research, in the schools in which the research was undertaken. Schools are required to have an anti-bullying policy in place (Department of Education and Skills, 2013) and findings can be used to inform the improvement of local policies and procedures for dealing with cyberbullying to ensure they reflect young people’s experiences, values, and norms. Parents/guardians and young people can also benefit from the research findings. Efforts will be made to ensure the dissemination of the findings to relevant stakeholders in an ethical and accessible manner. Evidence indicates that involving young people in the dissemination of research findings ensures their accessibility to young people (Smith et al., 2002). Further, Shaw et al. (2011) state that enabling young people to share the findings increases the impact on the audience thereby increasing the likelihood of stakeholder action. While the Advisory Group members have now completed secondary school, it is envisaged that young people from the participating schools will be involved in the planning and conduct of research dissemination. Funding will be sought to support these efforts.

7.6 Implications for Research

This thesis reports the first meta-ethnographic study of young people's conceptualisations of the nature of cyberbullying (Chapter three). The relevance and generalisability of this conceptualisation should be tested using quantitative methods and if appropriate it could be used to operationalise cyberbullying in future research. This synthesis did not include any study based in Ireland; therefore, it would be useful to undertake the research with a nationally representative sample in this context.

Future research should explore the role and impact of the facilitator in the implementation of school-based interventions as well as models of youth worker involvement in the school setting. Also, the challenges faced by schools in the implementation off anti-bullying procedures (Department of Education and Skills, 2013) should be investigated to improve the provision of support to students. Qualitative research should be conducted with parents/guardians to explore the barriers and facilitators to effective communication with their children. Findings could be used to inform education and training initiatives with parents and young people.

It has been suggested that involving young people in priority setting with regard to intervention development may enhance efforts to address cyberbullying (Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). However, research indicates that the majority of studies regarding cyberbullying prevention and intervention strategies lack youth perspectives (Cross et al., 2015). Therefore, this thesis makes a valuable contribution to research in that it identifies a suite of options which can be explored in efforts to enhance existing interventions or in the development of new strategies to address cyberbullying. Owing to the nature of this research, these proposals are bottom-up in that they are grounded in young people's experiences, values, and norms. As outlined in this chapter and throughout this thesis, potential strategies include the empowerment of support networks particularly young people, parents, and school personnel; the development of cyber literacy in young people as well as parents and school personnel; the development of emotional competency and mental health literacy in young people; and gender-transformative interventions to tackle the harmful stereotypes and norms which lead to cybervictimisation through the non-consensual distribution of nude images. In addition, young people indicated a preference for external facilitators in the delivery of school-based initiatives, non-judgemental participatory activities involving peer discussion groups, and in which young people are treated with respect, and the use accessible language.

Next Steps in Intervention Development

The research within this thesis was positioned with the Development Stage of the MRC framework for intervention development (Craig et al., 2008). Programmes and policies that have a direct impact on young people are more efficient and effective if young people are involved in the planning, delivery and implementation processes (Head, 2011). Therefore, drawing on the Behaviour Change Wheel (Michie et al., 2014) to support theory based intervention development, this thesis identified the evidence base regarding young people's conceptualisation of cyberbullying as well as their priorities regarding intervention focus. Future research efforts should engage the next steps of MRC and BCW frameworks to complete research, develop, implement and evaluate an intervention based on study findings. (Craig et al., 2008; Michie et al., 2014).

- This will involve specifying a target behaviour from those identified in this research, establishing who performs the behaviour and where and when is it performed, for example, young males' non-consensual distribution of nude images. The COM-B model described in Chapter one can then be used with the findings of this thesis (Chapter five) to assess young males' capability, motivation, and opportunity to perform this behaviour.
- The next step involves identifying intervention functions, the strategies by which an intervention can change behaviour such as education, training or enablement (Michie et al., 2014).
- The content of the intervention can then be identified in terms of which behaviour change techniques (BCTs) best serve the means of behaviour

change. These techniques are the active ingredients of interventions, the proposed mechanisms of change, which can be used alone or in combination with others. Within the BCW framework each intervention function is linked to frequently used BCTs within an evidence-based taxonomy (Michie et al., 2013). For example, techniques associated with 'education' include the provision of information about the social and emotional consequences of a behaviour. This may be potential option in the case of non-consensual distribution. Further, as gender-transformative interventions have been recommended in this thesis the literature related to these interventions could be systematically reviewed to establish which behaviour change techniques have been used in this context as well as their effectiveness. Key stakeholders including young people, school personnel, parents, youth workers, behaviour change experts, and cyberbullying experts could be engaged in selecting BCTs. Participatory methods similar to those used in this thesis could be used to explore the various options and achieve consensus (Chapter four). The APEASE (affordability, practicability, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness, acceptability, side-effects/safety, equity) criteria can be used to inform decision making about the most appropriate BCTs (Michie et al., 2014).

Conceptualising interventions in terms of their component techniques enables the possibility of identifying the active components within interventions (Michie & Johnston, 2012). This is of particular importance in cyberbullying research as a recent meta-analysis indicates that while some cyberbullying intervention and prevention programmes have proven effective it is not known which elements of these interventions were successful (Gaffney et al., 2019). Finally, the steps involved in this process should be synthesised to describe the intervention ahead of a feasibility study in accordance with the MRC framework (Craig et al., 2008).

7.7 Strengths and Limitations

An overview of the overall strengths and limitations of this thesis are presented here while the strengths and limitations of the individual papers have been acknowledged and addressed within the relevant chapters. The overall aim of the research within this thesis was to explore young people's perspectives on cyberbullying in order to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon and inform the development of effective and appropriate prevention and intervention strategies. The methodology employed to achieve this research aim is a key strength of this thesis.

The Medical Research Council guidance on complex interventions (Craig et al., 2008) and the BCW (Michie et al., 2013) were utilised to structure a systematic approach in the conduct of the research. Cyberbullying research methodologies have been predominantly quantitative and so qualitative and participatory research methods were utilised to being young people's voice to the fore (Espinoza & Juvonen, 2013; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, et al., 2010; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Smith, 2019). The first meta-ethnography of young people's conceptualisations of the nature of cyberbullying was conducted in the course of this research contributing an overarching interpretation of cyberbullying from the perspective of young people within the published literature. Informed by a rights-based approach (Lundy, 2007) young people were actively involved in the design, conduct, and interpretation of the qualitative study of young people's perspectives on cyberbullying and in the identification of intervention priorities. Evidence from national and local child protection policies, national guidelines on the conduct of ethical research with young people, and academic literature were drawn on to ensure best practice (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011, 2012; Felzmann et al., 2010; Hill, 2005; University College Cork, 2013). These efforts ensured that the research processes and outcomes were reflective of young people's experience values and norms thereby facilitating the safe, appropriate, and meaningful involvement of young people. The application of theory to research findings allows for the systematic interpretation and explanation of experiences or processes by illustrating the relationships between variables (Glanz

& Rimer, 2005). Hence, theoretical frameworks were employed to enhance understanding of research findings within this thesis where appropriate and to provide justification for intervention approaches.

It is acknowledged that within qualitative research the researcher shapes and is shaped by the research processes and outcomes. The planning, design, conduct, and interpretation of qualitative research is influenced by a researcher's background, values, experiences and assumptions (Creswell, 2014; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Palaganas et al., 2017). To address this and in the interest of transparency, the author engaged reflexive practices throughout this process (Chapter two). Further, the involvement of a multidisciplinary team in this research as well as the Young Person's Advisory Group ensured that multiple perspectives were considered and most importantly that findings were reflective of young people's experiences thereby increasing the validity of the research.

Findings from the co-designed study make a significant contribution to the knowledge base in Ireland where cyberbullying is relatively under-researched. As with all qualitative studies, the generalisability of these findings to other settings is limited. However, the concurrence of the research findings with the related literature suggests that they are not unique to this location. The methods utilised in the co-designed study could be replicated to see if similar findings are found elsewhere. Repeating the process in other schools may identify differing intervention priorities which could ultimately be collated and refined using consensus exercises such as the Delphi technique, a widely used and accepted method for achieving convergence of opinion concerning real-world issues (Hsu & Sandford, 2007).

In line with previous research (Mishna et al., 2009), focus group participants were not asked about their personal experiences with cyberbullying to avoid socially desirable responses. However, many participants volunteered this information. It is likely that this was a direct result of the safe physical and social space created through the involvement of the Advisory Group. However, ultimately, it is not known if participants were directly involved in cyberbullying and, therefore, findings should be interpreted as representing young people's perspectives on the topic rather than first-hand accounts. One-to-one interviews with cyber victims, although not favoured by young people (Chapter 4), may produce different results.

Positively, the schools involved in this study largely represent the various types of secondary schools in Ireland. Recruiting through schools is more likely to result in a representative sample than recruiting via youth services or other channels. However, young people's behaviour in schools is influenced by the expectations and norms of that environment which may encourage them to contribute perspectives considered socially desirable in that context (Hill, 2006). Holding the Advisory Group sessions in the youth centre facilitated the meeting of students from four different schools and enabled members to express their views freely. While focus groups were held in schools, the involvement of the Advisory Group in designing the study helped to create a safe and appropriate space within this setting,

The gender balance of the sample in the co-designed study is a strength of this research as it can be difficult to recruit young males to such projects. Evidence suggests that within focus groups with young people participants should be close in age (Shaw et al., 2011). However, no consensus exists on the merits of single or mixed-sex groupings. Therefore, focus groups within this research comprised participants from the same year group, and were single or mixed-sex based on the population of the respective school (Gibson, 2007; Heary & Hennessy, 2002). It is possible that the composition of the focus groups altered the discussion in different schools. Fifth year participants in the all-male school revealed more about the motivations for involvement in non-consensual distribution than those in mixed-sex groups, however, overall participants were forthcoming in their contributions.

This research involved schools, youth services, and young people, and it was at times challenging. The conduct of research with young people in the school setting is complicated by the presence of multiple gatekeepers and as such is time-consuming. While this work was essential in bringing youth voice to the fore its lengthy process meant that the ultimate development of an intervention was beyond the scope of this thesis. However, efforts will be made to enable the continuation of the work described below.

7.8 Conclusion

Cyberbullying is a complex and multifaceted problem that presents challenges for young people, parents, teachers, and policy-makers. It is a serious public health concern with research demonstrating deleterious effect on young people's mental health and wellbeing over and above that of traditional bullying. However, a lack of consensus regarding the conceptualisation of cyberbullying and the relative absence of youth voice from the evidence-base has hindered efforts to understand and address this issue. The current work utilised qualitative and participatory research methods to explore young people's conceptualisations of cyberbullying and to identify their priorities with regard to prevention and intervention strategies. The first meta-ethnography of young people's perceptions of the nature of cyberbullying was conducted and a qualitative study was undertaken to explore young people's perspectives in the Irish context. Using a rights-based model, this study was carried out in collaboration with a purposefully formed Young Person's Advisory Group thereby ensuring that processes and outcomes were appropriate and meaningful for young people. Findings indicate that while the definitional criteria for traditional bullying are evident in young people's conceptualisation, their nature is altered by the fundamental role of cyber technology in young people's lives and the complexity and ambiguity of the cyber world in which they connect. Young people identified the non-consensual distribution of nude images and the mental health impact of cybervictimisation as priority areas for intervention. Findings indicate that non-consensual distribution involves a complex process that is produced by, and reinforces, gender power dynamics. Young males, under pressure to conform to societal constructs of masculinity, coerce females to send explicit images which are screenshot and intentionally distributed, without consent, to male peers in exchange for social kudos. Regarding the mental health impact, cyberbullying was described as more psychological in nature and impact than traditional bullying with increased deleterious effect on the mental health and wellbeing of victims. Analysis identified several barriers which prevent victims from seeking social support and participants' perception that suicide is a viable escape route for young victims defeated and entrapped by cybervictimisation. Prevention and intervention efforts should focus on the underlying social factors that motivate cyberbullying, the factors which contribute to asymmetrical power relations between victims and perpetrators, and the barriers which prevent young people from seeking support. To conclude, this thesis makes a significant contribution to the knowledge-base on cyberbullying as it presents an interpretation of the nature, causes, and consequences of the phenomenon from the perspective of young people as well as making recommendations for research, policy, and practice which are grounded in young people's experiences, values, and norms.

8 Appendix A Supplementary Material for Chapter 3

Table 8.1 Search Strategy for Medline-Adapted for Use in Other Databases

Database: Medline (EBSCO)	
	Search Terms
Concept 1 Population-Adolescent aged 10-19	
1.	MH Adolescent
2.	MH Young Adult
3.	TI “Young People*”
4.	AB “Young People*”
5.	TI “Young person*”
6.	AB “Young Person*”
7.	MH Students
8.	TI Pupil*
9.	AB Pupil*
10.	MH Child
11.	**S1 OR S2 OR S3 OR S4 OR S5 OR S6 OR S7 OR S8 OR S9 OR 10**
Concept 2 Bullying Terms	
12.	SU Cyberbullying
13.	TI Cyberbull*
14.	AB Cyberbull*
15.	TI Cybervictimi#ation
16.	AB Cybervictimi#ation
17.	TI Cybermobbing
18.	AB cybermobbing
19.	**S12 OR S13 OR S14 OR S15 OR S16 OR S18**
20.	MH Bullying
21.	MH Aggression
22.	TI Aggressi*
23.	AB Aggressi*
24.	TI Victimi#ation
25.	AB Victimi#ation
26.	TI Harass*
27.	AB Harrass*
28.	TI Abuse
29.	AB Abuse
30.	**S20 OR S21 OR S22 OR S23 OR S24 OR S25 OR S26 OR S27 OR S29**
Concept 3 Context of Bullying	
31.	TI Cyber
32.	AB Cyber
33.	TI Electronic
34.	AB Electronic
35.	TI Internet
36.	AB Internet
37.	TI Online
38.	AB Online
39.	TI phone
40.	AB phone

41.	TI Text
42.	AB Text
43.	TI “Social media”
44.	AB “social media”
45.	**S31 OR S31 OR S32 OR S33 OR S34 OR S35 OR S36 OR S37 OR S38 OR S39 OR S40 OR S41 OR S42 OR S44**
46.	**S30 AND S45**
47.	**S19 OR S46**
48.	**S11 AND S47**
49.	**Limiters - English Language; Age Related: Child: 6-12 years, Adolescent: 13-18 years, Young Adult: 19-24 years**
Notes MH Exact Subject Heading SU Subject	

Table 8.2 Data Extraction Form

Study	Year	Country	Study Aim	Ethical Review	Parent/Guardian Consent	Young Person Consent/Assent	Youth Involvement in Research Process	Schools n=	School type; grade(s)	Qualitative Participants n=	Male % Female %	Age	Qualitative Data Collection	Qualitative Data analysis

Table 8.3 Translations and Line of Argument

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
ABU BAKER 2015	…messages will often be misinterpreted when the receiver tries to construe the meaning via their own analysis that is frequently influenced by the receiver's present contexts and conditions …the near absent of non-verbal communication produced several impacts among adolescents. For instance, by using any online applications, the perpetrators will not know the extent of severity of their wrongdoings. Victims will not be able to express their depression, resentment, humiliation, etc. when facial or non-verbal expression is not present during cyberbullying…there will often be no immediate feedback to clarify matters… not until the damage has already been done	Many cyberbullying experts suggest that to meet the term bullying, the act of bully must be repetitive…although the act of bullying occur only once, sometimes the harassing material uploaded lingers forever for anyone to download or forward it to others. This is due to the difficulty to remove it as soon as it is online.	To perform traditional bullying, a bully logically must have a strong physique in order to harass his or her victim or the perpetrator comes in group so that they can perform the action of bullying. However, now everyone can harass others regardless of their conditions as long as they are online…the researcher, therefore, concludes that online media has the opportunity to alter its users' behaviour due to its capabilities of being anonymous. Users can be anybody they want when online and remain hidden from others.	Informants described the inevitability to avoid online communication to socialise. The researcher conceptualised this as the permanence of expression. Researches show that adolescents and technologies cannot be separated. This inseparability, which is very difficult to erase, is exposing them to cyberbullying	
BAAS ET AL. 2013	Even more important, according to the children, are the presumed bully's intentions: they only speak of	According to the children, one-time occurrences would be bearable and not directly a form of cyberbullying	The anonymity of the bully was one of the most frightening features. A loss of trust in friends and	*'I hacked my friend's MSN account for fun. He was at home sitting at his computer saying*	Another reason for not seeking help is that victims may be afraid of the consequences. The

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
	cyberbullying when the bully has harmful intentions. the problem with intention is that it is a subjective notion, with potential problems of interpretation for both victims and bullies. Victims experience difficulties in estimating the intentions of the presumed bully Presumed bullies tend not to empathise with the victim and may underestimate the effects of their actions, which they primarily see as innocent pranks or harmless jokes. Victims may find it hard to estimate the presumed bully's intentions, and therefore are more likely to interpret intended jokes as forms of cyberbullying. From both perspectives, it appears that cyberbullying is more ambiguous than offline forms of bullying. Real cyberbullies, with harmful intentions, may use this ambiguity to laugh	*Just a couple of pranks is not so bad, it can even be funny. But if it happens more often, it is not nice anymore* Although repetition is quite clear in traditional bullying, online one-time actions may have repetitive effects. An example mentioned was that a video is posted on YouTube and watched by many viewers. Bullies may not be aware of the lasting consequences of one-time actions	classmates was another: anyone could be the anonymous bully *I was bullied for a long time several years ago; online and offline. Eventually I found out that one of the bullies actually was my best friend, this got me really upset*	*'Sh*t, sh*t, sh*t, I can't log on anymore'. He calls me in panic saying his computer has been hacked. And then I say: 'Joke'!'* Interventions for lowering the threshold should focus on creating a safe haven in the home and school context.	obstacle to talking to their teacher involves the fear of group discussions about their problems, which may have adverse effects *(''You're afraid other children hear about it and start bullying you as well.'').* The obstacle to going to their parents or caregivers involves the fear of ill-considered actions like contacting the teacher, the bully, or the bully's parents (''*My mother will immediately contact my teacher or the bully's parents, and that's something I really don't want.'')* Moreover, they are afraid of losing their Internet connection if they tell their parents (''*Taking the Internet away is one of the worst punishments there is. Even a bully would not deserve that. It is better to take a beating from all of your classmates than to be isolated from the*

Themes Authors	**Intent**	**Repetition**	**Anonymity**	**Accessibility**	**Barriers to Disclosure**
	away the seriousness of their actions				*Internet.''*). Having Internet access appears to be a necessity of life *(''Losing your Internet connection is like losing your soul.'').*
BERNE ET AL. 2013	*If I wrote something mean then it would be like pure jealousy, because I would feel like…'She is so fucking perfect, she's got a perfect life and I want that too,'…Ah, but then I'll write a mean comment, so that she doesn't get such an actual perfect life*	I think, because many people want to, like, show off, show that they are big and strong, you know. And to do that on Facebook where you've got maybe two, three, four hundred friends, and then, ah, and then other people see it, and then it's quite a lot who will see it.	Just as anyone could be a victim of appearance-related cyber-bullying, the adolescents perceived that a cyberbully generally also could be anyone	…the boys talked about getting back at someone who is cyberbullying others, by using violence. One boy described it this way: "*If someone had commented on my photo, it does not matter who the person is, me and my friends had looked them up, found them and beaten them."* Interestingly, the girls in the focus groups commented that girls tended to take greater offence and to be quieter about the incident than the boys.	
BETTS ET AL. 2017	*I would say it's more the content of the message and not the media, medium it which it was delivered "cause [..] a message could have a lot of threats, insults [.] and all*	Whilst the literature has debated whether behaviour needs to be repeated for it to be considered cyberbullying…for the participants of our study	anonymity could operate on many levels including: the target not being aware who the perpetrator was and the perpetrator could be	Participants discussed how cyberbullying was an extension of face-to-face bullying and involved carrying out acts of bullying using digital	there was a tension between a desire to disclose their experiences of cyberbullying to an appropriate adult and

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
	these kind of things which can affect you. The medium doesn't really matter it's still cyber bullying whichever way you look at it. Common to all of these examples of cyberbullying was the notion that the target of the behaviour is likely to take offence to the action or that the action would be interpreted as hurtful. Regardless of the media used to cyberbully and the nature of the act, participants acknowledged the importance of recognising the effect on the target Participants also made the distinction between cyberbullying and banter, suggesting that whilst banter could easily become cyberbullying because of potential ambiguity of how the message could be perceived, banter between known individuals was regarded as harmless. Banter	whether an act was defined as cyberbullying was dependent on the effect that it had the on target. If the recipient of the act was "affected," then regardless of the medium this was taken to be cyberbullying.	hidden from the consequences of their actions because they were not in the same physical environment as the target. further, because the perpetrator of the bullying behaviour may not be identifiable this was regarded as empowering the bully to continue their acts*: Cyber, cyber bullying it's like taking [.] aim at someone coz they won't give it back to you, so it's like going for the weak person just coz you won't get it back.*	means. However, whilst there was overlap between how face-to-face bullying occurred and cyberbullying, participants were also aware that cyberbullying had some unique characteristics. for example, participants talked about cyberbullying having the potential to be constant because of the nature of technology used and their potentially unlimited access to it. Specifically, the participants described how cyberbullying could happen at any time of the day or night which reflected their constant engagement with, and access to, technology. Conversely, face-to-face bullying would typically only occur in the presence of peers and, as such, could have a clear cut-off point.	the fear of the consequences of this disclosure. The fear took many forms including making the situation worse, the potential unknown consequences of disclosing experiences of cyberbullying, and the possibility of exacerbating cyberbullying in to face-to-face bullying *People get, yeh, that's, people get scared of telling of telling adults and things like that because they don't know what's, if they did tell an adult they don't know what's going to happen to them afterwards […] which is wrong, it's [yeah]. People should be able to tell people confidentially but like what they are going through and things like that without being in fear of, being punched or beaten up or whatever.*

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
	was also seen as something that occurred between friends and was considered to be a bit of fun				
BURNHAM & WRIGHT 2012	*Misunderstandings often dominate cyberbullying* numerous middle school discussions centred on confusion (i.e., in the eyes of students some of the cyberbullying incidents were misunderstandings or jokes that got out of hand, implying that many times malicious intentions did not exist, but once escalation started, cyberbullying became inevitable			…cyberbullying is more prevalent [at home] and fewer parents closely monitor online interactions *Home is the most likely place to by cyberbullied*	*…we [often] go to friends to see what we could do about cyberbullying before we go to our parents* …students were frank about educators' and parents' understanding of cyberbullying (i.e., believing that they are often inadequate or inept in dealing with cyber issues and not technologically savvy). Students noted that some educators and parents were too overwhelmed to help and others were emotionally unavailable. Consequently, when adults are inept or ill---equipped, students will confide in peers rather than adults.

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
					…educators and parents may not be consulted about cyberbullying issues until the issues have accelerated
JACOBS ET AL. 2015	*Sometimes I think calling names isn't bullying, sometimes you do that as friends* …some behaviors are not seen as cyberbullying (e.g., gossiping, calling each other names while being friends), and perception depends on the context and/or being in a fight. In case of these behaviors—contexts and being in a fight—apparently adolescents do not always see themselves as cyberbully or cyberbullying victim.	*It depends, when you're in a fight you call each other names and offend each other as well, that doesn't mean that it's bullying. However, when they always do that, and with more people, then I think it is [cyberbullying]* Apparently, victims do not see themselves as cyberbullying victims, but rather as adolescents who once or twice experienced cyberbullying. Similarly, they do not see themselves as cyberbullies but rather as adolescents who occasionally tease someone else, and therefore cannot be called bullies. These findings suggest that the repeated nature…really is important in the perception of cyberbullying: single or occasional events are not	*Yes, everybody can be a bully. Whether it's someone who's very small with glasses and whatever, or someone who's very tall and who looks like a bully…* In four groups, victims experienced that someone—known (e.g., brother) or unknown to them—pretended to be someone else (i.e., impersonation), which made it possible to bully anonymously.	…a lot of victims spontaneously talked about experiences with traditional bullying as well (i.e., physical bullying, being called names, being threatened, and being excluded).	*Most of the time I don't talk about it to no one, really no one. And I keep it to myself* …some victims mentioned that they did not want to bother their parents (e.g., boy: "*No, but I'll not tell my parents. It would only be bad for them, because they'll stress out and stuff. While that's not necessary at all, I think.*"

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
		often perceived as cyberbullying.			
MISHNA ET AL. 2009	*I've heard that sometimes cyber bullying is some friends that are really close to you and they want to get back at you* *Some people do cyber bullying as a joke and don't know what it feels to be bullied* *I think cyber bullying is just a different way that you do it. It's not face-to-face. It's easier to say more hurtful comments because sometimes you don't like to say things to people's faces but when you do it for revenge on MSN or something, it might be easier to do because you do not see how much they are hurt by it*		The participants explained that anonymity lets individuals behave in ways they might not otherwise and that would not otherwise be tolerated. Some students attributed this power of anonymity to individuals feeling more comfortable in their homes with little fear of repercussions or of being traced, which the students believed enables aggressors to threaten, harass, or denigrate others and to even assume a new persona or character online. According to the participants concealing one's identity is usually intended to invoke distress or fear in the victimised child. The participants believed that aggressors concealed their identity in order to	One child coined the term "*non-stop bullying*" to capture the phenomenon of cyber bullying due to bullying occurring at school and continuing online when the child returns home at the end of the day. According to a number of participants, children expect to feel safe and protected from bullying in their own homes. Consequently, the cyber bullying they experience while on the computer at home, and often in their own bedroom, may feel particularly invasive. *cyber bullying is when bullies already bullied someone, but got in trouble by a teacher, so they want to make it silent, so they go on a computer and they try to*	…prime reasons for not disclosing to parents or other adults were fear that their computer privileges would be taken away and the belief that if they told, adults would not be able to find evidence of the cyber bullying or to identify the aggressor. *some people that may be cyber bullied, if they do tell their principals, a lot of people will just lie and be like 'that wasn't me on MSN. That was someone else*

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
			bully and increase their power by remaining "hidden behind the keyboard. "*I think cyber bullying is so horrible because nobody really knows, like if you're being bullied nobody knows, you don't know who's doing it and it's just so silent and even if you do know who's doing it, you feel really bad, you can't see her, you can't really tell to her face how you feel.*	*be hidden and secretive, but still hurting*	
NARUSKOV ET AL 2012	In the context of intentionality, if the intention to hurt lay behind the bully's act, then the behaviour was considered bullying or even psychological violence and therefore very serious as well. Older students said that "*here he/she sends these things intentionally, it is not a joke anymore, he/she literally wants to hurt others and this*	*if M sends something once and then leaves [the victim] alone then it is not significant but if it is repeated, then perhaps it is a serious case* it seemed that if the bullying action was public instead of private, then it was evaluated as very serious…in the case of public cyberbullying there is a large audience involved, and therefore, the victim's	There was more disagreement about the anonymity criteria. On the one hand, it was not considered very severe because if you do not know the person, then it does not seem to be a problem compared to the situation where the perpetrator is a familiar person. On the other hand, the presence of		

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
	is a form of psychological violence". The results showed that it was important to the students to know how the victim reacted to the bullying "*if C. didn't care, then it was just a senseless incident"*	reputation may become damaged	anonymity was considered severe because it is unknown who is behind these kinds of acts; he or she may be a dangerous person.		
NOCENTINI ET AL. 2010	If there is the intention to hurt someone it is bullying All participants agreed that if the victim is affected by the behaviour then the behaviour constitutes bullying…the effect on the victims and his/her perception of the acts can also be more relevant than the intention of the aggressor	Adolescents agreed that the criterion of repetition can differentiate between a joke and an intentional attack and it can characterise the severity of the action. One of the German groups stated explicitly that the behaviour cannot be unintentional if it is repeated. Thus, repetition and intention are perceived as related. However, participants in Italy and Germany paid attention to the relation between repetition and publicity: if the act is public and thus it is sent (or showed) to several people, although it is done only once this can be considered as done several times. The terms	Anonymity is important for the impact on the victim, but not as definitional criterion to discriminate cyberbullying from non-bullying incidents. Not knowing who the contents are from can raise insecurity and fear, while if the perpetrator is someone the students know it could hurt more if it was someone they trusted or were friends with. On the level of personal relationships, however, coping is easier. The anonymous scenario was perceived as worse than the control scenario. *If you know the person, you*		

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
		proposed by German adolescents well represent this meaning: *'mass bullying'* or '*multiple bullying* In all countries, students rated public cyberbullying as the most serious incident, because of the role of the bystanders. The victims might worry about what others think about them. However, this criterion is not necessary to define bullying	*can have a talk, positively or negatively and you can better understand if it is a joke or not*.		
PELFREY & WEBER 2014	when someone *abuses the Internet to hurt another person* Cyberbullying can result from two friends joking around – especially if one of the friends takes offense during the exchange. This can be fluid as different things happen to individuals everyday that could change their outlook on joking or teasing exchanges. What might be jocular one day may mean something very	It also does not need to be repeated as a single comment can initiate a cascade of events. As the male focus group participant indicated, it is scary and intimidating to go to school knowing that many of the other students you see on a daily basis have seen embarrassing text messages or Facebook posts. While all teens must deal with feelings of embarrassment, the nature	*If you were there in person there'd be no way you would say any of this stuff to anyone's face, but yet they write it on their status. Things like stuff that they would never say to you personally and then it gets into this big thing* These students thought that students often said things that they would never say in person. The	it can take place online, but it also has a cyclical nature which often begins in cyberspace, becomes apparent within the school walls, and revolves back to cyberspace again. There is a strong relationship between Facebook and in-school communication as it relates to gossip, rumors, and peer news. Students	

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
	different to an individual on a day where exogenous stressors (grades, family issues, etc.) have created a sense of internal tension *It could happen to anybody—even between two friends you know … like teasing … and it would be OK because we would be having fun but then I try doing it to somebody else or they get offended by you or my friend gets offended, basically when it goes too far that's when it gets to escalate* The absence of immediate feedback (via both verbal and nonverbal communication modes) to comments may lead to more harshness in teasing and jokes.	of social media can exponentially increase the number of persons who view or hear about potentially embarrassing issues.	masking effect of social networking interaction mitigates the nature of social interaction.	see each other at school then maintain high levels of contact through social media and texting during evenings and weekends. This constant access gives students the opportunity to maintain close relationships with friends but it also facilitates rumors, gossip, and cyberbullying activity. The role of technology distinguishes cyberbullying from traditional bullying through the omni-present nature of access to social media, texting, email, and phone calls.	
SMITH ET AL 2008.	the perpetrator is less likely to see any direct response from the victim; this might reduce direct gratification for pupils who enjoy watching pain inflicted on others, but might also reduce any inhibition of	Cyberbullying could be worse [than traditional bullying]:…*'loads of people can see it if it's on the internet'*;	'*there is less fear of getting caught*'. '*you don't know who it is, so more scared'; '[in face-to-face bullying] you know who it is – there's*	*it's constant all the time*	Adults may seem less informed about cyberbullying issues and therefore less likely to be approached; this remains an untested hypothesis from our data, but if substantiated would

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
	inflicting pain due to empathy at seeing the victim's distress		*advantages and disadvantages to that*		reinforce the need for awareness raising amongst teachers and parents about cyberbullying and preventative measures.
TOPCU ET AL. 2013	…intentionally seeking to harm the cyber victim was expressed as another reason for cyber bullying by two of the participants…they believed that cyber bullying unquestionably aims to hurt or upset the cyber victim according to four of the seven participants, the main underlying motivation in cyber bullying is joking. They believed that people cyber bully others for fun and they do not intend to harm the victim Children might also continue to engage in cyber bullying if they are not able to empathise with the victim and are not able to identify with the experiences of the victim	Cyber space holds the promise of anonymity for the bully and gives considerable potential publicity to the cyber bullying act	Anonymity and confidentiality on the Internet provides a degree of protection for cyber bullies and reinforces the illusion of invulnerability. By its very nature, tracing cyber bullies is difficult and sometimes impossible, and those who are arrogant do not seem to have a fear of being caught	Can (a 15 year-old, male) said he experienced cyber bullying as a cyber victim; his girlfriend made up some rumors about him and disseminated these rumors to Can's friends by instant message after they had broken up. As a response to this cyber bullying act, Can tried to persuade his friends that his ex-girlfriend was lying and her words were not true, but he could not convince his friends. He voiced "*…I felt embarrassed and could not concentrate on my school tasks due to these rumors on the Internet for about a week…"*	participants shared information about acts of cyber bullying in the form of gossiping, intrusion into privacy, and stealing passwords and pretending to be someone else. In all of these, the common difficulty was the victim's inability to prove that he or she had been cyber bullied. When someone is disseminating gossip on the Internet, it is clearly difficult for a victim to defend him or herself; and similarly so, with sharing information through impersonation

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
VANDEBOSCH & CLEEMPUT 2008	…the perpetrator of cyberbullying really wanted to hurt the feelings of another person intended to hurt by the perpetrator and perceived as hurtful by the victim According to the respondents, cyberbullying was clearly different from teasing via the Internet or mobile phone. One huge distinction, according to the youngsters who participated in the focus groups, was that the perpetrator of cyberbullying really wanted to hurt the feelings of another person. Cyber jokes, on the other hand, were not intended to cause the victim negative feelings—they were meant to be funny. The respondents acknowledged, however, that there might be a difference between the way things were intended and the way things were perceived. What some	Another aspect that students mentioned spontaneously when describing the difference between cyberbullying and cyber-teasing was that cyberbullying implied repetition This criterion did not necessarily imply several instances of electronic bullying. A single negative act via Internet or mobile phone that followed on traditional ways of bullying was also considered cyberbullying	From the side of the victim, not knowing the person behind the cyber attacks was often frustrating and increased the feeling of powerlessness. Knowing the individual(s) behind a certain action, on the other hand, made it possible to put the action into perspective (and to perceive it as negative or not) and to react accordingly. The focus groups showed that in the case of friends, the initial anonymity was often given up by the perpetrators themselves	The weaker victims were usually also the target of traditional bullying	

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
	perpetrators considered an innocent joke might be considered an aggressive attack by the victim (or even the other way around				
Third Order Interpretations	Intent is a subjective concept with potential problems of interpretation for both perpetrators and victims. Although intent is important in young people's characterisation they also consider that if the recipient is negatively affected by the behaviour, then it constitutes cyberbullying. Cyber communication is often devoid of the physical and verbal signals that augment understanding in face-to-face interactions. The absence of these elements complicates the interpretation of online interactions making it difficult for recipients to determine the intention of online behaviour, for victims to convey their distress, and consequently, for perpetrators to recognise the impact of	Repetition is key in young people's conceptualisation of cyberbullying indicating the intent and severity of cyberbullying behaviours. The repetition of potentially harmful acts differentiates jocular behaviour from intentional harm. However, the concept of repetition is complicated in the cyber-world where solitary acts can have repetitive effects if executed in the public domain where detrimental material has the potential to reach a large audience. The ability to share information publically through cyber technology empowers perpetrators to cause significant damage to victims with little effort or risk. The relative permanence of online interactions and the sharing capabilities of	Although, perpetrators are often portrayed as anonymous, cyberbullying often takes places in known social groups, facilitated by anonymity. Anonymity gives perpetrators the power to cause intentional harm while remaining hidden, thereby, evading responsibility and repercussion for their actions. In the absence of consequence behaviour is no longer restricted by social norms and regulations. This enables young people to say or do things that they would not otherwise and empowers those unlikely to perpetrate acts of traditional bullying to	The omni-present nature of cyber technology facilitates continuous cyberbullying and enables the extension of school bullying to young people's homes. Cyberbullying can also originate in the cyber world and manifest in the real world as physical violence. Subsequently, victimisation can traverse the victims physical and cyber worlds rendering young people powerless to escape.	The unknown identity of the perpetrator contributes to the fear experienced by victims and makes it difficult to report. A fear of the potential consequences discourages young people from reporting to adults. Adults are perceived as ignorant to the cyber world are not trusted by young people to adequately deal with cyber issues. Young people fear that adults' efforts to intervene will intensify cyberbullying or lead to physical violence. The potential for escalation to violence is a significant source of fear for young people. Cyber technology is central to young people's social

Themes Authors	Intent	Repetition	Anonymity	Accessibility	Barriers to Disclosure
	their actions. This facilitates the continuation and escalation of harmful behaviour. Additionally, the ambiguity of intent in the cyber world empowers perpetrators to engage in acts of intentional harm under the guise of teasing enabling them to avert the ramifications of their behaviour. This renders cyber-victims powerless to verify their victimisation and to hold perpetrators accountable.	technology and online media enable further distribution of harmful content by others and facilitate continuing victimisation. Although not essential in defining cyberbullying, publicity is significant because of the potential for reputational damage and public humiliation.	engage in bullying behaviour.		interactions. Their desire to be constantly connected acts as a facilitator for cyberbullying and also serves as a barrier to seeking support as young people fear that their access to the cyber world will be removed in efforts to protect them.
Line of Argument	Cyberbullying, largely, occurs within young people's social groups and relationships and often while young people are in their homes. The prevalence and significance of technology in young people's lives can mean that cyberbullying is a risk to which many young people are exposed. Exposure to the risk of cyberbullying is outweighed by young people's desire for continuous digital connectivity and fear of social disconnection. Cyberbullying is highly complex in nature, characterised by a degree of ambiguity not seen within traditional conceptualisations of bullying and by the intersection of a range of possible components, all of which do not have to be present for it to occur. A power imbalance influenced by the physical, psychological and social characteristics of perpetrators and victims may exist where the perpetrator is identifiable. However, the nature of the cyber world alters the distribution of power and within cyberbullying power relations can be identified as fluid and changeable. Features such as anonymity, ambiguity, accessibility and public exposure are experienced as disempowering by victims and empowering by perpetrators. Young people believe cyberbullying can occur whether or not there is intent to harm; they conceptualise its occurrence based on the seriousness of victim impact, as well as intent. Intentional cyberbullying is motivated by internal factors including jealousy and revenge and also by the features of the cyber world that serve to empower perpetrators. Negative impact is determined by victims' perception of events as influenced by the same cyber features and by contextual and external factors that shape victims' interpretation of online interactions. These include their relationship with the sender or exogenous stressors such as school and family stressors. Repetition may or may not be required for cyberbullying to occur. One action can constitute cyberbullying, due to the degree of rapid and widespread public dissemination facilitated by ICT. Further, negative anticipation regarding the consequences of reporting cyberbullying to adults, such as an escalation of bullying or the restriction of ICT access, can deter victims from seeking help, thereby, maintaining a cycle of victimisation that in some instances spans the physical and cyber worlds.				

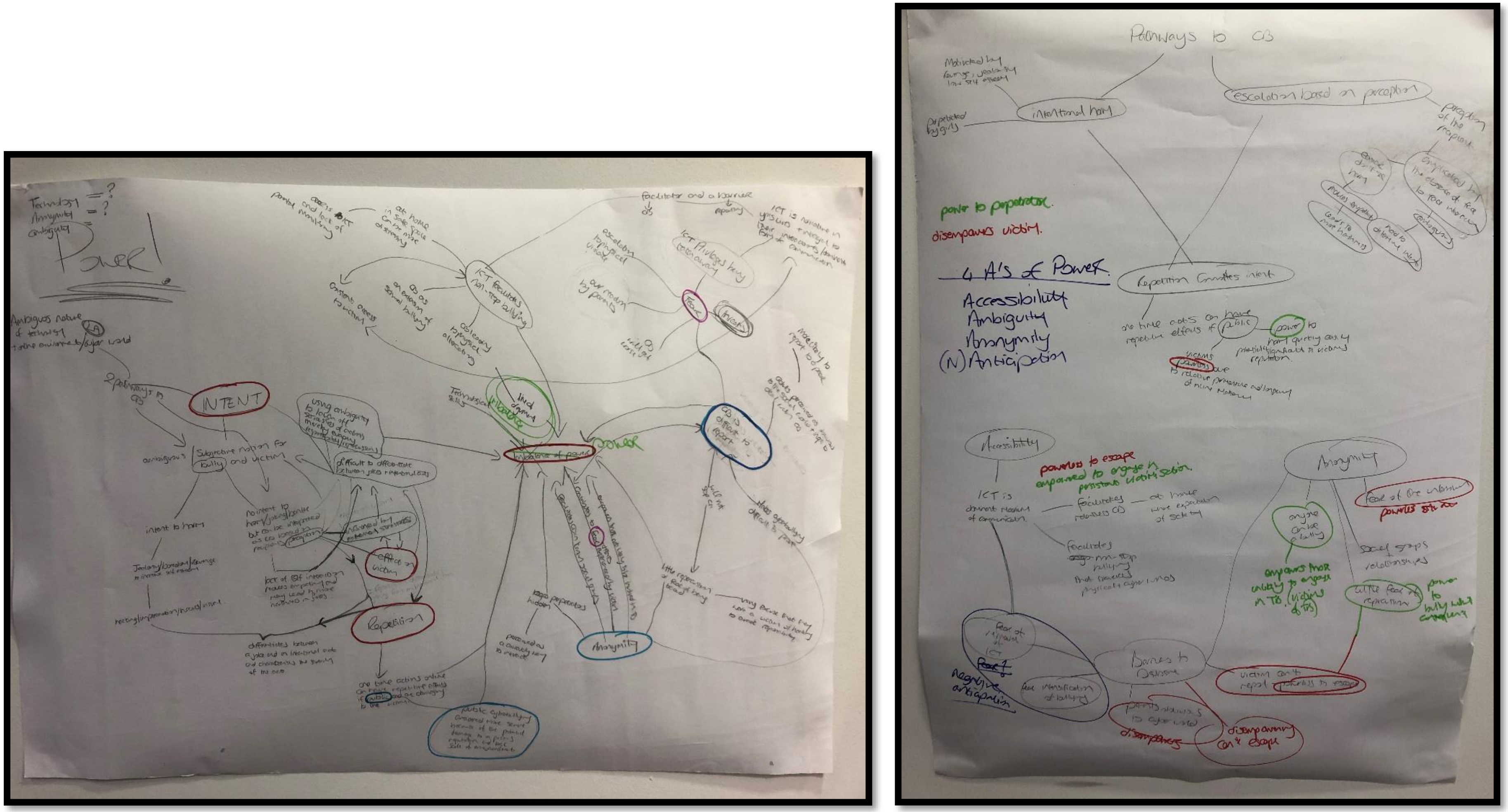
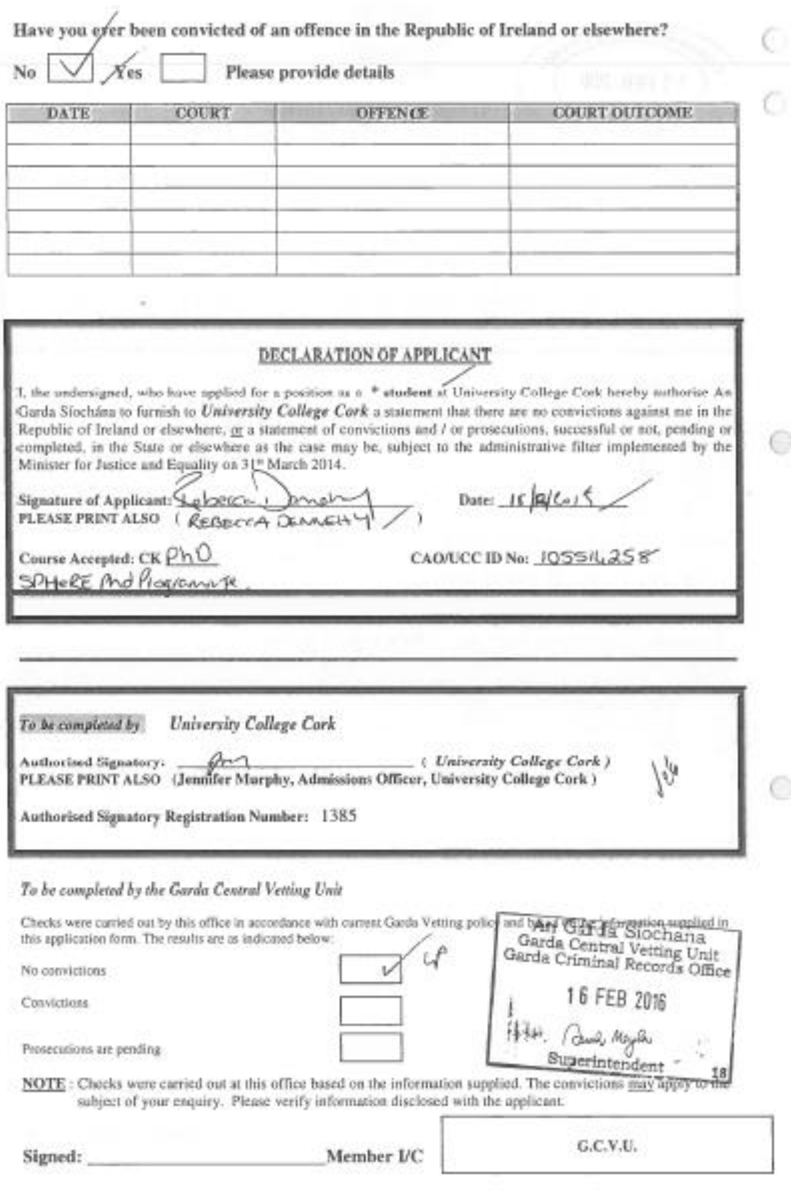

Technology = ?
Anonymity = ?
ambiguity =
Power!
Ambiguous nature of technology
2 pathways to CB
INTENT
Subjective notion for bully and victim
ambiguous
intent to harm
Jealousy/boredom/revenge
difficult to differentiate between jokes and intentional
using ambiguity to laugh off seriousness of actions
effect on victim
Repetition
differentiates between a joke and an intentional act
ICT facilitates non-stop bullying
Constant access to victim
CB as an extension of school bullying
at home in safe space
Technological skills
Imbalance of power
Power
Anonymity
keeps perpetrators hidden
public cyberbullying
facilitator and a barrier
ICT is normative in youths lives
ICT Privileges being taken away
Fear
Threat
CB is difficult to report
little repercussion or fear of being traced
makes cyberbullying difficult to stop
Pathways to CB
Motivated by revenge, jealousy, low self esteem
perpetrated by girls
intentional harm
escalation based on perception
perception of the recipient
Repetition constitutes intent
power
power to perpetrator.
disempowers victim.
4 A's of Power.
Accessibility
Ambiguity
Anonymity
(N) Anticipation
Accessibility
powerless to escape
empowered to engage in persistent victimisation.
ICT is dominant medium of communication
facilitates relentless CB
at home
facilitates non-stop bullying
Anonymity
fear of the unknown
powerless
anyone can be a bully
empowers more likely to engage in TB (victims of TB)
social status + relationships
little fear of repercussion
power to bully without consequences
Barriers to Disclosure
fear of removal of ICT
negative anticipation
fear intensification of bullying
victim can't report
powerless to escape
disempowering
disempowering can't escape

Figure 8.1 Theme Development- Meta-ethnography

9 Appendix B Supplementary Material for Chapter 4



Have you ever been convicted of an offence in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere?

No ☑ **Yes** ☐ **Please provide details**

DATE	COURT	OFFENCE	COURT OUTCOME

DECLARATION OF APPLICANT

I, the undersigned, who have applied for a position as a * **student** at University College Cork hereby authorise An Garda Síochána to furnish to ***University College Cork*** a statement that there are no convictions against me in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere, or a statement of convictions and / or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, in the State or elsewhere as the case may be, subject to the administrative filter implemented by the Minister for Justice and Equality on 31st March 2014.

Signature of Applicant: Rebecca Dennehy **Date:** 15/8/2015

PLEASE PRINT ALSO (REBECCA DENNEHY)

Course Accepted: CK PhD SPHeRE And Programme **CAO/UCC ID No:** 105516258

To be completed by *University College Cork*

Authorised Signatory: ____________ (***University College Cork***)

PLEASE PRINT ALSO (**Jennifer Murphy, Admissions Officer, University College Cork**)

Authorised Signatory Registration Number: 1385

To be completed by the Garda Central Vetting Unit

Checks were carried out by this office in accordance with current Garda Vetting policy and based on the information supplied in this application form. The results are as indicated below:

No convictions ☑

Convictions ☐

Prosecutions are pending ☐

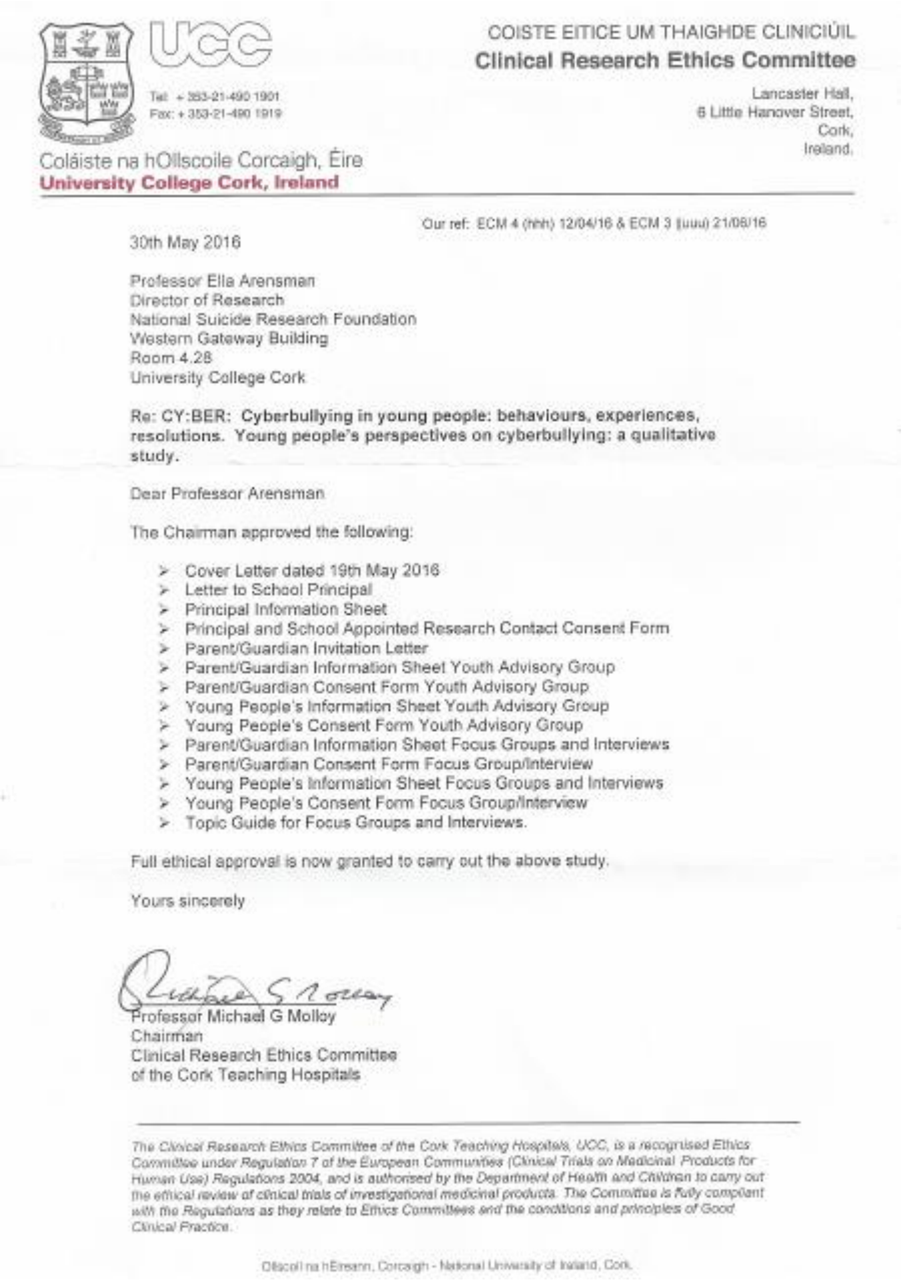
An Garda Síochána
Garda Central Vetting Unit
Garda Criminal Records Office
16 FEB 2016
Superintendent

NOTE : Checks were carried out at this office based on the information supplied. The convictions may apply to the subject of your enquiry. Please verify information disclosed with the applicant.

Signed: ______________________ **Member I/C** G.C.V.U.

Figure 9.1 National Vetting Bureau Authorisation

Ethical Approval



Tel: + 353-21-490 1901
Fax: + 353-21-490 1919

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

COISTE EITICE UM THAIGHDE CLINICIÚIL
Clinical Research Ethics Committee

Lancaster Hall,
6 Little Hanover Street,
Cork,
Ireland.

Our ref: ECM 4 (hhh) 12/04/16 & ECM 3 (uuu) 21/06/16

30th May 2016

Professor Ella Arensman
Director of Research
National Suicide Research Foundation
Western Gateway Building
Room 4.28
University College Cork

Re: CY:BER: Cyberbullying in young people: behaviours, experiences, resolutions. Young people's perspectives on cyberbullying: a qualitative study.

Dear Professor Arensman

The Chairman approved the following:

- Cover Letter dated 19th May 2016
- Letter to School Principal
- Principal Information Sheet
- Principal and School Appointed Research Contact Consent Form
- Parent/Guardian Invitation Letter
- Parent/Guardian Information Sheet Youth Advisory Group
- Parent/Guardian Consent Form Youth Advisory Group
- Young People's Information Sheet Youth Advisory Group
- Young People's Consent Form Youth Advisory Group
- Parent/Guardian Information Sheet Focus Groups and Interviews
- Parent/Guardian Consent Form Focus Group/Interview
- Young People's Information Sheet Focus Groups and Interviews
- Young People's Consent Form Focus Group/Interview
- Topic Guide for Focus Groups and Interviews.

Full ethical approval is now granted to carry out the above study.

Yours sincerely

Professor Michael G Molloy
Chairman
Clinical Research Ethics Committee
of the Cork Teaching Hospitals

The Clinical Research Ethics Committee of the Cork Teaching Hospitals, UCC, is a recognised Ethics Committee under Regulation 7 of the European Communities (Clinical Trials on Medicinal Products for Human Use) Regulations 2004, and is authorised by the Department of Health and Children to carry out the ethical review of clinical trials of investigational medicinal products. The Committee is fully compliant with the Regulations as they relate to Ethics Committees and the conditions and principles of Good Clinical Practice.

Ollscoil na hÉireann, Corcaigh - National University of Ireland, Cork.

Figure 9.2 Ethical Approval Letter

School Principals Letter of Invitation

Dear *Principal,*

My name is Rebecca Dennehy. I am a PhD Researcher in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork. I am working on a research project called CY: BER (Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences, and Resolutions). The project is funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and supported by the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) and (youth service name removed for publication).

Based on the views of young people and parents, and on wider research, it is apparent that cyberbullying is a very real and worrying problem. The current approach to cyberbullying is based on knowledge of traditional face-to-face bullying, however, research has shown that there are marked differences between the two. In fact, cyberbullying has been shown to be more harmful to young people than traditional bullying. Due to the potential negative impact on the physical and mental health of young people efforts are required to tackle cyberbullying, however, further comprehension of the issue is needed before cyberbullying can be effectively challenged. The aim of the CY: BER Study is to generate a greater understanding of cyberbullying from the perspective of young people to inform the development of a relevant, appropriate and evidence-based programme to address this issue.

This is an exciting opportunity for schools to participate in a pioneering research project that will have real and valued outputs. It is a unique opportunity for students to be actively involved in the research process and a chance for them to have a voice on an issue that impacts them directly.

I would be delighted if you would consider taking part in the study. I have attached an information sheet for your reference and I will contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss the study further if you wish to do so.

For further information, I can be contacted at 021-4205519 or at r.dennehy@ucc.ie.

Yours Sincerely,

____
Rebecca Dennehy

School Principal Information Sheet

Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions (CY:BER)

What is the CY:BER Study?

One in four young people in Ireland report being victims of cyberbullying. Efforts are required to address cyberbullying because of the potential negative impact on the physical and mental health of young people. This study will generate a greater understanding of cyberbullying to inform the development of an appropriate and evidence based programme to address the issue.

Who is running the Study?

The study is being led by a research team at University College Cork (UCC), including Professor Ella Arensman, Director of the National Suicide Research Foundation, Dr Paul Corcoran, National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre and Ms Rebecca Dennehy, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health. Please find biographies enclosed.

What does the study involve?

Step 1: Consent will be obtained from parents and students. Only students who return completed consent forms will be eligible to participate.

Step 2: A Young Person's Advisory Group (YAG) will be established comprising student representatives from Transition year in each participating school. The YAG will collaborate with researchers to co-generate an initial understanding of cyberbullying and to design a study to explore cyberbullying with young people in their schools. They will then be consulted at key stages of the research process. Meetings will take place at (location removed for publication) This group will meet 3-4 times in the academic year.

Step 3: The study, co-designed with the Transition Year Students, will be conducted in the participating schools.

How will the collected information be used?

The information gained from this study will be analysed by the research team in a way that allows us to better understand young people's experiences of cyberbullying and will inform the development of a programme to address the issue.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The findings will be used in an anonymised way in publications and presentations to share the information with scientists and policy makers. Findings will be presented to participating schools in the form of a research report. A public meeting will also be held for interested parties.

Confidentiality

The research will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Clinical Research Ethics Committee of the Cork Teaching Hospitals (CREC). All information collected during the study will be treated with the strictest of confidence. It will be securely stored within the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCC. Child protection guidelines will be adhered to at all times to protect the young people and the researchers involved.

What are your rights if you choose to participate?
You may withdraw from the study at any time.

What will happen next?
You will be contacted by a member of the research team to make an appointment to discuss the study.

Your participation counts
Taking part in this study is voluntary, however, the participation of your school in this study is crucial in its success. We are very hopeful that you can support us and would like to thank you, in advance, for your help. For further information contact: Rebecca Dennehy on 021-4205519 or at r.dennehy@ucc.ie

SPHeRE Structured Population and Health-services Research Education

UCC Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire University College Cork, Ireland

HRB Health Research Board

NSRF National Suicide Research Foundation

School Key Contact Form Completed at Initial Meeting with Principals

School Name	
School Address	**Contact Details Phone/Email**
Principal Name	**Contact Details Phone/Email**
CY:BER Support Person	**Contact Details Phone/Email**
Designated Liaison Person Name	**Contact Details Phone/Email**
Guidance Counsellor	**Contact Details Phone/Email**
Any other information	
Principal Signature	**Researcher Signature**
Date:	**Date:**

Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions (CY:BER)
Young Peron's Advisory Group Information Sheet

Why are we doing this study?

Cyberbullying has become more common in recent years and it can be hurtful to the young people that are involved. We want to learn more about cyberbullying so that we can help to stop it and help the young people who are affected by it.

Who is running the Study?

CY:BER is funded by the Health Research Board and is led by a research team at University College Cork.

What is the CY:BER Young Person's Advisory Group?

Young people are experts in their lives with different experience, knowledge, insights and capabilities to adults. We want to bring together a group of young people with a range of experiences and opinions to help make sure our research reflects what is important to you. We want our research to be done with young people, rather than to or on them.

The Advisory Group will:

- Help us to understand cyberbullying from a young person's perspective
- Identify issues related to cyberbullying that need to be investigated
- Advise on the type of information to be provided to young people about the study
- Advise on the questions to be asked in focus groups and interviews with young people
- Comment on the results of the study as they come out

Why me?

We are interested in hearing about cyberbullying from young people in your school and other schools in your area. We are inviting four Transition Year students from each school to be involved in the Advisory Group. You do not have to take part but we hope that you will.

What would I have to do?

The Advisory Group will attend 5 meetings at (location removed for publication), during school hours. At these meetings we will work in groups using creative and fun ways to plan and make decisions about the CY:BER Study. We may record some of our conversations so that we can remember the things that were discussed.

What will happen to the information that I give?

Membership of the Advisory Group will be known, however, all information collected during our work will be treated with the strictest confidence. We will write some reports and present the information that we have found. The information we produce together will help to make the CY:BER Study relevant to young people.

What are the good and bad things about taking part?

This is a good chance for you to be involved in a research project and have your say on something that directly impacts young people. The experience will be fun and rewarding. You will learn about research and public health. You will be awarded a certificate from UCC and it will help to build up your CV.

Talking about cyberbullying might make you feel upset. If this happens you can talk to a researcher and they will make sure that you get help. Everything you tell us will be treated with confidence however, if you tell us something that leads us to believe that you or another person is at risk of serious harm we will have to report this to your school.

How can I get additional information about this study?

For further information contact: Rebecca Dennehy on 021-4205519 or at r.dennehy@ucc.ie or write to us at CY:BER Study, Dept of Epidemiology and Public Health, 4th Floor, Western Gateway Building, UCC, Western Road, Cork.

Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions (CY:BER)
Young Person's Advisory Group Consent Form

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the project, received a copy, and have had the opportunity to ask questions

Yes	No

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason

Yes	No

I am aware that some of our discussion with the adult researcher may be audio recorded and I agree to this

Yes	No

I understand that the data obtained within this project will be stored securely in an anonymised manner

Yes	No

I agree to quotation/publication of anonymised extracts from my discussion with researchers

Yes	No

I agree to my photograph being taken during my involvement in the Young Person's Advisory Group for use in reports and presentations related to the CY:BER Study only

Yes	No

After reading the information sheet, if you have no further questions, please sign below

NAME	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	
SCHOOL	

Thank you for your collaboration

SPHeRE Structured Population and Health-services Research Education

UCC Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire University College Cork, Ireland

HRB Health Research Board

NSRF National Suicide Research Foundation

Parent/Guardian Invitation Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Rebecca Dennehy. I am a PhD Researcher in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork. I am working on a research project called CY:BER (Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences, and Resolutions). The project is fully funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and is supported by the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF).

Based on the views of young people and parents, and on wider research, it is apparent that cyberbullying is a very real and worrying problem. Efforts are required to take action against cyberbullying, however, further understanding of the issue is needed before it can be tackled. The aim of the CY:BER Study is to generate a greater understanding of cyberbullying from the perspective of young people to inform the development of a programme to address this issue. This is a unique opportunity for young people to be actively involved in the research process and a chance for them to have a voice on an issue that impacts them directly.

I have enclosed a leaflet containing information about the study along with a consent form. Your child has also been given an information sheet and a consent form. Please discuss this information with your child. If you are happy to take part please return both consent forms signed by you and your child and keep the second copy for your own records.

If you would like further details please feel free to contact me on 021-4205519 or at r.dennehy@ucc.ie or write to me at CY:BER Study, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, 4th Floor, Western Gateway Building, UCC, Western Road, Cork.

Yours Sincerely,

Rebecca Dennehy

Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions (CY:BER)
Parent/Guardian Information Sheet for Young Person's Advisory Group

What is the CY:BER Study?

Cyberbullying has become more common in recent years and it can be harmful to the young people that are involved. We want to learn more about cyberbullying so that we can help to stop it and help the young people who are affected by it. Young people are experts in their lives with different experience, knowledge, insights and capabilities to adults. We want to bring together a group of young people with a range of experiences and opinions to help make sure that our research reflects what is important to them. We are inviting four Transition Year students from each participating school to be on our Young Person's Advisory Group, 16 young people in total.

Who is running the Study?

The study is funded by the Health Research Board and is being led by a research team at University College Cork.

Why was my child selected for this study?

The study will take place in a number of secondary schools in [redacted] Your child's school has agreed to take part in this study. Each young person will be given the choice to participate. In the interest of fairness, if a large number of students consent to participate the Advisory Group will be selected from this number at random.

What does the study involve for my child?

The Advisory Group will meet five times in the academic year at (location removed for publication), during school hours. Sessions will be two hours long and will include a break. Members will learn about research, explore cyberbullying in a fun and creative way and advise us on how to make the CY:BER Study relevant to young people. Some of the discussion may be audio recorded.

How will the collected information be used?

Information collected during the study will be treated with the strictest confidence. The information generated by the Advisory Group will help us to plan our research in a way that is relevant for young people.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The findings of the study will be used in an anonymised way in publications and presentations to share the information with other researchers and policy makers. The overall results of the study will be presented to participating schools in the form of a research report and by presentations. No personal information about your child will be published.

What are the risks and benefits involvement in the Young Person's Advisory Group?

There are few risks involved in this study. Child protection guidelines will be adhered to at all times. Membership of the Advisory Group will be known, however, any reported information will be anonymised. This is an exciting opportunity for your child to play an active role in a research project. It is a chance to develop personal and social skills and network with researchers and peers. Your child will be awarded a certificate of participation from UCC.

What do I do now?

Please discuss the study with your child. They have also received an information sheet. Your child can decide whether s/he would like to take part and can decide to withdraw from the study at any time. Please complete the consent form if both you and your child are willing to participate in the study. Please return the consent form in the enclosed envelope to your child's school by *X*. A member of the research team will collect the consent form. Please keep the second consent form for your own records.

How can I get additional information about this study?

For further information contact: Rebecca Dennehy on 021-4205519 or at r.dennehy@ucc.ie or write to us at CY:BER Study, Dept of Epidemiology and Public Health, 4th Floor, Western Gateway Building, UCC, Western Road, Cork.

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UCC
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

HRB Health Research Board

NSRF National Suicide Research Foundation

Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Young Person’s Advisory Group

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the project, received a copy and have had the opportunity to ask questions

Yes	No

I have discussed the study with my child and I consent to his/her participation

Yes	No

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I, and my child, are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason

Yes	No

I understand that the data obtained within this project will be stored securely in an anonymised manner

Yes	No

I am aware that some of the discussion with my child may be audio recorded and I agree to this

Yes	No

I agree to quotation/publication of anonymised extracts from my child’s discussion with researchers

Yes	No

I agree to my child’s photograph being taken during his/her involvement in the Young Person’s Advisory Group for use in reports and presentations related to the CY:BER Study only

Yes	No

After reading the information sheet, if you have no further questions, please sign below

CHILD’S NAME	
SCHOOL	
PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME	
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE	
DATE	

Thank you for your collaboration

Receipt of Notification of Disclosure to School Designated Liaison Person

Receipt of Notification of Disclosure	
School	
Name of Designated Liaison Person	
Researcher Making Notification of Disclosure	
Date of Notification	
Time of Notification	
Relevant Notes (no details of young person or nature of disclosure)	
Signatures **CY:BER Researcher:** **Designated Liaison Person:** Date:	

Session 1 Building Rapport

Introduction Booklet Provided to Young People at Session 1

CY:BER
Youth Advisory Group

nothing about us without us

SPHeRE Structured Population and Health-services Research Education

UCC

HRB Health Research Board

National Suicide Research Foundation

Why did this advisory group start?

At the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College Cork we are concerned with improving people's health and wellbeing. It has come to our attention that cyberbullying is having a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of young people and we would like to do something to help.

We believe that young people have a right to be involved in research that is about them and their lives. We think that young people are experts in their own lives, with different experience, knowledge, insights and capabilities to adult researchers.

We invited you to join this advisory group because we wanted to bring together a group of young people with a range of experiences and opinions to help make sure our that our research on cyberbullying reflects what is important to young people. Ultimately this will help us to design a programme to address cyberbullying that meets the wants, interests and needs of young people.

What does it mean to be a CY:BER Advisor?

[redacted]

The advisory group will meet 5 times in the school year 2016/17 at [redacted]

- *Meeting 1:* *September*
- *Meeting 2:* *October*
- *Meeting 3:* *October*
- *Meeting 4:* *May*
- *Meeting 5:* *May*

In these meetings you will be asked to give your thoughts, ideas and opinions on topics related to cyberbullying research. Together we will figure out what we need to know about cyberbullying and how best to collect this information from young people in your school.

What do I have to do?

As a CY:BER Advisor you will work together with the research team to:

- Help us to understand cyberbullying from a young person's point of view
- Identify issues related to cyberbullying that need to be investigated
- Advise on the type of information to be provided to young people in your school about the study
- Advise on the questions to be asked in focus groups and interviews with young people in your school
- Comment on the results of the study as they come out
- Identify the key issues that should be targeted in relation to cyberbullying based on the results of our study

TEAMWORK
MAKES THE DREAM WORK!

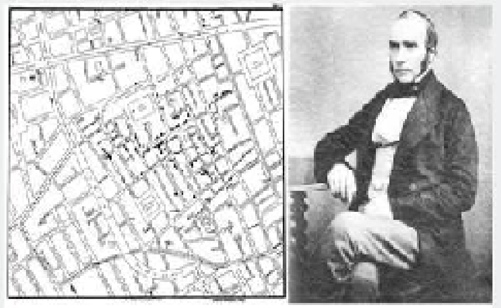
So, what's in it for me?

- You will have your voice heard and have a real impact on research that will help to improve people's lives
- You will learn about research and public health as well as other life skills. These can help you to work out what you would like to do next and build up a good CV
- You will be awarded a certificate from the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College Cork
- The experience will be fun and rewarding
- You will meet new people and have the chance to see the facilities available for young people in your town

WHAT'S
IN IT
FOR ME?
?!?!?

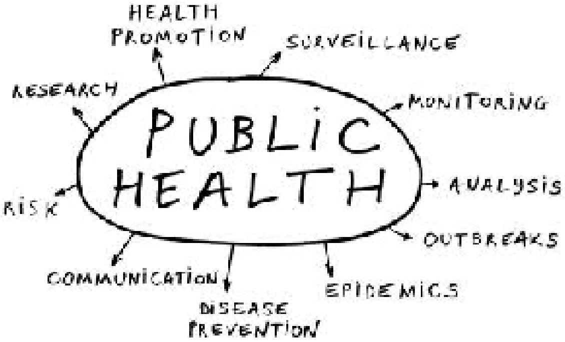
Department of Epidemiology and Public Health
What is that all about?

Epidemiology is the study of patterns of both health and disease in different populations



Cholera is coming

Public Health relates to helping people remain healthy and avoid illness. It is concerned with physical, mental and social wellbeing


PUBLIC HEALTH
HEALTH PROMOTION
SURVEILLANCE
RESEARCH
MONITORING
ANALYSIS
RISK
OUTBREAKS
COMMUNICATION
EPIDEMICS
DISEASE PREVENTION

What is Research?

Research is the process used to find out new information.

Research is asking a question and finding out the answer in an organised way it is…

- looking into something
- looking for something
- comparing and contrasting things
- finding out more information
- counting things
- making enquiries
- finding out what people think
- finding out what people do
- finding out what people want

Can you think of any research you conducted lately?

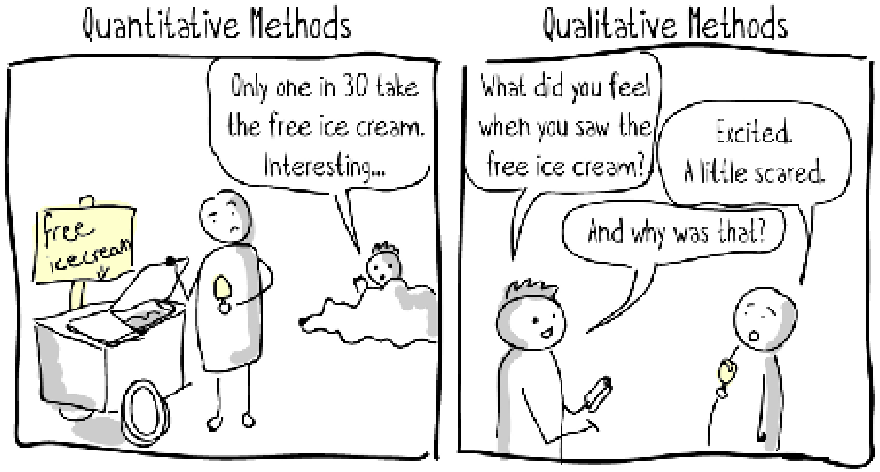
Approaches to Research

Quantitative research is concerned with information about quantities, that is information that can be measured or written down using numbers

Examples include:
- the number of people who are in transition year
- the number of students cyberbullied
- the number of people who cycle to school

Qualitative research aims to explain or describe something. It is used to investigate people's opinions, experiences or attitudes

Examples include:
- Students attitudes to transition year
- what is it like to be cyberbullied
- young people's attitudes to cycling [redacted]


Quantitative Methods
Only one in 30 take the free ice cream. Interesting...
free icecream
Qualitative Methods
What did you feel when you saw the free ice cream?
Excited. A little scared.
And why was that?

Primary vs Secondary Sources

Primary Sources of Information

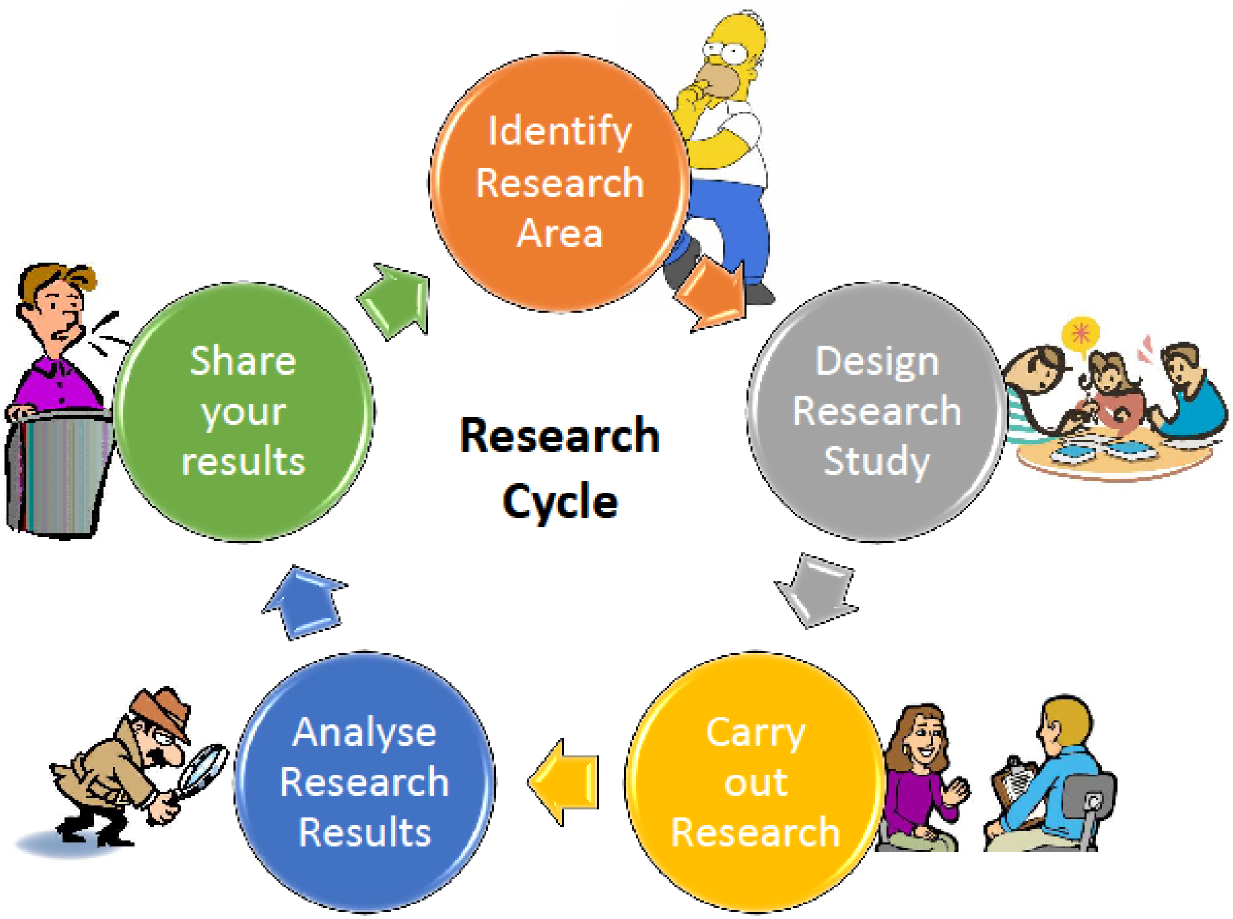
Primary data is the data collected by the researcher themselves e.g.

- Interview
- Focus group
- Questionnaire

Secondary Sources of Information

Secondary data is data that already exists e.g.

- Websites
- Official Statistics (Census)
- Letters


Identify Research Area
Design Research Study
Research Cycle
Carry out Research
Analyse Research Results
Share your results

How can I find out more?

If you have any questions, concerns or would like help or more information please do not hesitate to contact **Rebecca Dennehy** on

- 021-4205519/0879919305
- r.dennehy@ucc.ie
- CY:BER Study, Dept of Epidemiology and Public Health, 4th Floor, Western Gateway Building, UCC, Western Road, Cork.

Session 1 Building Rapport

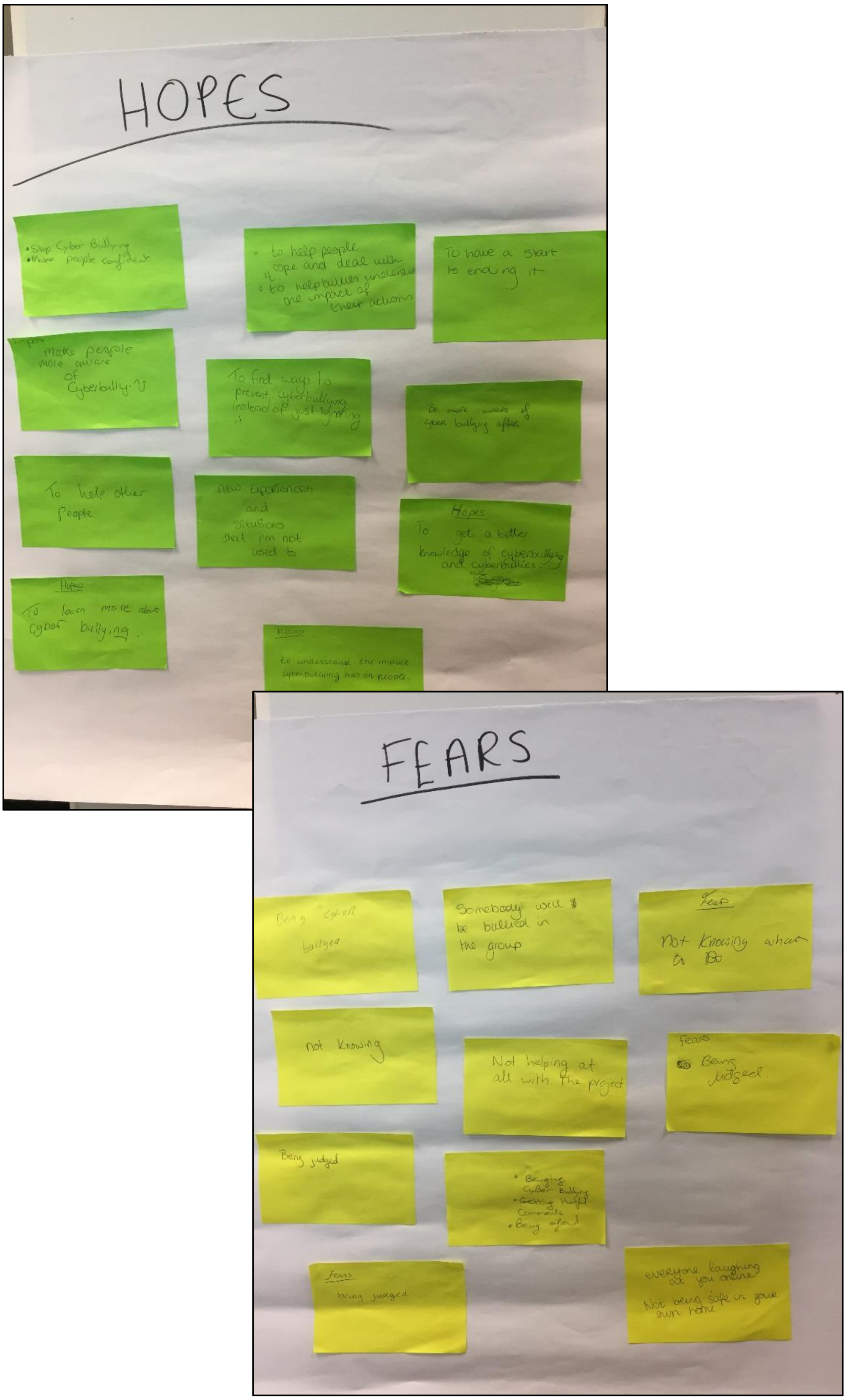

HOPES
• Stop Cyber Bullying • Make people confident
• to help people cope and deal with it • to help bullies understand the impact of their actions
To have a start to ending it
Hopes Make people more aware of Cyberbully
To find ways to prevent cyberbullying instead of just ignoring it
Be more aware of cyber bullying after
To help other people
new Experiences and situations that I'm not used to
Hopes To get a better knowledge of cyberbullying and cyberbullies.
Hopes To learn more about cyber bullying.
Hopes to understand the impact cyberbullying has on people.
FEARS
Being cyber bullyed
Somebody will be bullied in the group
Fear Not Knowing what to do
not Knowing
Not helping at all with the project
fears Being judged.
Being judged
• Bringing Cyber Bullying • Getting Hurtful Comments • Being afraid
fears being judged.
everyone laughing at you online Not being safe in your own home

Figure 9.3 Hopes and Fears Ahead of Participation

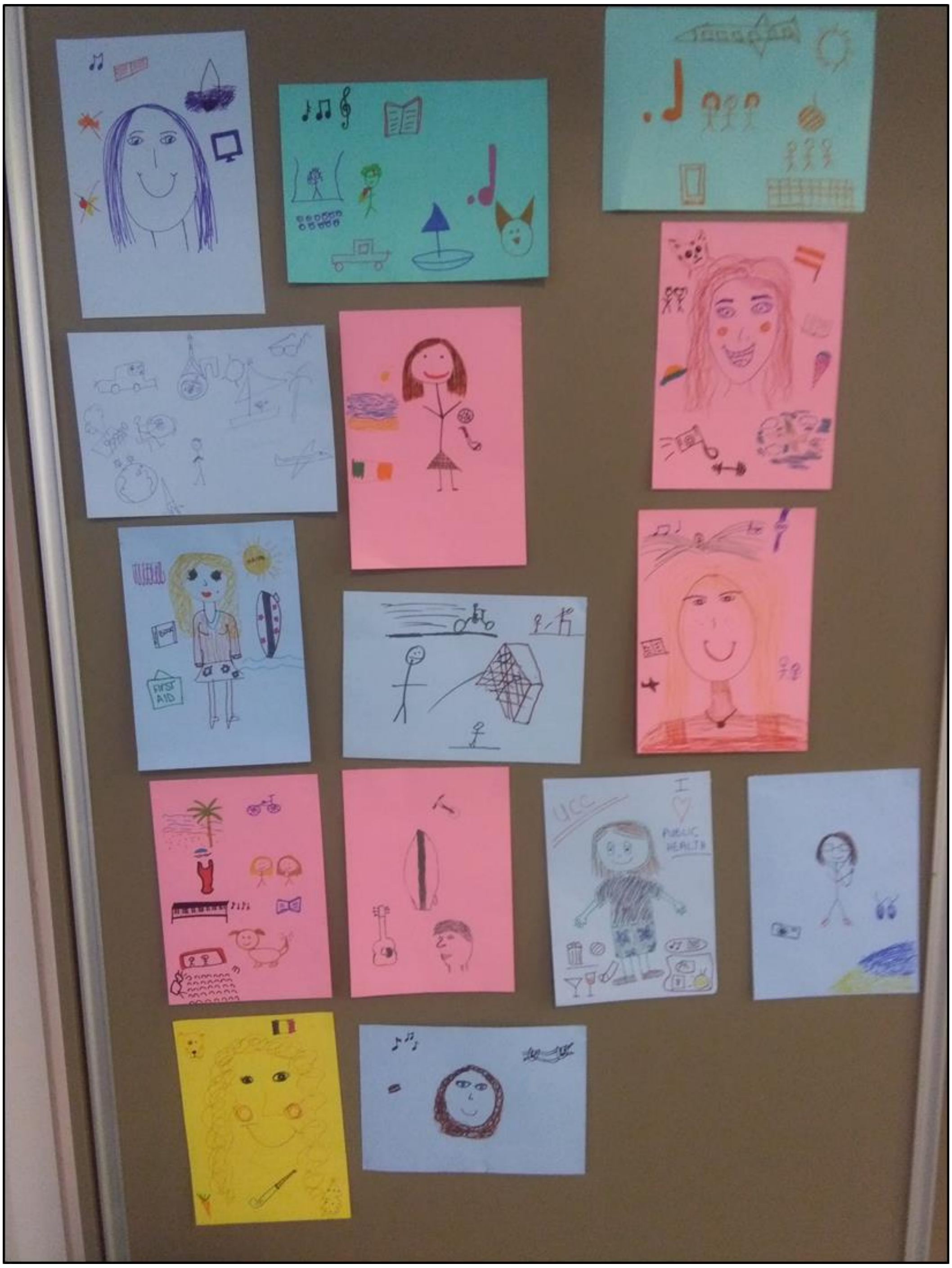
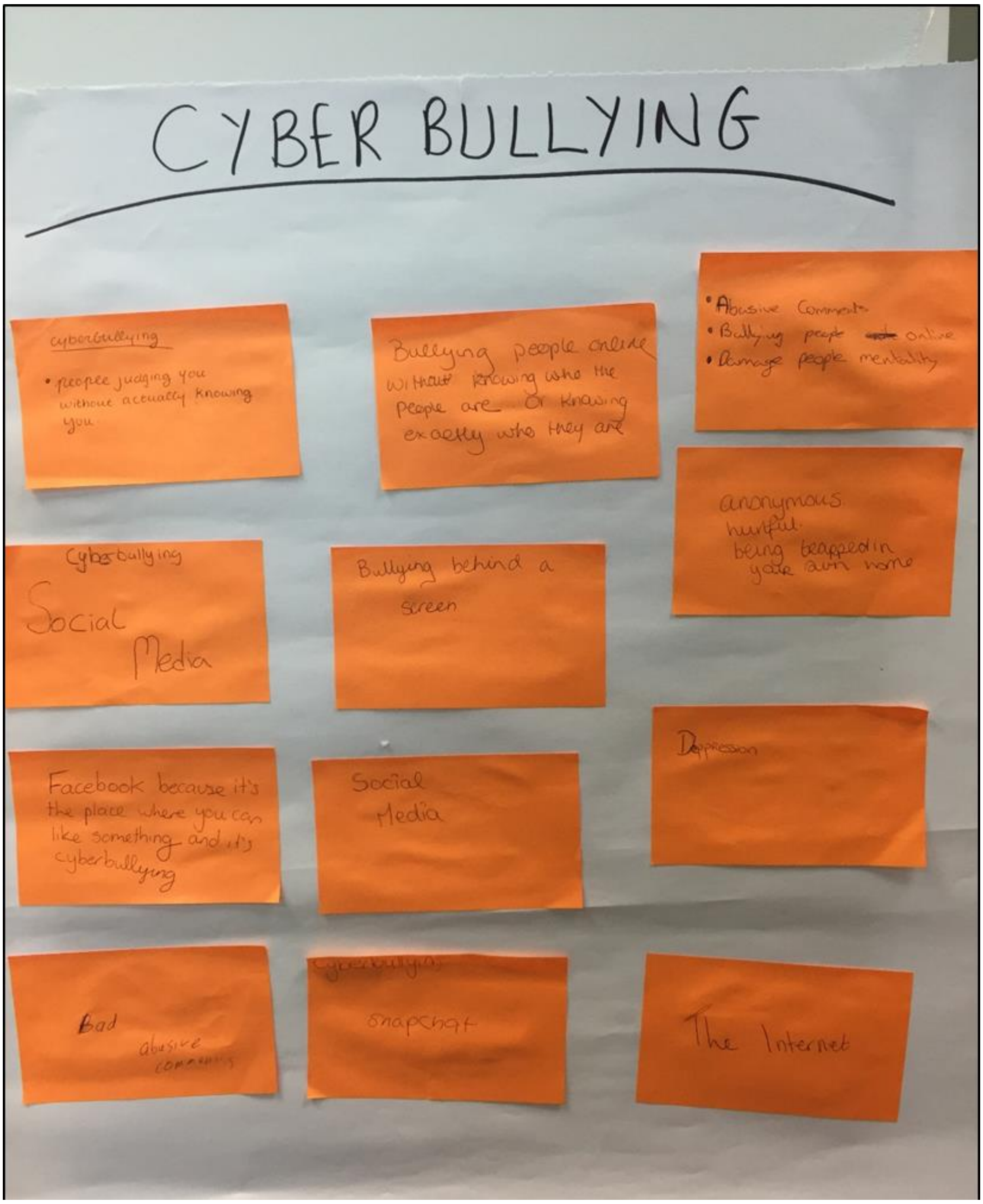

FIRST AID
UCC
I ♥ PUBLIC HEALTH

Figure 9.4 Self-Portraits Icebreaker



CYBER BULLYING

cyberbullying
- peopee judging you without acctually knowing you.

Bullying people online without knowing who the people are or knowing exactly who they are

- Abusive Comments
- Bullying people online
- Damage people mentality

Cyberbullying
Social Media

Bullying behind a screen

anonymous
hurtful.
being trapped in your own home

Facebook because it's the place where you can like something and it's cyberbullying

Social Media

Depression

Bad
abusive comments

cyberbullying
snapchat

The Internet

Figure 9.5 First Thoughts on Cyberbullying

Young Person’s Advisory Group Terms of Reference

1. Work with adult researchers, youth worker, and other advisory group members as part of a team
2. Contribute a young person’s point of view
3. Advise on the best ways to talk to post-primary school students about cyberbullying
4. Comment on the research findings
5. Identify key issues to be addressed to help those affected by cyberbullying

Session 2 Building Capacity

Description of Participatory Enabling Techniques Implemented in Session 2

Walking Debates

Walking debates, a tool to encourage discussion and the formation of views (Gowran, 2002; National Women's Council of Ireland, 2014) were conducted to enable reflection on the role of gender and setting in cyberbullying, to identify the characteristics of those impacted by victimisation and perpetration and to explore current prevention and intervention efforts. Two signs with the words "*I agree*" and "*I disagree*" were placed on the wall on either side of the room. Statements such as "*girls are more likely to be victims of cyberbullying than boys"* were read aloud. Advisory Group members were invited to walk to the sign that best reflected their view or stand in the middle if they were unsure. To encourage dialogue, they were encouraged to defend their position and to move if their view changed over the course of the debate.

Flexible Brainstorming and Sorting and Ranking

'Flexible Brainstorming' (Mc Menamin et al., 2015a) and 'Sorting and Ranking' (Chambers, 2002; Mc Menamin et al., 2015a) facilitated discussion about the media through which cyberbullying takes place. Members were provided with flipchart paper, sticky notes, card, and markers and invited to use the materials to depict the media through which cyberbullying takes place using one sticky note or piece of card per idea. They were then asked to sort their ideas into meaningful groupings. Through discussion and a process of retaining or removing certain items a list of the media they believed to facilitate cyberbullying was formed and items were ranked according to the perceived risk of victimisation. This was then used as a tool to enable reflection and discussion about the nature of cyberbullying in different outlets.

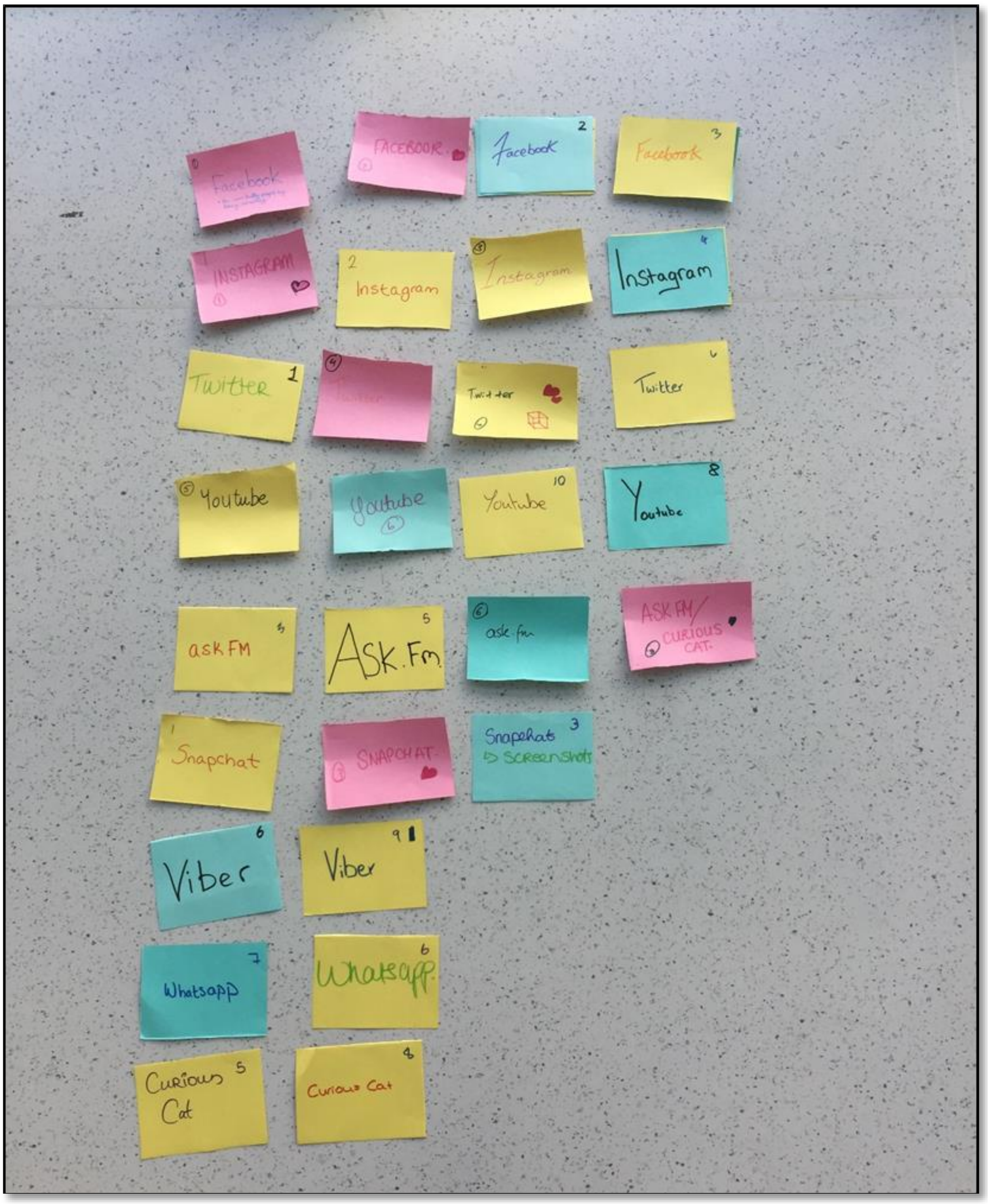

Facebook
FACEBOOK
Facebook 2
Facebook 3
INSTAGRAM
2 Instagram
Instagram
Instagram 4
Twitter 1
Twitter
Twitter
Youtube
Youtube
Youtube 10
Youtube 8
askFM
ASK.Fm 5
ask.fm
ASK.FM/ CURIOUS CAT.
Snapchat
SNAPCHAT
Snapchats 3
⇨ SCREENSHOTS
Viber 6
Viber 9
Whatsapp 7
Whatsapp 6
Curious Cat 5
Curious Cat 8

Figure 9.6 Brainstorming, Sorting, and Ranking-Where does cyberbullying take place?

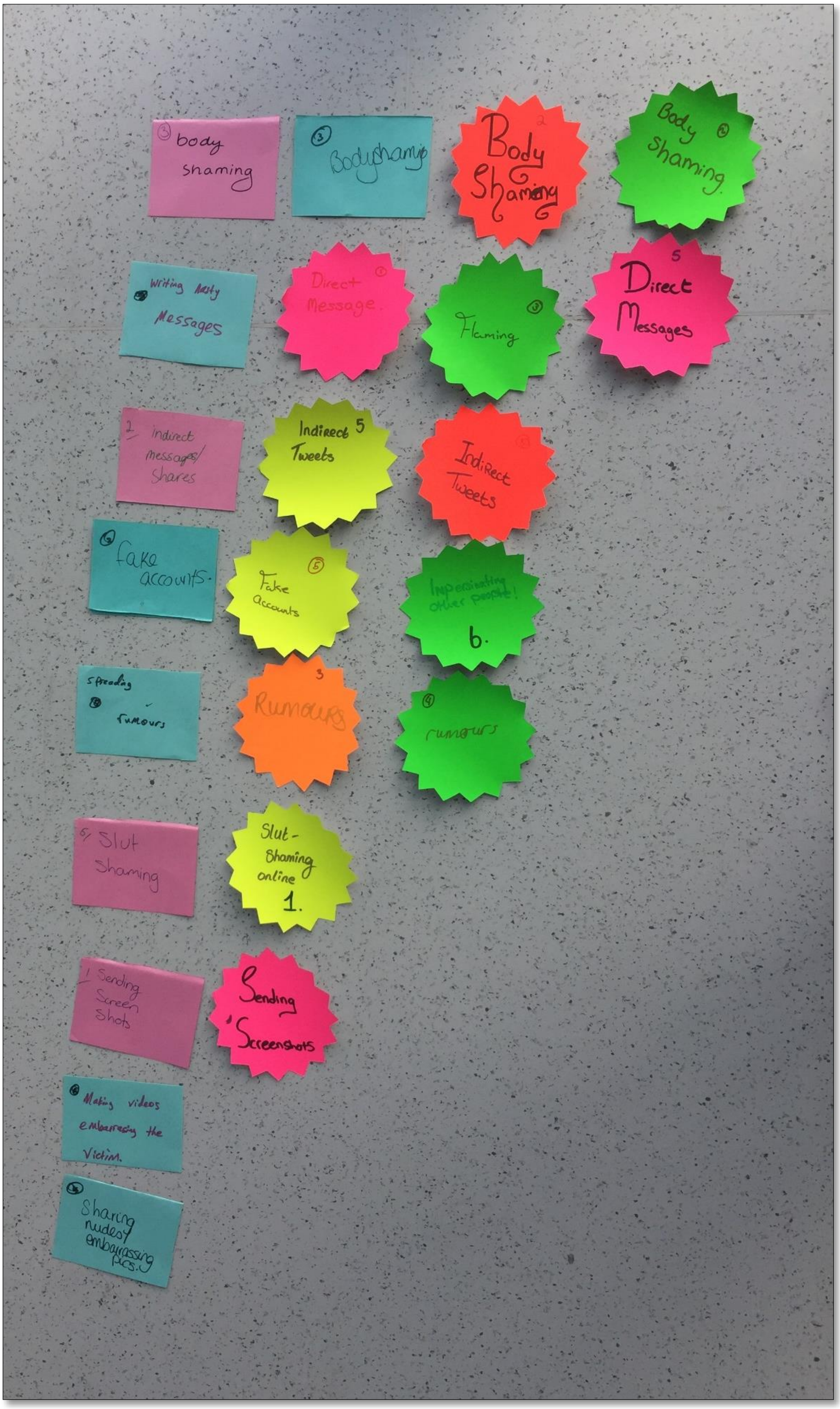
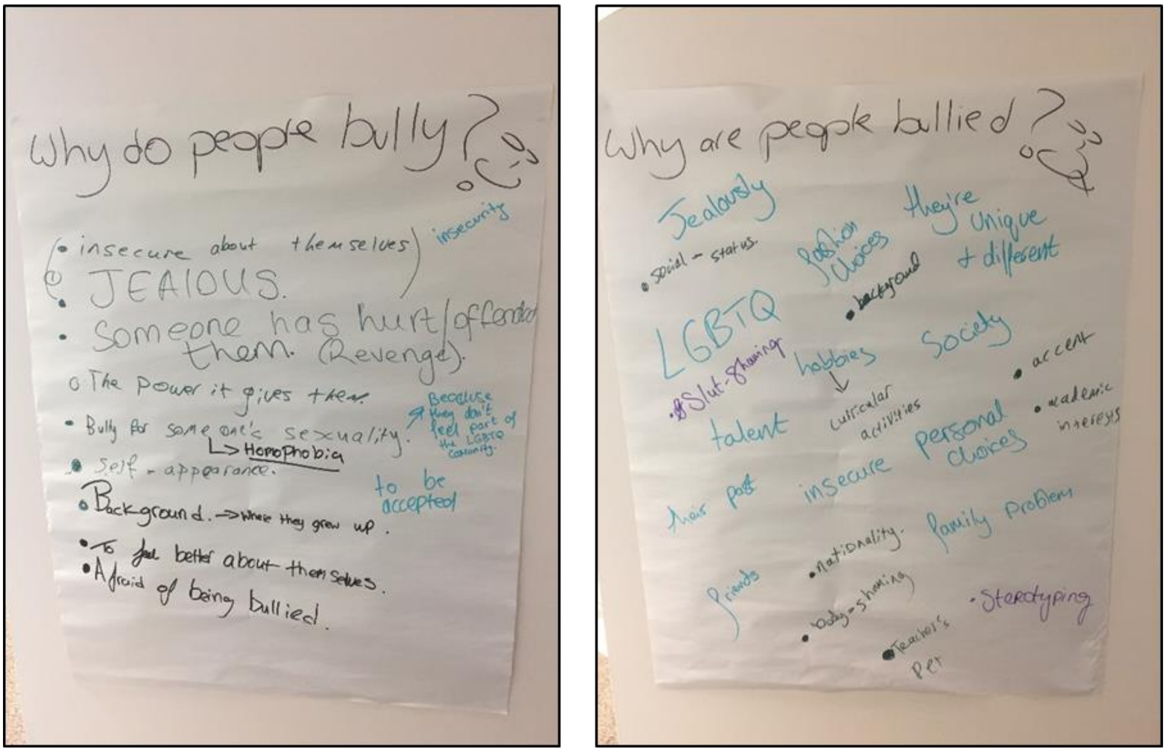

body shaming
Bodyshaming
Body Shaming
Body Shaming
Writing nasty Messages
Direct Message
Flaming
Direct Messages
Indirect messages/ shares
Indirect Tweets
Indirect Tweets
fake accounts.
Fake accounts
Impersonating other people!
6.
spreading rumours
Rumours
rumours
Slut Shaming
Slut-Shaming online
1.
Sending Screen Shots
Sending Screenshots
Making videos embarrassing the victim.
Sharing nudes/ embarrassing pics.

Figure 9.7 Brainstorming, Sorting, and Ranking-What form does cyberbullying take?

The Carousel technique (Chambers, 2002) was used to enable the Advisory Group to consider motivations for cyberbullying and the impact on those involved. Four tables were set up with markers and a sheet of flipchart paper with one question on each such as: “Why do young people cyberbully others?” and “What is the impact of cyberbullying on the perpetrator?”. Four members sat at each table and recorded their ideas on the flipchart paper. After five minutes they were invited to rotate to the next table to consider the next question. The flipchart sheets were then displayed and discussed by the group.



Why do people bully?

- insecure about themselves
- JEALOUS.
- Someone has hurt/offended them. (Revenge).
- The power it gives them.
- Bully for some one's sexuality.
  L> Homophobia
- Self - appearance.
- Background. -> where they grew up.
- To feel better about themselves.
- Afraid of being bullied.

insecurity

Because they don't feel part of the LGBTQ community.

to be accepted

Why are people bullied?

Jealously

- social - status.

fashion choices

they're unique + different

- background

LGBTQ

- #Slut-shaming

hobbies

curicular activities

Society

- accent

talent

personal choices

- academic interests

their past

insecure

family problem

Friends

- nationality.
- body-shaming
- Teacher's pet
- Sterotyping

Figure 9.8 Motivations for Cyberbullying

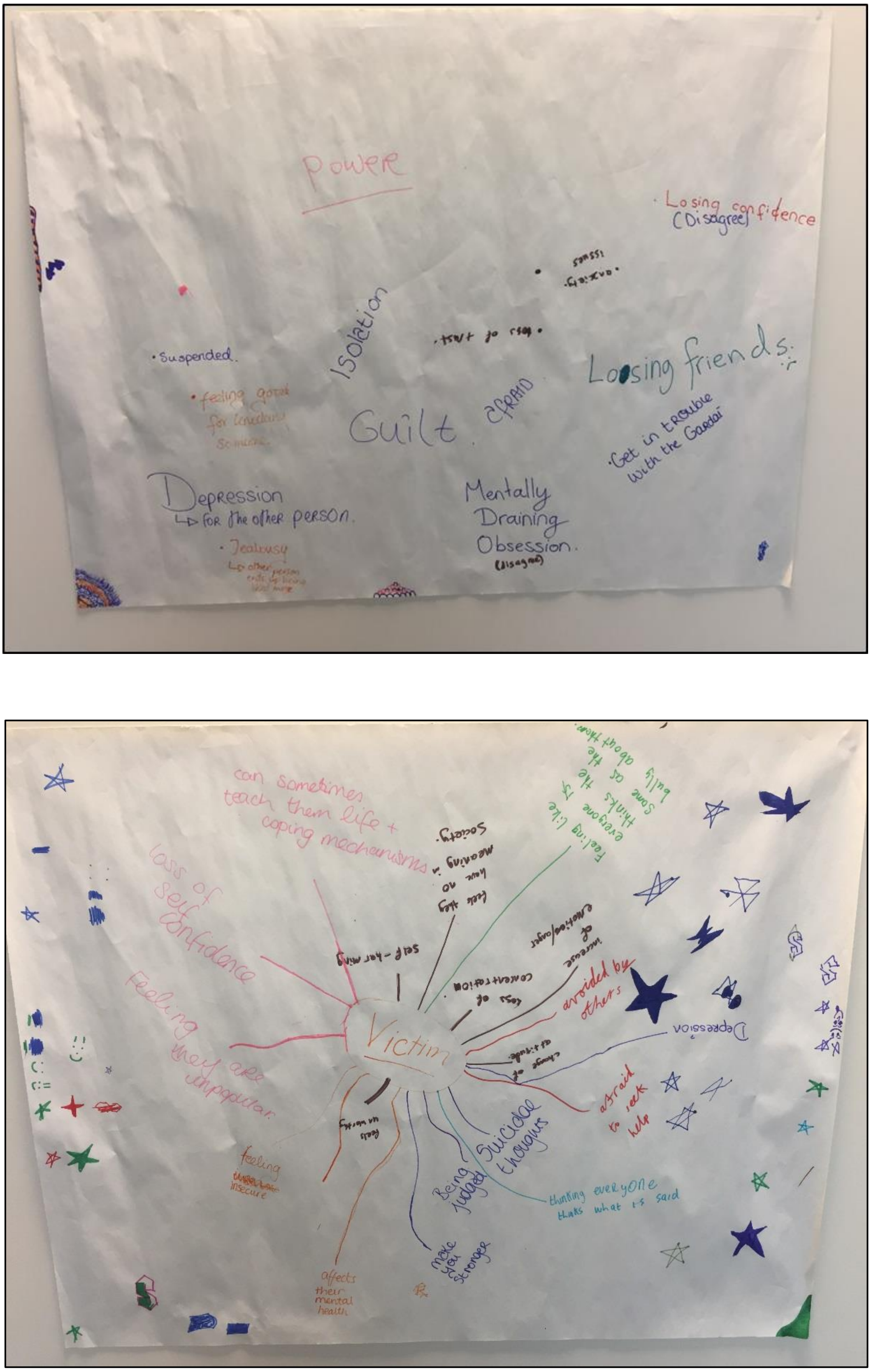
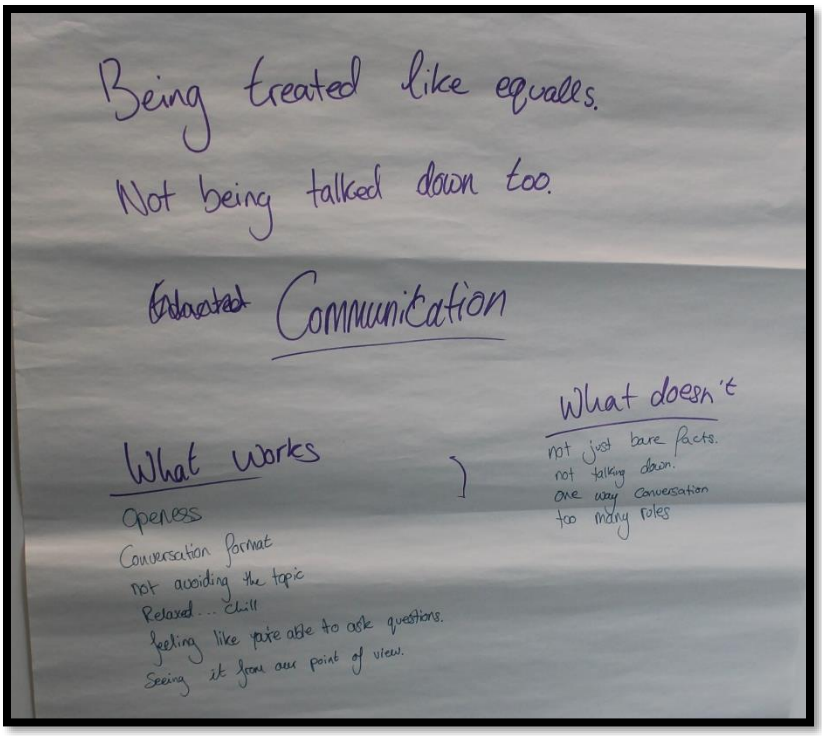

Power
· Losing confidence (Disagree)
· issues
· anxiety
· loss of trust
Isolation
· Suspended.
Loosing friends
· feeling good for lowering someone.
Guilt
afraid
· Get in trouble with the Gardai
Depression
↳ for the other person.
· Jealousy
↳ other person ends up being liked more
Mentally Draining
Obsession.
(disagree)
can sometimes teach them life + coping mechanisms
loss of self confidence
Feeling they are unpopular
self-harming
feels they have no meaning in society.
Feeling like everyone is thinks the same as the bully about them.
loss of concentration
increase of emotion/anger
avoided by others
Victim
Depression
change of attitude
afraid to seek help
feels unworthy
feeling insecure
Being judged
Suicidal thoughts
thinking everyone thinks what is said
make you stronger
affects their mental health

Figure 9.9 Impact on Those involved

Session Four Interpretation of Findings and Identification of Intervention Priorities



Being treated like equalls.

Not being talked down too.

~~Educated~~ Communication

What works

Openess
Conversation format
not avoiding the topic
Relaxed... chill
feeling like you're able to ask questions.
Seeing it from our point of view.

What doesn't

not just bare facts.
not talking down.
one way conversation
too many roles

Figure 9.10 Communication is the Root Issue

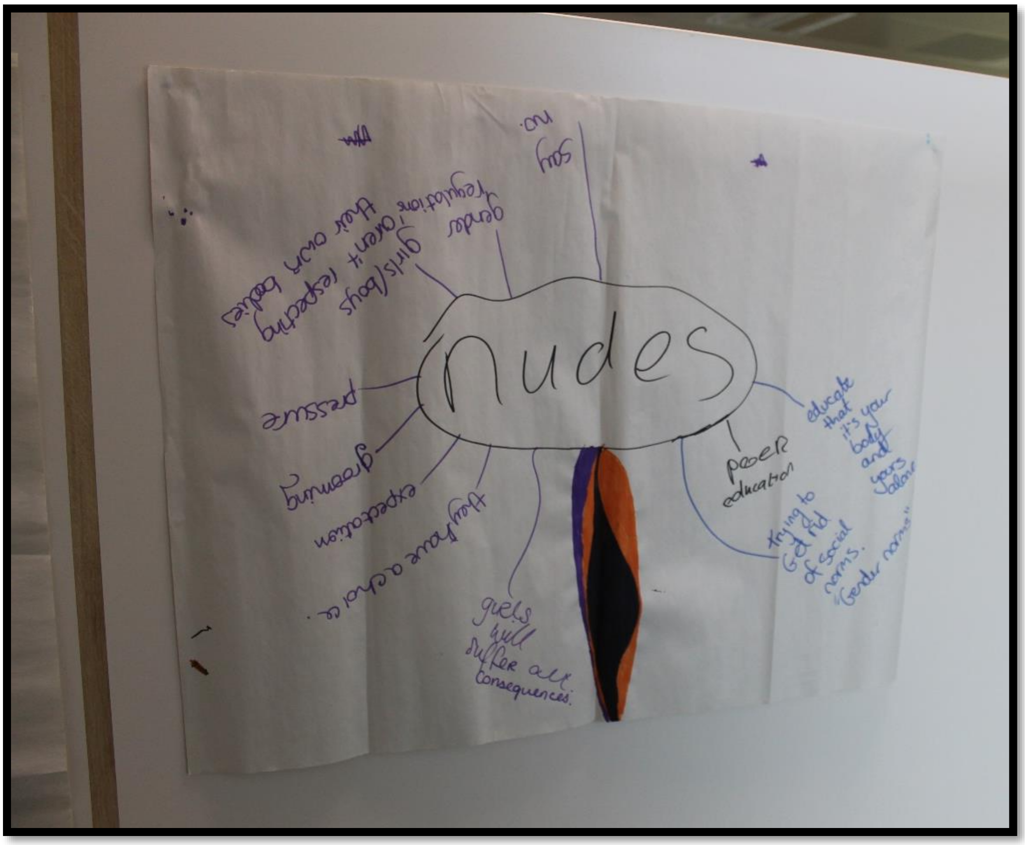

nudes
say no.
gender regulations
girls/boys aren't respecting their own bodies
pressure
grooming
expectation
they have a choice.
girls will suffer all consequences.
peer education
trying to get rid of social norms. "Gender norms"
educate that it's your body and yours alone

Figure 9.11 Tackling Non-Consensual Distribution

Session 5 Final Evaluation

Table 9.1 Final Evaluation Topic Guide

Topic	Tools	Objective
Why did you get involved?	Group Discussion	Expectations/Needs
What was your role as a youth advisor to the CY:BER Project? (What did you do?)	Group Discussion	Process
In general, what makes a group work well together?	Brainstorming, write on post-its and discuss why and how this happened in the group?	Process
To what extent did these factors exist in the group? • **What helped/didn't help?** • **What could have been done to make the group work more successfully?**	Using the post-its ask young people to place them on a continuum line labelled "fully" to "not at all"	Process, barriers, things that could be improved
What helped you to be actively involved in the Advisory Group?	Group Discussion	Training and support
What did you like, or not, what could be changed?	Flipchart paper, happy face, sad face, forward arrow	Process, barriers, things to be improved
What difference did it make? • **Did you feel listened to? Examples?** • **What impact has the experience had on you?** • **What impact did the group have on the project?** • **What impact did the group have on the wider community (school, home etc.)?** • **Was it worthwhile?** • **Would you do it again?** • **Do you think you had an influence on the decisions made? Examples** • **Can you give me examples of things that were achieved by the group, (even if they are small)**	Group Discussion	Perceived outcomes
What would you advise to a friend who is aiming to do something similar?	Write a card to your friend	Identify recommendations
Is this a good way of involving young people in research? Is there a better way?		
Is there anything else that you would like to add?	Group Discussion	

CY:BER Topic Guide Focus Groups

- *Check that parent//guardian consent form returned for each participant*
- *Remind young people about the purpose of the study and that participation is voluntary, check young people's consent forms and sign if necessary*
- *Make sure that participants are clear about what to expect and have the opportunity to ask questions*
- *Review limits to confidentiality*
- *Icebreaker-Two Truths One Lie*
- *Group Contract*
- *Ensure consent is given before commencing recording*
- *Interviewer to state name, focus group/interview ID, date, time, location and that assent has been given*

1. **Cyber Context/Behaviours**
    - Can you tell me about how you use technology? E.g. phone calls, text, social media, gaming, chat rooms, apps etc.
    - What do you use to go online? Phone, tablet, computer, console
    - How often do you use it?
    - Where do you use it? Home, school, social
    - What do you use it for? Homework, gaming, music, chatting, sharing photos
    - What are some of the positive things that you have experienced?
    - What are some of the negative things that you have experienced? Do you consider this experience cyberbullying or not/why/why not
    - How would you feel if you weren't able to use any form of technology? (How important is it?)
    - Do you think about what you are going to write before you put something online? (Facebook, Instagram etc.) Are there places online where you do not have to think as much about what you are writing? Why/why not?

2. **Bullying/Cyberbullying Context/Behaviours**
    - What do you think bullying is?
    - Do you think bullying is a normal part of growing up? Why/why not? (Is bullying inevitable?)
    - What do you think cyberbullying is?
    - When do you consider something to be cyberbullying? Is it the action of the perpetrator or how the victim perceives it?
    - Where are young people more likely to be when it happens? (Home, school, socially)
    - How does it happen? (SMS, IM, group chat, public/indirect posts, pictures (nude images?), fake accounts, screenshots)
    - Do you have any examples of where this happened? Have you ever seen it? (what was bad about comment/picture/detail)
    - Do you think cyberbullying is a problem for young people? If yes, how much of a problem, if not, why not?

3. **Differences between cyberbullying and face to face bullying**
    - Do you think cyberbullying is different from face to face bullying? (**Idea of consensus, repetition**).
    - Is one more serious than the other? If yes, why? If no, can you say more?
    - Is one easier to deal with? If yes, why? If no, can you say more?
    - Is one easier to do? If yes, why? If no, can you say more?
    - Does it feel different to say hurtful things over texts, emails, social media than face to face? If so, what is different?
    - Does it feel different to receive hurtful messages over phone/social media? If so, why? (consensus)

- Are people who are cyberbullied also bullied face-to-face? Is that always the case? What is the impact of this on the person?

4. **Motivations**
    - What do young people get cyberbullied about? (**slut-shaming, body-image, gender expectations/roles, nude images,** something that sets them apart, race, appearance, disability)
    - Why do young people cyberbully each other?
    - Where did you learn about how young people cyberbullying each other?
    - Does cyberbullying happen between friends, people you know or strangers? Or all of these? Why?
    - Why do some young people get cyberbullied and others don't?

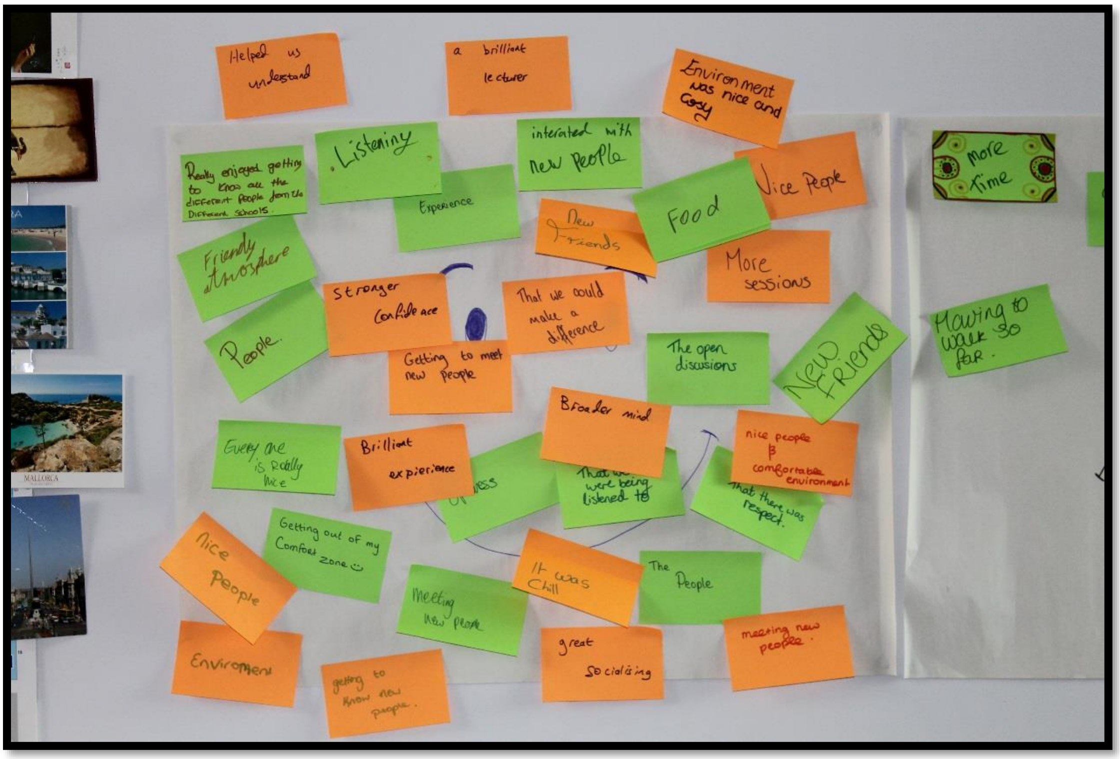
5. **Impact and Consequences**
    - What effect does cyberbullying have on those who are impacted by it? Target, witness, perpetrator?
    - Is the impact the same/worse/better than face to face bullying? How? Why?

6. **Coping**
    - How do young people deal with or react to cyberbullying? E.g. ignore it, report it, ask for help, respond/retaliate, talk to friends/parents/teacher, blocking, focus on other activity, avoid perpetrator online/in-person?
    - Do young people tell anyone about cyberbullying? Why/why not? If they do tell, who do they tell? (Friend, parent, teacher?)
    - Some YP have said they do not tell because it will become a big deal? What do you think about that? What do you think would happen if they told?
    - Some young people have said that they would be afraid to tell a friend about hurtful comments they received online in case their friend would agree with them? What do you think about this?

7. **Getting help/solutions**
    - What stops people from getting help? (target, perpetrator and witness)
    - What do you think would help? (target, perpetrator and witness)
    - Who is responsible for helping people deal with cyberbullying? (What is the role of the school?)
    - How much to you think your parents/guardians know about cyberbullying? What about schools?
    - Has anyone talked to you about cyberbullying? (Parent, teacher, other) What did they tell you?
    - What kind of information would you like about cyberbullying?
    - Are you aware of any anti-cyberbullying campaigns? What do you think of them?
    - What do you think should be done to tackle cyberbullying? (education, coping skills)

Thinking about cyberbullying in general, is there anything else you think is important that I haven't asked you about?

Participatory Evaluation Process


Helped us understand
a brilliant lecturer
Environment was nice and Cosy
Really enjoyed getting to know all the different people from the Different schools.
Listening
interated with new People
Nice People
more time
Experience
New friends
Food
Friendly atmosphere
Stronger Confidence
That we could make a difference
More sessions
People
Getting to meet new people
The open discussions
New Friends
Having to walk so far.
Every one is Really Nice
Brilliant experience
Broader mind
nice people & comfortable environment
That we were being listened to
That there was respect.
Nice People
Getting out of my Comfort Zone :)
It was Chill
The People
Meeting New People
great socialising
meeting new people.
Enviroment
getting to know new people.

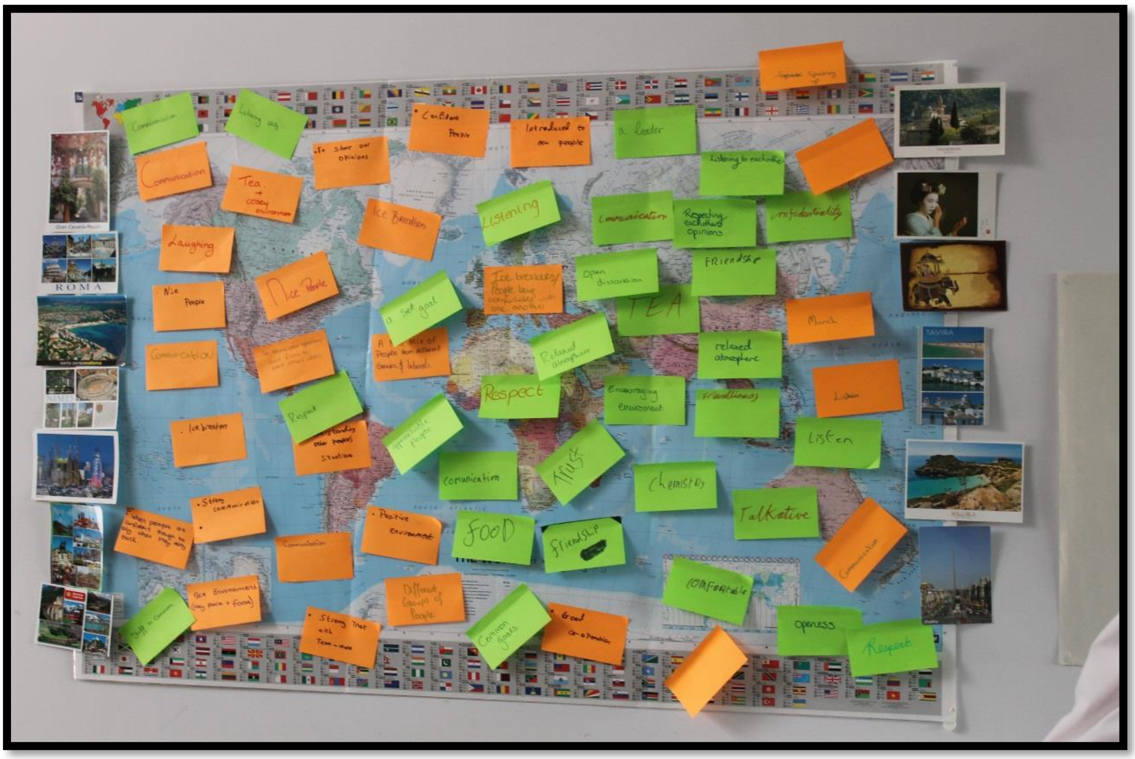
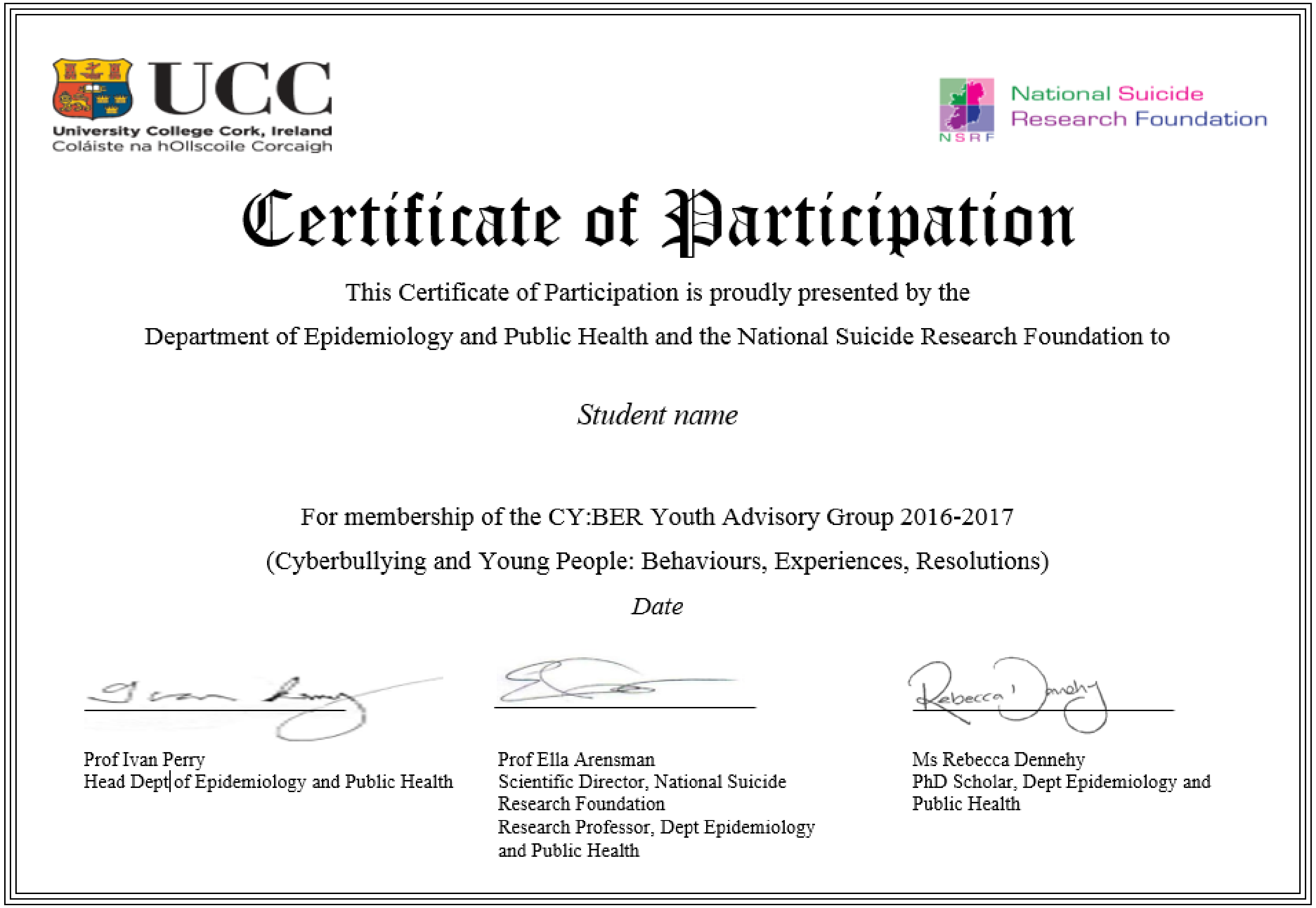

Communication
Tea + cosey environment
Ice Breakers
Listening
Laughing
Nice People
Communication
Respect
Listen
Chemistry
Talkative
Food
Friendship
Trust
TEA
Comfortable
openess
Respect
Friendship
relaxed atmosphere
Confidentiality
Open discussion
Ice breakers
A set goal
Common goals
Good Conversation
Different Groups of People
Positive environment
Strong Communication
Introduced to new people
a leader
Confident People
To share our opinions

Figure 9.12 Participatory Evaluation



UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

National Suicide
Research Foundation
NSRF

Certificate of Participation

This Certificate of Participation is proudly presented by the
Department of Epidemiology and Public Health and the National Suicide Research Foundation to

Student name

For membership of the CY:BER Youth Advisory Group 2016-2017
(Cyberbullying and Young People: Behaviours, Experiences, Resolutions)

Date

Prof Ivan Perry
Head Dept of Epidemiology and Public Health

Prof Ella Arensman
Scientific Director, National Suicide Research Foundation
Research Professor, Dept Epidemiology and Public Health

Ms Rebecca Dennehy
PhD Scholar, Dept Epidemiology and Public Health

Figure 9.13 Certificate of Participation

10 Appendix C Supplementary Material for Chapter 5

Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions
Parent/Guardian Information Sheet

Dear Parent/Guardian,
My name is Rebecca Dennehy, I am a PhD Researcher in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork (UCC). I am working on a study called CY:BER (Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences, Resolutions) and I would like your child to take part.

What is the CY:BER Study? 1 in 4 young people in Ireland report that they have been cyberbullied. Cyberbullying is harmful to the health of young people, more so than face-to-face bullying. Talking to young people will help us to learn more about cyberbullying so that we can find ways to address it.

Who is running the Study? The study is funded by the Health Research Board and is led by a research team at UCC including Professor Ella Arensman, Director of the National Suicide Research Foundation, Dr Paul Corcoran, National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre and Ms Mary Cronin and Ms Rebecca Dennehy, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health.

Why is my child being invited to take part? This study will take place in a number of schools in [redacted] Your child's school has agreed to let us invite their students to take part. Each child will be given the choice to take part or not.

What does the study involve for my child? Your child will be invited to talk about cyberbullying in a focus group. Following the focus group we may invite your child to take part in a 1-to1 interview with a researcher. Focus groups and interviews will take place in school and will take no more than 1 hour. With your permission, the discussion will be audio recorded so that it can be typed up at a later stage.

What are the risks and benefits of the study? We do not expect any risks for your child. Child protection guidelines will be followed at all times. If talking about cyberbullying upsets your child a support team is available. Cyberbullying is a serious concern, your child will be making an important contribution to helping us understand and address the issue.

How will the collected information be used? The information collected will be treated with the strictest confidence and stored securely in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCC, so that only the researchers can access it. Your child's name will not appear on any information. We will study the information in a way that helps us to better understand cyberbullying.

What will happen to the findings of the study? The findings will be shared with schools, researchers and policy makers in the form of presentations and reports. Your child's name or anything that may identify them will not appear in any of these presentations or reports.

What should I do now? Please discuss the study with your child, they have also received an information sheet. Your child can decide whether s/he would like to take part and can decide to leave the study at any time. If you are happy for your child to take part please sign and return the consent form to your child's school by__________. Please keep the second consent form for your own records.

How can I get additional information about this study? Contact: Rebecca Dennehy on 021-4205519 or at r.dennehy@ucc.ie or write to me at CY:BER Study, Dept of Epidemiology and Public Health, 4th Floor, Western Gateway Building, UCC, Western Road, Cork.

Yours Sincerely,
Rebecca Dennehy

CY:BER
Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the project and have had the opportunity to ask questions

Yes	**No**

I have discussed the study with my child and I consent to his/her participation

Yes	**No**

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I, and my child, are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason

Yes	**No**

I am aware that the discussion with my child will be audio recorded and I agree to this

Yes	**No**

I understand that my child's name will not appear on any research data for this study

Yes	**No**

I agree to the use of my child's data in reports and publications

Yes	**No**

After reading the information sheet, if you have no further questions, please sign below

CHILD'S NAME	
CHILD'S CLASS	
PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME	
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE	
DATE	

Thank you for your collaboration

CY:BER
Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions
Young People's Information Sheet and Consent Form

Why are we doing this study? Cyberbullying has become more common in recent years and it can be hurtful to the young people that are involved. We want to learn more about cyberbullying and find ways to tackle it.

Why me? We are interested in hearing about cyberbullying from young people in your school and other schools in your area. You do not have to take part but we hope that you will.

What will I have to do? You will be invited to take part in a focus group with other students from your year. The focus groups will involve 6-8 students in a group setting being asked about their thoughts on cyberbullying. The focus group will take about 1 hour and will be audio recorded. There are no right or wrong answers and you do not have to answer any question you don't want to.

Your parents/guardians and your school will know that you are taking part but only the researchers and the others in the group will know what you tell us. Those in the focus group will be asked to keep the discussion to themselves but it is possible that they may tell someone outside of the group, because of this you will not be asked to tell us about your personal experience in a focus group. After the focus group you may be asked if you would like to do a 1-to-1 interview with a researcher.

What happens in an interview? If you are willing to do a 1-to-1 interview this will take place in school and will last for no more than 1 class. If you agree the interview will be audio recorded. Your parents/guardians and school will know that you are taking part but only the researchers will know what you tell us. You will be asked about your views on cyberbullying and you can share your personal experience if you would like to.

What will happen to the information that I give? All information collected during the study will be treated with the strictest confidence and will be safely stored so that only the researchers can access it. We will write some reports and share the information that we have found but we will not put your name on anything. The information will be used to help us to understand cyberbullying so that together with young people we can figure out the best way to deal with it.

What are the good and bad things about taking part? This is a chance for you to have your say on something that directly impacts young people. It may feel good to talk about cyberbullying and know that your input will make a difference. Talking about cyberbullying might make you feel upset. If this happens please tell the researcher and they will talk with you and make sure that you get help. The guidance counsellor in your school, the local youth worker and members of the research team are available to support you if needed. Everything you tell us will be treated with confidence however, if you tell us something that leads us to believe that you or another person is at risk of serious harm we will have to report this to your school.

What should I do now? Please discuss the study with your parent/guardian. If you are happy to take part please sign and return your consent form and your parent/guardian consent form to your school.

How can I find out more? For further information contact: Rebecca Dennehy on 021-4205519 or at r.dennehy@ucc.ie or write to me at CY:BER Study, Dept of Epidemiology and Public Health, 4th Floor, Western Gateway Building, UCC, Western Road, Cork.

CY:BER
Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions
Student Consent Form

I understand what the project is about and what the results will be used for

Yes	No

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and that I am free to leave the study at any time, without giving a reason

Yes	No

I am aware that the discussion with the researcher will be audio recorded and I agree to this

Yes	No

I understand that the information that I give will be stored securely and that my name will not appear on it

Yes	No

I understand that what the researchers find out in this study will be shared with others but that my name and details will not be given to anyone

Yes	No

After reading the information sheet, if you have no further questions, please sign below

NAME	
CLASS	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	

Thank you for your collaboration

CY:BER Topic Guide Focus Groups

- *Check that parent//guardian consent form returned for each participant*
- *Remind young people about the purpose of the study and that participation is voluntary, check young people's consent forms and sign if necessary*
- *Make sure that participants are clear about what to expect and have the opportunity to ask questions*
- *Review limits to confidentiality*
- *Icebreaker-Two Truths One Lie*
- *Group Contract*
- *Ensure consent is given before commencing recording*
- *Interviewer to state name, focus group/interview ID, date, time, location and that assent has been given*

8. **Cyber Context/Behaviours**
    - Can you tell me about how you use technology? E.g. phone calls, text, social media, gaming, chat rooms, apps etc.
    - What do you use to go online? Phone, tablet, computer, console
    - How often do you use it?
    - Where do you use it? Home, school, social
    - What do you use it for? Homework, gaming, music, chatting, sharing photos
    - What are some of the positive things that you have experienced?
    - What are some of the negative things that you have experienced? Do you consider this experience cyberbullying or not/why/why not
    - How would you feel if you weren't able to use any form of technology? (How important is it?)
    - Do you think about what you are going to write before you put something online? (Facebook, Instagram etc.) Are there places online where you do not have to think as much about what you are writing? Why/why not?

9. **Bullying/Cyberbullying Context/Behaviours**
    - What do you think bullying is?
    - Do you think bullying is a normal part of growing up? Why/why not? (Is bullying inevitable?)
    - What do you think cyberbullying is?
    - When do you consider something to be cyberbullying? Is it the action of the perpetrator or how the victim perceives it?
    - Where are young people more likely to be when it happens? (Home, school, socially)
    - How does it happen? (SMS, IM, group chat, public/indirect posts, pictures (nude images?), fake accounts, screenshots)
    - Do you have any examples of where this happened? Have you ever seen it? (what was bad about comment/picture/detail)
    - Do you think cyberbullying is a problem for young people? If yes, how much of a problem, if not, why not?

10. **Differences between cyberbullying and face to face bullying**
    - Do you think cyberbullying is different from face to face bullying? (**Idea of consensus, repetition**).
    - Is one more serious than the other? If yes, why? If no, can you say more?
    - Is one easier to deal with? If yes, why? If no, can you say more?
    - Is one easier to do? If yes, why? If no, can you say more?
    - Does it feel different to say hurtful things over texts, emails, social media than face to face? If so, what is different?

- Does it feel different to receive hurtful messages over phone/social media? If so, why? (consensus)
- Are people who are cyberbullied also bullied face-to-face? Is that always the case? What is the impact of this on the person?

11. **Motivations**
    - What do young people get cyberbullied about? (**slut-shaming, body-image, gender expectations/roles, nude images,** something that sets them apart, race, appearance, disability)
    - Why do young people cyberbully each other?
    - Where did you learn about how young people cyberbullying each other?
    - Does cyberbullying happen between friends, people you know or strangers? Or all of these? Why?
    - Why do some young people get cyberbullied and others don't?

12. **Impact and Consequences**
    - What effect does cyberbullying have on those who are impacted by it? Target, witness, perpetrator?
    - Is the impact the same/worse/better than face to face bullying? How? Why?

13. **Coping**
    - How do young people deal with or react to cyberbullying? E.g. ignore it, report it, ask for help, respond/retaliate, talk to friends/parents/teacher, blocking, focus on other activity, avoid perpetrator online/in-person?
    - Do young people tell anyone about cyberbullying? Why/why not? If they do tell, who do they tell? (Friend, parent, teacher?)
    - Some YP have said they do not tell because it will become a big deal? What do you think about that? What do you think would happen if they told?
    - Some young people have said that they would be afraid to tell a friend about hurtful comments they received online in case their friend would agree with them? What do you think about this?

14. **Getting help/solutions**
    - What stops people from getting help? (target, perpetrator and witness)
    - What do you think would help? (target, perpetrator and witness)
    - Who is responsible for helping people deal with cyberbullying? (What is the role of the school?)
    - How much to you think your parents/guardians know about cyberbullying? What about schools?
    - Has anyone talked to you about cyberbullying? (Parent, teacher, other) What did they tell you?
    - What kind of information would you like about cyberbullying?
    - Are you aware of any anti-cyberbullying campaigns? What do you think of them?
    - What do you think should be done to tackle cyberbullying? (education, coping skills)

Thinking about cyberbullying in general, is there anything else you think is important that I haven't asked you about?

11 Appendix D Supplementary Material for Chapter 6

Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions
Parent/Guardian Information Sheet

Dear Parent/Guardian,
My name is Rebecca Dennehy, I am a PhD Researcher in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College Cork (UCC). I am working on a study called CY:BER (Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences, Resolutions) and I would like your child to take part.

What is the CY:BER Study? 1 in 4 young people in Ireland report that they have been cyberbullied. Cyberbullying is harmful to the health of young people, more so than face-to-face bullying. Talking to young people will help us to learn more about cyberbullying so that we can find ways to address it.

Who is running the Study? The study is funded by the Health Research Board and is led by a research team at UCC including Professor Ella Arensman, Director of the National Suicide Research Foundation, Dr Paul Corcoran, National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre and Ms Mary Cronin and Ms Rebecca Dennehy, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health.

Why is my child being invited to take part? This study will take place in a number of schools in [redacted] Your child's school has agreed to let us invite their students to take part. Each child will be given the choice to take part or not.

What does the study involve for my child? Your child will be invited to talk about cyberbullying in a focus group. Following the focus group we may invite your child to take part in a 1-to1 interview with a researcher. Focus groups and interviews will take place in school and will take no more than 1 hour. With your permission, the discussion will be audio recorded so that it can be typed up at a later stage.

What are the risks and benefits of the study? We do not expect any risks for your child. Child protection guidelines will be followed at all times. If talking about cyberbullying upsets your child a support team is available. Cyberbullying is a serious concern, your child will be making an important contribution to helping us understand and address the issue.

How will the collected information be used? The information collected will be treated with the strictest confidence and stored securely in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCC, so that only the researchers can access it. Your child's name will not appear on any information. We will study the information in a way that helps us to better understand cyberbullying.

What will happen to the findings of the study? The findings will be shared with schools, researchers and policy makers in the form of presentations and reports. Your child's name or anything that may identify them will not appear in any of these presentations or reports.

What should I do now? Please discuss the study with your child, they have also received an information sheet. Your child can decide whether s/he would like to take part and can decide to leave the study at any time. If you are happy for your child to take part please sign and return the consent form to your child's school by__________. Please keep the second consent form for your own records.

How can I get additional information about this study? Contact: Rebecca Dennehy on 021-4205519 or at r.dennehy@ucc.ie or write to me at CY:BER Study, Dept of Epidemiology and Public Health, 4th Floor, Western Gateway Building, UCC, Western Road, Cork.

Yours Sincerely,
Rebecca Dennehy

CY:BER
Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the project and have had the opportunity to ask questions

Yes	**No**

I have discussed the study with my child and I consent to his/her participation

Yes	**No**

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I, and my child, are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason

Yes	**No**

I am aware that the discussion with my child will be audio recorded and I agree to this

Yes	**No**

I understand that my child's name will not appear on any research data for this study

Yes	**No**

I agree to the use of my child's data in reports and publications

Yes	**No**

After reading the information sheet, if you have no further questions, please sign below

CHILD'S NAME	
CHILD'S CLASS	
PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME	
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE	
DATE	

Thank you for your collaboration

CY:BER
Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions
Young People's Information Sheet and Consent Form

Why are we doing this study? Cyberbullying has become more common in recent years and it can be hurtful to the young people that are involved. We want to learn more about cyberbullying and find ways to tackle it.

Why me? We are interested in hearing about cyberbullying from young people in your school and other schools in your area. You do not have to take part but we hope that you will.

What will I have to do? You will be invited to take part in a focus group with other students from your year. The focus groups will involve 6-8 students in a group setting being asked about their thoughts on cyberbullying. The focus group will take about 1 hour and will be audio recorded. There are no right or wrong answers and you do not have to answer any question you don't want to.

Your parents/guardians and your school will know that you are taking part but only the researchers and the others in the group will know what you tell us. Those in the focus group will be asked to keep the discussion to themselves but it is possible that they may tell someone outside of the group, because of this you will not be asked to tell us about your personal experience in a focus group. After the focus group you may be asked if you would like to do a 1-to-1 interview with a researcher.

What happens in an interview? If you are willing to do a 1-to-1 interview this will take place in school and will last for no more than 1 class. If you agree the interview will be audio recorded. Your parents/guardians and school will know that you are taking part but only the researchers will know what you tell us. You will be asked about your views on cyberbullying and you can share your personal experience if you would like to.

What will happen to the information that I give? All information collected during the study will be treated with the strictest confidence and will be safely stored so that only the researchers can access it. We will write some reports and share the information that we have found but we will not put your name on anything. The information will be used to help us to understand cyberbullying so that together with young people we can figure out the best way to deal with it.

What are the good and bad things about taking part? This is a chance for you to have your say on something that directly impacts young people. It may feel good to talk about cyberbullying and know that your input will make a difference. Talking about cyberbullying might make you feel upset. If this happens please tell the researcher and they will talk with you and make sure that you get help. The guidance counsellor in your school, the local youth worker and members of the research team are available to support you if needed. Everything you tell us will be treated with confidence however, if you tell us something that leads us to believe that you or another person is at risk of serious harm we will have to report this to your school.

What should I do now? Please discuss the study with your parent/guardian. If you are happy to take part please sign and return your consent form and your parent/guardian consent form to your school.

How can I find out more? For further information contact: Rebecca Dennehy on 021-4205519 or at r.dennehy@ucc.ie or write to me at CY:BER Study, Dept of Epidemiology and Public Health, 4th Floor, Western Gateway Building, UCC, Western Road, Cork.

SPHeRE Structured Population and Health-services Research Education

UCC Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire University College Cork, Ireland

HRB Health Research Board

NSRF National Suicide Research Foundation

CY:BER
Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences and Resolutions
Student Consent Form

I understand what the project is about and what the results will be used for

Yes	No

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and that I am free to leave the study at any time, without giving a reason

Yes	No

I am aware that the discussion with the researcher will be audio recorded and I agree to this

Yes	No

I understand that the information that I give will be stored securely and that my name will not appear on it

Yes	No

I understand that what the researchers find out in this study will be shared with others but that my name and details will not be given to anyone

Yes	No

After reading the information sheet, if you have no further questions, please sign below

NAME	
CLASS	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	

Thank you for your collaboration

CY:BER Topic Guide Focus Groups

- *Check that parent//guardian consent form returned for each participant*
- *Remind young people about the purpose of the study and that participation is voluntary, check young people's consent forms and sign if necessary*
- *Make sure that participants are clear about what to expect and have the opportunity to ask questions*
- *Review limits to confidentiality*
- *Icebreaker-Two Truths One Lie*
- *Group Contract*
- *Ensure consent is given before commencing recording*
- *Interviewer to state name, focus group/interview ID, date, time, location and that assent has been given*

1. **Cyber Context/Behaviours**
    - Can you tell me about how you use technology? E.g. phone calls, text, social media, gaming, chat rooms, apps etc.
    - What do you use to go online? Phone, tablet, computer, console
    - How often do you use it?
    - Where do you use it? Home, school, social
    - What do you use it for? Homework, gaming, music, chatting, sharing photos
    - What are some of the positive things that you have experienced?
    - What are some of the negative things that you have experienced? Do you consider this experience cyberbullying or not/why/why not
    - How would you feel if you weren't able to use any form of technology? (How important is it?)
    - Do you think about what you are going to write before you put something online? (Facebook, Instagram etc.) Are there places online where you do not have to think as much about what you are writing? Why/why not?

2. **Bullying/Cyberbullying Context/Behaviours**
    - What do you think bullying is?
    - Do you think bullying is a normal part of growing up? Why/why not? (Is bullying inevitable?)
    - What do you think cyberbullying is?
    - When do you consider something to be cyberbullying? Is it the action of the perpetrator or how the victim perceives it?
    - Where are young people more likely to be when it happens? (Home, school, socially)
    - How does it happen? (SMS, IM, group chat, public/indirect posts, pictures (nude images?), fake accounts, screenshots)
    - Do you have any examples of where this happened? Have you ever seen it? (what was bad about comment/picture/detail)
    - Do you think cyberbullying is a problem for young people? If yes, how much of a problem, if not, why not?

3. **Differences between cyberbullying and face to face bullying**
    - Do you think cyberbullying is different from face to face bullying? (**Idea of consensus, repetition**).
    - Is one more serious than the other? If yes, why? If no, can you say more?
    - Is one easier to deal with? If yes, why? If no, can you say more?
    - Is one easier to do? If yes, why? If no, can you say more?
    - Does it feel different to say hurtful things over texts, emails, social media than face to face? If so, what is different?
    - Does it feel different to receive hurtful messages over phone/social media? If so, why? (consensus)

- Are people who are cyberbullied also bullied face-to-face? Is that always the case? What is the impact of this on the person?

4. **Motivations**
    - What do young people get cyberbullied about? (**slut-shaming, body-image, gender expectations/roles, nude images,** something that sets them apart, race, appearance, disability)
    - Why do young people cyberbully each other?
    - Where did you learn about how young people cyberbullying each other?
    - Does cyberbullying happen between friends, people you know or strangers? Or all of these? Why?
    - Why do some young people get cyberbullied and others don't?

5. **Impact and Consequences**
    - What effect does cyberbullying have on those who are impacted by it? Target, witness, perpetrator?
    - Is the impact the same/worse/better than face to face bullying? How? Why?

6. **Coping**
    - How do young people deal with or react to cyberbullying? E.g. ignore it, report it, ask for help, respond/retaliate, talk to friends/parents/teacher, blocking, focus on other activity, avoid perpetrator online/in-person?
    - Do young people tell anyone about cyberbullying? Why/why not? If they do tell, who do they tell? (Friend, parent, teacher?)
    - Some YP have said they do not tell because it will become a big deal? What do you think about that? What do you think would happen if they told?
    - Some young people have said that they would be afraid to tell a friend about hurtful comments they received online in case their friend would agree with them? What do you think about this?

7. **Getting help/solutions**
    - What stops people from getting help? (target, perpetrator and witness)
    - What do you think would help? (target, perpetrator and witness)
    - Who is responsible for helping people deal with cyberbullying? (What is the role of the school?)
    - How much to you think your parents/guardians know about cyberbullying? What about schools?
    - Has anyone talked to you about cyberbullying? (Parent, teacher, other) What did they tell you?
    - What kind of information would you like about cyberbullying?
    - Are you aware of any anti-cyberbullying campaigns? What do you think of them?
    - What do you think should be done to tackle cyberbullying? (education, coping skills)

Thinking about cyberbullying in general, is there anything else you think is important that I haven't asked you about?

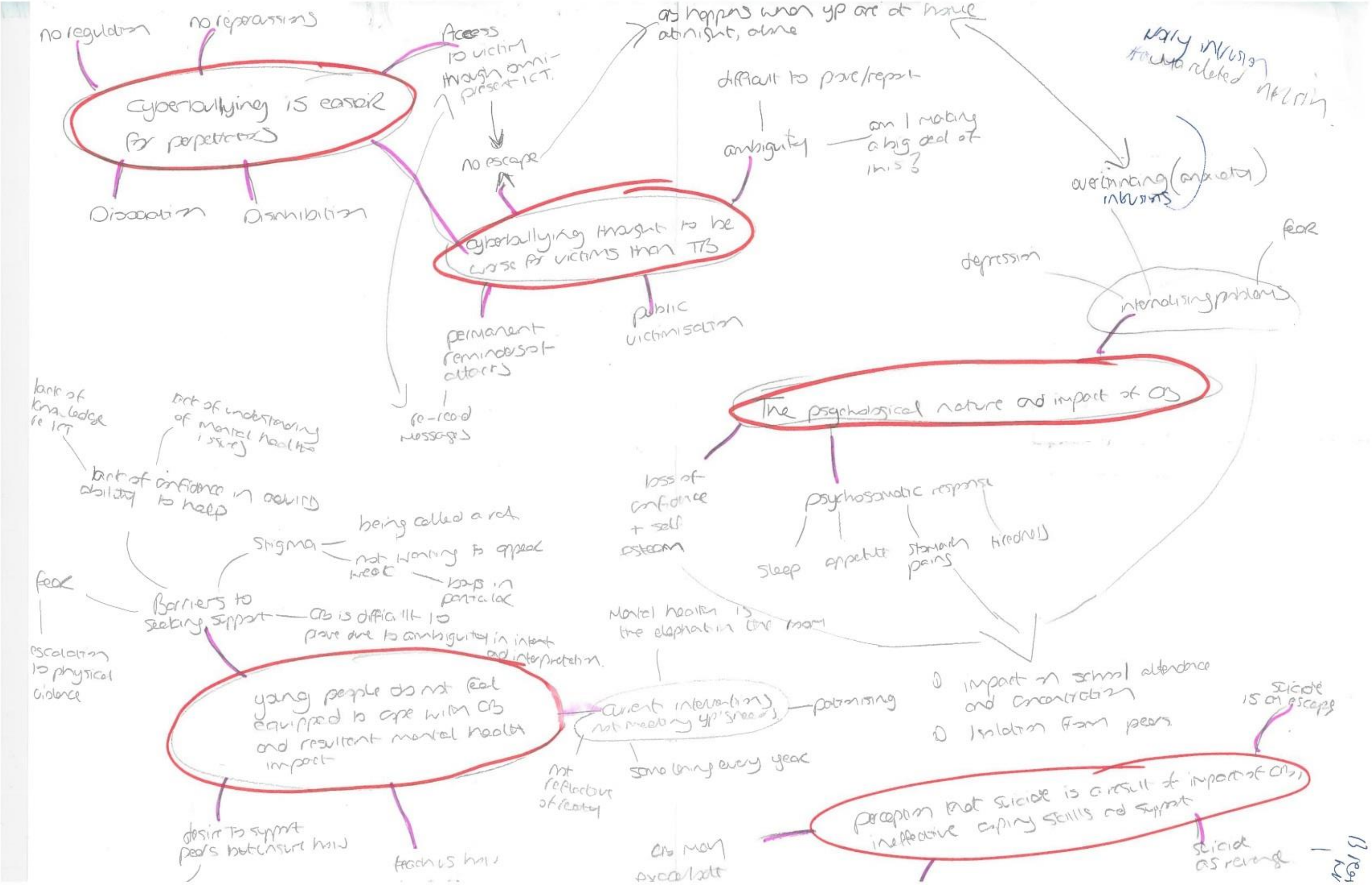

no regulation
no repercussions
Access to victim through omni-present ICT.
Cyberbullying is easier for perpetrators
Dissociation
Disinhibition
no escape
CB happens when YP are at home at night, alone
difficult to prove/report
ambiguity
am I making a big deal of this?
daily intrusion trauma related intrusion
overthinking (anxiety) intrusions
Cyberbullying thought to be worse for victims than TB
permanent reminders of attacks
public victimisation
re-read messages
fear
depression
internalising problems
The psychological nature and impact of CB
lack of knowledge re ICT
lack of understanding of mental health issues
lack of confidence in adults ability to help
loss of confidence + self esteem
psychosomatic response
sleep
appetite
stomach pains
tiredness
being called a rat
Stigma
not wanting to appear weak
boys in particular
fear
Barriers to seeking support
CB is difficult to prove due to ambiguity in intent and interpretation.
escalation to physical violence
Mental health is the elephant in the room
① impact on school attendance and concentration
② Isolation from peers
young people do not feel equipped to cope with CB and resultant mental health impact
current interventions not meeting YP's needs
patronising
not reflective of reality
same thing every year
suicide is an escape
perception that suicide is a result of impact of CB, ineffective coping skills and support
suicide as revenge
desire to support peers but unsure how
teachers how
CB may escalate
13 Rey

Figure 11.1 Theme Development-Mental Health

12 Appendix E Dissemination, Training, and Contributions

Thesis Related Papers

Dennehy R, Cronin M, Arensman E. Involving young people in cyberbullying research: The implementation and evaluation of a rights-based approach. *Health Expect*. 2018;00: 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.12830

Dennehy, R., Meaney, S., Walsh, K. A., Sinnott, C., Cronin, M., & Arensman, E. (2020). Young people's conceptualizations of the nature of cyberbullying: A systematic review and synthesis of qualitative research. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 101379. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2020.101379

Dennehy, R., Meaney, S., Cronin, M., & Arensman, E. (2020). The psychosocial impacts of cybervictimisation and barriers to seeking social support: Young people's perspectives. Children and Youth Services Review, 111, 104872. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104872

Dennehy R, Meaney S, Cronin M, Arensman E. Cyberbullying through the non-consensual distribution of nude images: Young people's perceptions. (Ready for submission)

Additional Non-Thesis Related Papers

Walsh, K. A., Dennehy, R., Sinnott, C., Browne, J., Byrne, S., McSharry, J., . . . Timmons, S. (2017). Influences on Decision-Making Regarding Antipsychotic Prescribing in Nursing Home Residents With Dementia: A Systematic Review and Synthesis of Qualitative Evidence. J Am Med Dir Assoc, 18(10)

Boyle S, Dennehy R, Healy O and Browne J. Development of performance indicators for systems of urgent and emergency care in the Republic of Ireland. Update of a systematic review and consensus development exercise [version 2; peer review: 2 approved, 2 approved with reservations]. *HRB Open Res* 2019, **1**:6 (https://doi.org/10.12688/hrbopenres.12805.2)

Published Abstracts

Dennehy, R., Meaney, S., Cronin, M., & Arensman, E. (2019). P10 Communication is the root issue: informing the development of cyberbullying interventions. Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 73(Suppl 1), A76-A76. doi:10.1136/jech-2019-SSMabstracts.161

Walsh, K. A., Dennehy, R., Sinnott, C., Browne, J. P., Byrne, S., McSharry, J., . . . Timmons, S. (2017). Conceptualising the Influences on Decision-Making Regarding Antipsychotic Prescribing in Nursing Home Residents with Dementia: A Meta-Ethnography. Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association, 13(7), P1172. doi:10.1016/j.jalz.2017.06.1728

Table 12.1 Presentations During PhD

Date	Conference/Event	Title of Presentation	Presentation Type
Sept. 2015	SPHeRE Network Peer Learning Day, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin	CY:BER Project Cyberbullying in Young People: Behaviours, Experiences, Resolutions	Invited Oral
June 2016	The 7th Living Knowledge Conference, Institute of Technology, Dublin	Building RRI Proficiency through a Community-Based Participatory Research Module	Poster which won two awards: • Living Knowledge People's Choice award • Living Knowledge EnRRICH Advisory Board award
Oct. 2016	Association for Criminal Justice Research & Development, Cyber Crime, The Spencer Hotel, Dublin, Ireland	Cyberbullying and Young People, Behaviours, Experiences, Resolutions	Invited Oral
Nov. 2016	National Health Services Research Institute Research Day, University College Cork, Cork	#Soci@lSesh Collaborating with Young People in Cyberbullying Research	Poster
Dec. 2016	5th National Children's Research Network Conference, Chartered Account House, Dublin	Collaborating with Young People in Cyberbullying Research	Poster
Mar. 2017	National Suicide Research Foundation, University College Cork, Cork	Conducting a meta-ethnography of qualitative research	Invited Lecture
Mar. 2017	14th Annual Psychology Health and Medicine Conference, RCSI, Dublin, Ireland	Collaborating with Young People in Cyberbullying Research	Poster
April 2017	National Suicide Research Foundation Seminar, From evidence into Practice: New insights into the assessment of self-harm and youth mental health and suicide prevention, University College Cork, Cork	Cyberbullying: A children's rights-based approach to involving young people in research	Invited Lecture
May 2017	World-Anti Bullying Forum, Quality Hotel Friends, Stockholm	Collaborating with Young People in Cyberbullying Research	Oral

Date	Conference/Event	Title of Presentation	Presentation Type
May 2017	World-Anti Bullying Forum, Quality Hotel Friends, Stockholm	Cyberbullying and Young People, Behaviours, Experiences, Resolutions	Oral
May 2017	Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto	Cyberbullying and Young People in Ireland	Invited Oral
June 2017	Childrens Research Network, Special Interest Group in Child and Youth Participation, Centre for Effectiveness Studies, Dublin, Ireland	The establishment, implementation, and evaluation of a Young Person's Advisory Group	Invited Oral
Sept. 2017	International Association for Youth Mental Health, The Clayton Hotel, Dublin	Exploring cyberbullying from the perspective of young people: Collaborating with a Young Person's Advisory Group on the CYBER Study	Oral-Table Top Presentation
Nov. 2017	6th Children's Research Network Conference, Chartered Accountants House, Dublin	A children's rights based approach to involving young people in research: An evaluation of a Young Person's Advisory Group as a model for participation	Oral
Jan. 2018	SPHeRE Network 4th Annual Conference: The Value of Patient and Public Involvement in Research, Healthcare and Health Planning, Dublin	A Rights-Based Approach to Cyberbullying Research Evaluating a Young Person's Advisory Group as a Model for Participation	Poster
Feb. 2018	Institute for Social Science in the 21st Century, Children and Young People Cluster. Lunchtime Seminar Series	Involving Young People in Cyberbullying Research: The Implementation and Evaluation of a Young Person's Advisory Group	Invited Lecture
Dec. 2018	7th Children's Research Network Conference, Chartered Accountants House, Dublin	Young People's Perceptions of the Nature of Cyberbullying: A Meta-Ethnography	Oral
Jan. 2019	SPHERE Network 5th Annual Conference: RCSI, Dublin World Anti-Bullying Forum, Dublin City University	"Communication is the root issue" Informing Cyberbullying Interventions	Oral
June 2019	World Anti-Bullying Forum, Dublin City University, Dublin	Communication is the root issue: Informing the development of an	Oral

Date	Conference/Event	Title of Presentation	Presentation Type
		intervention to address cyberbullying	
June 2019	World Anti-Bullying Forum, Dublin City University	Young people's perceptions of the nature of cyberbullying: A meta-ethnography	Oral
Sept. 2019	Society for Social Medicine & Population Health Annual Scientific Meeting, University College Cork, Cork	Collaborating with Young People to Inform the Development of Cyberbullying Interventions	Oral

Table 12.2 Education and Training

Year	Course	Provider
2014	The Importance of Academic Feedback	SPHeRE Workshop
2014/15	Perspectives on Population Health and Health Services research	SPHeRE Module
2014/15	Health Systems Policy and Management	SPHeRE Module
2014/15	Systematic Reviewing	SPHeRE Module
2014/15	Research methods and Study Design	SPHeRE Module
2014/15	Statistics and Health Informatics	SPHeRE Module
2014/15	Health Informatics	SPHeRE Module
2015	Qualitative Research Methods	Oxford University
2015	NVivo Training Workshop, UCC	University College Cork
2015	Code of Good Practice in Research	SPHeRE Workshop
2016	Research Development and Academic Writing	University College Cork
2016	Writing Skills	SPHeRE Workshop
2016	Teaching & Learning Module for Grad Studies	University College Cork
2016	What is Your Contribution?	SPHeRE Workshop
2016	Community-Based Participatory Research	University College Cork
2016	Centre for Behaviour Change Summer School: Behaviour Change - Principles and Practice,	University College London
2016	Public and Patient Involvement Summer School	University of Limerick
2017	Getting Research into Policy	SPHeRE Workshop
2017	Communicating your Research into Policy	SPHeRE Workshop
2018	Grant Preparation and Writing	SPHeRE Workshop
2019	Odyssey Programme	University College Cork

Table 12.3 Funding Obtained to Support Dissemination

Year	Funding	Source	Purpose
2017	Travel Bursary	College of Medicine and Health, University College Cork	World-Anti Bullying Forum, Quality Hotel Friends, Stockholm
2019	Travel Bursary	College of Medicine and Health, University College Cork	World-Anti Bullying Forum, Dublin City University Dublin

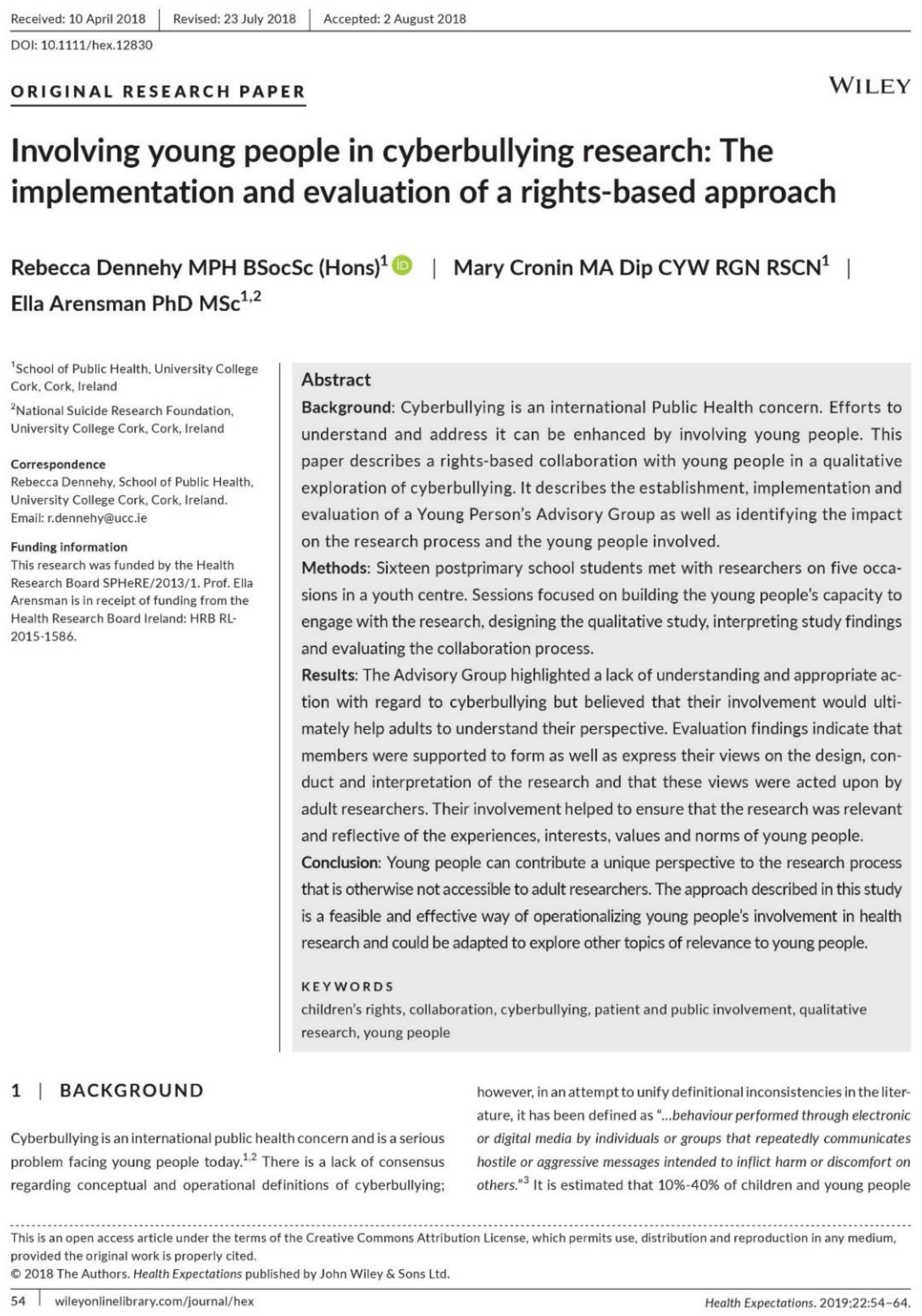
Table 12.4 Committee/Group Membership

Childrens Research Network, Special Interest Group in Child and Youth Participation
Institute for Social Sciences in the 21st century, Children and Young People Research Cluster
College of Medicine Health, UCC, Post-Graduate Student Committee

Table 12.5 Contribution to the School of Public Health

Nature of Contribution	Details of Contribution
Editor	Editor of the School of Public Health Newsletter-Issue 12, Issue 13, Issue 14 Editor of the Graduate School, College of Medicine and Health, Student Committee Newsletter (2015-2016)
Co-ordination	Assistant Co-ordinator EH6045 Health Promotion Practice Portfolio (2017) Co-ordinator EH6045 Health Promotion Practice Portfolio (2018) EH6097 Introduction to Social Research in Public Health-Online (2018) EH6094 Public Health Core Principles and Overview-Online (2019)
Tutoring	EH6108 Psychosocial Epidemiology-Online (2016) EH6085 Psychosocial Epidemiology in Public Health-Online (2017)
Supervision	Co-supervision of Master of Public Health student theses (2015-2017) Supervision of student work placement in the School of Public Health (2017)
Teaching	Teaching on BSc Public Health and Master of Public Health (Health Promotion, Youth Mental Health, Qualitative Research Methods, Public Health, Reflective Practice) (2015-2019) Teaching on Medicine and Graduate Entry to Medicine Programme (Qualitative Research in Medicine and Health) (2016-2019)

13 Appendix F Publications



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ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

WILEY

Involving young people in cyberbullying research: The implementation and evaluation of a rights-based approach

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Abstract

Background: Cyberbullying is an international Public Health concern. Efforts to understand and address it can be enhanced by involving young people. This paper describes a rights-based collaboration with young people in a qualitative exploration of cyberbullying. It describes the establishment, implementation and evaluation of a Young Person's Advisory Group as well as identifying the impact on the research process and the young people involved.

Methods: Sixteen postprimary school students met with researchers on five occasions in a youth centre. Sessions focused on building the young people's capacity to engage with the research, designing the qualitative study, interpreting study findings and evaluating the collaboration process.

Results: The Advisory Group highlighted a lack of understanding and appropriate action with regard to cyberbullying but believed that their involvement would ultimately help adults to understand their perspective. Evaluation findings indicate that members were supported to form as well as express their views on the design, conduct and interpretation of the research and that these views were acted upon by adult researchers. Their involvement helped to ensure that the research was relevant and reflective of the experiences, interests, values and norms of young people.

Conclusion: Young people can contribute a unique perspective to the research process that is otherwise not accessible to adult researchers. The approach described in this study is a feasible and effective way of operationalizing young people's involvement in health research and could be adapted to explore other topics of relevance to young people.

KEYWORDS
children's rights, collaboration, cyberbullying, patient and public involvement, qualitative research, young people

1 | BACKGROUND

Cyberbullying is an international public health concern and is a serious problem facing young people today.[1,2] There is a lack of consensus regarding conceptual and operational definitions of cyberbullying; however, in an attempt to unify definitional inconsistencies in the literature, it has been defined as "*...behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others.*"[3] It is estimated that 10%-40% of children and young people

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have experienced cybervictimization.[4] Cyberbullying has a detrimental effect on the psychological, physical and social well-being of both victims and perpetrators.[4-6] It is associated with anxiety and suicidal behaviour (fatal and nonfatal) and has a stronger relationship with depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation than traditional bullying.[4,5,7] Despite the negative impact on the health of young people, evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies are lacking.[8,9] Cyberbullying is a contemporary problem facilitated in recent years by a rapid growth in information and communication technology. Adults do not have first-hand experience of being immersed in social media in their youth;[10] therefore, the development of effective interventions requires a thorough understanding of cyberbullying[11,12] from the perspective of young people.[1,13] Existing research is predominantly quantitative in nature, and young people's voice is largely absent from the current discourse.[14-16] The omission of young people's perspective may lead to a misinterpretation of their needs and misguided prevention and intervention strategies.[13] It has been suggested that collaborating with young people as coresearchers could enhance efforts to understand and address cyberbullying.[10,15,16]

Patient and public involvement in research is increasingly expected to be an inherent part of research development. It is defined as "*research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them*" and refers to the active involvement of patients/public in research "*rather than the use of people as participants in research or as research subjects.*"[17] It is founded on the principle that people have a right to express their views on matters that affect their lives[18] and it has been shown to enhance the quality, appropriateness and relevance of health research.[19] Involvement encompasses collaboration, which refers to an on-going partnership between researchers and patients/public and shared decision making.[20] This approach is thought to be more effective than once off consultations or sporadic involvement in the research process.[19] As enshrined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), it is the right of young people to have a say in matters that affect them.[21] Collaboration with young people has the potential to increase the relevance of research, enhance methodological rigour, provide rich data on cyberbullying and positively impact on the young people involved.[1,20,22-25] The way that research is conducted and the methods that are used to access young people's views can impact on those who are involved as research participants and ultimately on health outcomes.[26] As competent social actors and "digital natives,"[27] young people, in the role of coresearchers, can provide a unique perspective on the design, conduct and interpretation of cyberbullying research to facilitate the appropriate and meaningful participation of their peers as research participants.[10]

Published examples of collaborations with young people in health research are limited,[20,28] particularly in regard to cyberbullying research.[15,29,30] Additionally, it has been noted that young people are rarely asked about their involvement in research,[24,31,32] and therefore, insight into young people's views on methods and approaches to collaboration are lacking. This study presents a rights-based approach to collaborating with young people in a qualitative exploration of cyberbullying. It describes the establishment, implementation and evaluation of a Young Person's Advisory Group as well as identifying the impact on the research process and the young people involved. Young people's involvement in the study is reported in line with guidance for reporting patient and public involvement in research (GRIPP2).[33]

2 | METHODS

2.1 | Rights-based approach

The study was informed by Lundy's Model of Participation,[26,32,34] which conceptualizes Article 12 of the UNCRC.[21] This model identifies four key chronological concepts underpinning the effective realization of young people's participation: (a) *space*—children must be given the opportunity to express a view in a space that is safe and inclusive, (b) *voice*—children must be facilitated to express their views, (c) *audience*—the view must be listened to and (d) *influence*—the view must be acted upon as appropriate.[26,34] Lundy's Model highlights that Article 12 does not exist in isolation and should be recognized in line with other children's rights including the right to guidance from adults (Article 5) and the right to seek and impart appropriate information (Article 13 and 17).[32,34] A rights-based approach to collaborating with young people therefore requires that young people are supported in not only expressing their views but also in forming them.[32]

2.2 | Adult researchers

The adult researchers have experience of working with young people in school and youth work settings, in community and mental health research and in participatory and qualitative research methods.

2.3 | Recruitment of schools

The recruitment of schools commenced in spring 2016 with a view to beginning work at the start of the 2016/2017 school year. Four schools in a large town in the Republic of Ireland were invited to participate. These included an all-girls voluntary secondary school (non-fee-paying), an all-boys voluntary secondary school (non-fee-paying), a coeducational private school (fee-paying) with a mix of day students and boarders and a coeducational vocational school (non-fee-paying) in receipt of additional supports to address educational disadvantage and social exclusion.[35] An information sheet was sent to the principal of each school and during follow-up meetings all four schools agreed to participate. Written consent was obtained to formalize the agreement. A contact person was elected by each principal to act as a link between the adult research team and the school.[36,37]

2.4 | Establishment of the Advisory Group

Transition Year is an optional 1-year programme in the fourth-year of postprimary education in Ireland. Taken after the Junior Certificate (1st-3rd year) and before the Leaving Certificate (5th and 6th year), Transition Year promotes the personal, social, vocational and educational development of students without the pressure of state examinations.[38] These students were therefore considered well-placed to be involved in the Advisory Group. In September 2016, the lead researcher spoke to Transition Year students about the project and distributed information sheets. Students were advised that their membership of the Advisory Group would be known to others. Transition Year Coordinators in each school elected four students from those interested to sit on the Advisory Group. Ten female and six male students participated, all were 16 years old. Written consent was obtained from both young people and a parent/guardian and forms were returned to the school.[37,39]

2.5 | Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the University Clinical Research Ethics Committee. The study was conducted in line with ethical[40,41] and child protection guidelines.[42-44] It was agreed with schools that any concerns about the safety of a young person during the study would be addressed in line with their school's child protection policy and standard operating procedure.[37] The Guidance Counsellor in each school was available as a support, as was the local Youth Service. The lead researcher's contact details and relevant helplines were also provided.

2.6 | Procedure

The Advisory Group met with adult researchers for 5 two-hour research sessions in the 2016/2017 school year. These were held in a youth centre and were attended by a Youth Worker and two adult Research Officers. A kitchenette was available to prepare snacks, which were provided at each session. The work was conducted in three stages (Figure 1). Sessions focused on building the young people's capacity to engage with the research process and the issues surrounding cyberbullying, designing a qualitative study, interpreting the findings of the study and evaluating young people's involvement in the Advisory Group; the latter was informed by guidelines for evaluating participation work with young people.[45,46]

2.6.1 | Stage 1: Session 1—building rapport

Session 1 focused on building rapport among the research team. Icebreakers were used to ease inhibitions, build trust and create an open atmosphere.[47] In an attempt to alleviate any concerns and manage expectations, the Advisory Group were invited to write their "hopes and fears" for their involvement on sticky notes, which were then discussed. "Hopes" can reveal motivations for participation; therefore, this information also contributed to the on-going evaluation process.[45,48] Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group were reviewed collaboratively and approved. As is good practice in group facilitation,[49] and in working with young people, a group contract was developed to set out the fundamental rules of the group (Table 1).[49,50] The Advisory Group were reassured that discussion would be confidential and anonymized except in the event of a disclosure of potential risk to a young person or to others.[31,39] They were reminded on an on-going basis that they were free to withdraw from an activity or from the process as a whole at any time.[41,51,52] They selected "*#SocialSesh*" as the name for the Advisory Group as they felt it represented their interest in social media and social research, and demonstrated the social aspect of the group.

2.6.2 | Session 2—building capacity

Session 2 focused on building the Advisory Group's capacity to engage with the research and the issues surrounding cyberbullying.[32,53] It aimed to enable the Advisory Group to express their existing views or form new ones based on the interaction with the information generated, their peers and the adult researchers.[32] Brief training in Public Health research was delivered to enable them to make informed contributions to the study design.[19] Key topics included "What is public health?"; "What is research?"; "The cycle of a research project"; "Research methods"; and "Research ethics."

Strategies to enable the Advisory Group to reflect on and discuss cyberbullying were informed by the literature on capacity building and participatory methods.[32,53,54] A topic guide[55] developed at the University of Toronto to explore cyberbullying with young people was used to inform discussion topics, which included defining cyberbullying, cyberbullying behaviours, motivations, consequences and coping, and reporting. Participatory enabling techniques were implemented to stimulate thinking and to facilitate the Advisory Group to refine and express their

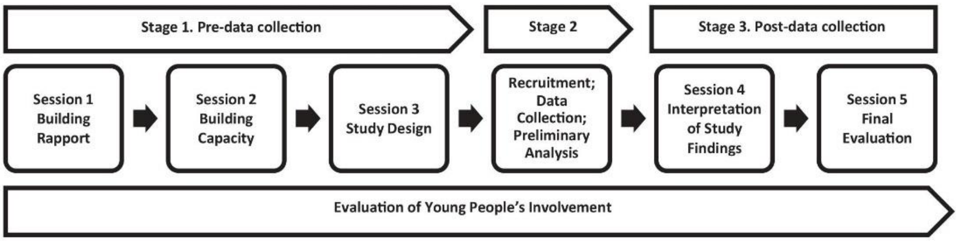
Stage 1. Pre-data collection
Stage 2
Stage 3. Post-data collection
Session 1 Building Rapport
Session 2 Building Capacity
Session 3 Study Design
Recruitment; Data Collection; Preliminary Analysis
Session 4 Interpretation of Study Findings
Session 5 Final Evaluation
Evaluation of Young People's Involvement

FIGURE 1 Process of collaborating with Young Person's Advisory Group in qualitative research

TABLE 1 Terms of Reference and group contract for the Young Person's Advisory Group

Terms of Reference
Work with adult researchers, youth worker and other advisory group members as part of a team
Contribute a young person's point of view
Advise on the best ways to talk to postprimary school students about cyberbullying
Comment on the research findings
Identify key issues to be addressed to help those affected by cyberbullying
Group Contract
No mobile phones
No bullying
Participate
Maintain confidentiality where appropriate
Listen to and respect group members
Have fun

views.[56] These techniques provided further insight into the nature of the research and allowed for adaptation of the topic guide for use later in the project. The nature of cyberbullying and its relationship to traditional bullying was discussed. Walking debates, a tool to encourage discussion and the formation of views,[57,58] were conducted to enable reflection on the role of gender and setting in cyberbullying, to identify the characteristics of those impacted by victimization and perpetration and to explore current prevention and intervention efforts. "Flexible Brainstorming"[59] and "Sorting and Ranking"[48,59] facilitated discussion about the media through which cyberbullying takes place, and the carousel technique[48] was used to enable the Advisory Group to consider motivations for cyberbullying and the impact on those involved (see Appendix S1 for detailed description). At the end of the second session, the Advisory Group wrote their thoughts about the day on sticky notes as part of the on-going evaluation.

2.6.3 | Session 3—study design

In the third session, the Advisory Group advised on the recruitment of study participants and data collection tools and strategies. At the end of Session 2, each member of the Advisory Group was given a draft copy of an information sheet and a consent form to review at home. They brought these to the third session where they presented their feedback on the accessibility of the content before approving the documents for use.

The Advisory Group suggested that the sample should include second- (aged 14), fourth- (aged 16) and fifth-year students (aged 16-17). They recommended excluding those preparing for state examinations (3rd and 6th year) as they would have constraints on their time and also first-year students. They felt that as first-year students were new to the school and still *"getting used to their environment,"* they might be intimidated by the process or would not take the process seriously. One member stated: *"I feel if you ask a first year any of that he wouldn't take it seriously, like he wouldn't get the seriousness of it."* The Advisory Group decided that they would like to be involved in the recruitment process suggesting that they would be better able than adult researchers to encourage the participation of their peers.

The Advisory Group debated the merits of various approaches to collecting qualitative data from the students in their schools. They suggested that focus groups would be less *"intimidating"* for students than one-to-one interviews. They stressed that school staff should not be in attendance at the focus groups as they felt it would compromise the openness of the conversation with one member highlighting: *"you wouldn't feel like you could be completely honest, it would have to be with like people who are not in the school."* It was agreed that the participants in each focus group should be from the same year group to promote comfortable discussion. The Advisory Group recommended that icebreakers and group contract development should be included at the beginning of each focus group.

Having developed an understanding of cyberbullying and related issues during the capacity building session, the Advisory Group reviewed the topic guide and adapted it for use with participants in the Irish postprimary school setting. As the topic guide was originally used in one-to-one interviews, the questions were rephrased to suit a focus group setting. To ensure confidentiality and encourage openness, it was decided that participants would not be asked directly about their personal experiences. Prompts related to the taking and distribution of *"nude images"* through social media were added to the topic guide as the Advisory Group viewed this as a key issue for Irish young people.

The final task with regard to study design was to agree a protocol for the provision of support to any participant experiencing distress. Initially, the Advisory Group wanted to make themselves available in their respective schools. However, the adult researchers believed that this may deter participants from seeking support, put a vulnerable participant at risk or create an unnecessary burden for Advisory Group members. With reference to Article 19 (right to be safe) and Article 3 (best interests of the child) of the UNCRC, it is the responsibility of adult researchers to ensure the safety of the young people involved in the research and to make decisions in their best interests.[21] Therefore, given the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behaviour and the potential risk of harm to the young people involved, the adult research team decided that participants seeking support would be directed to the lead researcher, their Guidance Counsellor or the Youth Worker involved in the study. Relevant helplines would also be provided. The reasoning for the decision was discussed openly with the Advisory Group, and they accepted the rationale. At the end of the session, as is custom on a popular social media platform, the Advisory Group were invited to write their thoughts about the day in 140 characters or less. This concise feedback contributed to the on-going evaluation.

2.6.4 | Stage 2: recruitment and data collection

The next stage involved recruitment to the focus groups. The lead researcher visited individual second-, fourth- and fifth-year classes with Advisory Group members in their respective schools. Members explained the nature and purpose of the study and encouraged their peers to participate. Interested students were provided with an information sheet and asked to return completed consent forms, in an envelope provided, to the school contact person. These were collected by the lead researcher. The Advisory Group therefore were not aware of the identity of the participants. In total, 64 students (30 male and 34 female, aged 14-17) agreed to participate and subsequently 11 focus groups were conducted across the four schools using the format codesigned with the Advisory Group.

2.6.5 | Stage 3: Session 4—interpretation of findings

Audio from the 11 focus groups was transcribed, and a qualitative analysis was conducted by adult researchers. Consensus was reached on the identified themes, and preliminary findings were presented to the Advisory Group during Session 4. They were asked whether they believed the research findings to be reflective of young people's experience of cyberbullying and to identify what they perceived to be the key issues within the findings. The carousel technique[48] was used to facilitate the Advisory Group in considering what needs to change to address cyberbullying and how this change can be achieved.

2.6.6 | Session 5—final evaluation

In Session 5, the final evaluation of the Advisory Group's involvement in the research process was conducted. Participatory techniques generated qualitative data, which were coanalysed with the Advisory Group using the principles of thematic analysis.[60] Discussion topics included motivations for involvement, the role and impact of the Advisory Group, the suitability of the approach and the impact on the young people involved. A framework approach[61] was later applied by adult researchers to structure the findings and to establish if the elements of Lundy's Model of Participation[34] were present. This enabled the exploration of a priori objectives but allowed themes to be identified through the Advisory Group's interpretation of the data. Handwritten data, photographs, interpretations and summaries produced throughout the sessions were recorded electronically along with notes taken by adult researchers. NVivo 11 was used to manage the data. Open-coding was conducted, and codes were grouped according to identified themes. Themes were mapped onto a framework informed by Lundy's Model of Participation,[34] which outlines the four elements necessary for meaningful participation in accordance with Article 12 of the UNCRC: Space, Voice, Audience and Influence.[21] Findings were sent via email to the Advisory Group for "member-checking."[62] Five members responded; all five were in agreement with the findings, and no changes were suggested. At this point, Advisory Group members had completed Transition Year and had commenced preparation for their state examinations; therefore, researchers did not follow up with those who chose not to engage.

2.7 | Recognition of involvement

Advisory Group members were awarded personalized Certificates of Participation. Additionally, members requested and were provided with help to formulate details of their new experience, training, and skills for inclusion in their curricula vitae and Transition Year Portfolios.[38]

3 | EVALUATION FINDINGS

All 16 members of the Advisory Group remained involved for the duration of the process; on only one occasion was a member absent due to a conflicting commitment. The Advisory Group's input is summarized in Table 2; findings from the evaluation of their involvement are presented with supporting quotes in Table 3.

3.1 | Motivations for involvement

The Advisory Group were motivated primarily by the relevance of the research topic to their lives. They highlighted that cyberbullying was an on-going concern and that many live in fear of cybervictimization. Members believed that there was a lack of understanding and appropriate action from parents and schools with regard to cyberbullying and that this was affecting efforts taken to address it. They highlighted that they could not relate to the content of existing cyberbullying interventions but believed that through their involvement they would help adult researchers understand the reality of the situation faced by young people and incite relevant action. Altruism was a key motivating factor. They articulated the hope that through their involvement they would raise awareness of cyberbullying and help both victims and perpetrators. While all of the members were enthusiastic about their involvement, some were cynical about the value of their contribution, unsure about how they could help with the project and concerned that their views might not be taken seriously.

3.2 | Space

Efforts to create a safe and appropriate physical and social space appear to have been successful. The Advisory Group reported that they felt comfortable in the youth centre. They reported that they were facilitated to express their views on cyberbullying, stating that it was easy to put forward ideas because of a nonjudgemental space and an encouraging environment that fostered open discussion. They valued the opportunity for involvement and the space to discuss a topic that was of interest and relevance to young people.

TABLE 2 Input of Young Person's Advisory Group to research process

Young Person's Advisory Group
Development of Terms of Reference and Group Contract for Young Person's Advisory Group
Selection of name for Young Person's Advisory Group, that is #SocialSesh
Study design
Identification of key issues of relevance to Irish young people with regard to cyberbullying
Development of study materials, that is information sheet, consent form, helpline information
Development of data collection tools and strategies, for example use of focus groups to collect data, use of icebreakers and group contract at the beginning of focus group sessions
Adaptation of topic guide for use in focus groups with students in postprimary schools
Selection of study sample, that is second-, fourth- and fifth-year postprimary school students
Development of recruitment strategy
Study conduct
Recruitment of peers to participate in focus groups
Interpretation of study findings
Interpretation of findings from focus groups with postprimary school students
Identification of key issues for consideration in intervention development
Evaluation
Co-analysis of data collected during final evaluation of Young Person's Advisory Group
Review of evaluation findings

3.3 | Voice

Findings indicate that Advisory Group members were supported to form, as well as express, their views. While research training was provided during the capacity building session, it was the knowledge generated through the interaction with their peers and adult researchers that they valued more in supporting their involvement in the design, conduct and interpretation of the research. They highlighted that this had given them a deeper understanding of the issues under research.

3.4 | Audience

The Advisory Group reported that they were listened to by their peers and adult researchers throughout the process. They perceived that their thoughts and opinions were valued and appreciated and that their position on cyberbullying and related issues had been recognized by the adult researchers. They highlighted that this was not normally their experience when interacting with adults about the issues facing young people.

3.5 | Influence

The Advisory Group members reported that their views had been acted on during the course of the research. They believed that they had contributed directly to the study design and that the decisions they made were implemented in the conduct of the research. They claimed their involvement as coresearchers had improved the research process and made the findings of the qualitative study more accurate than if only adults were involved in the research. A sense of achievement was described based on a belief that they had made a difference to the study but also in being a voice for young people and ultimately in helping those affected by cyberbullying.

3.6 | Personal Impact on Advisory Group members

All members described a positive social and learning experience during which they made new friends and had fun. They highlighted increased knowledge and understanding with regard to cyberbullying. Many members applied this learning to their own lives articulating that they now felt more equipped to cope with cyberbullying and to help others affected by it. They reported that they felt more confident because of their involvement and described satisfaction in stepping out of their comfort zone and trying something new.

3.7 | Recommendations of the Advisory Group

As they attended the sessions during school hours, the Advisory Group were required to wear their school uniforms. They suggested that it would have been preferable to wear their own clothes as this made it easier for them to express themselves. They recommended that an additional session between Session 3 (Study Design) and Session 4 (Interpretation of Findings) would be useful as they found the time gap of 5 months too long. They suggested that the added session could provide an update on recruitment and data collection. Members felt that the rights-based, participatory approach was successful and suggested "expanding the topics of conversation" to explore other areas of relevance to young people.

4 | DISCUSSION

This study presents a rights-based approach[26,32,34] to collaborating with young people as coresearchers in a qualitative study of cyberbullying. It contributes a worked example to the limited body of knowledge on collaborating with young people in cyberbullying research[15,16,29,30] and in health research more broadly.[20,28] It reports a systematic evaluation of young people's involvement in the research process, an area which has been neglected in previous studies.[31,32,63] Findings suggest that collaboration with young people is feasible and beneficial to the research process and those involved.

Echoing findings from previous research,[64] at the outset of the process, some Advisory Group members expressed cynicism about the value of their contribution. This is likely as a result of

TABLE 3 Young person's Advisory Group's evaluation of involvement in the research

Themes	Quotations to illustrate young people's experience
Motivations	
Relevance of the research topic	"the research is relevant to people my age" "we are going through it and it is something that concerns us"
Fear of cybervictimization	"getting hurtful comments [online]" "being judged [online]" "being afraid in your own home" "everyone laughing at you online" "It [cyberbullying] is with you 24/7"
Lack of understanding from parents and schools	"people [adults] think it's [cyberbullying] something different" "the difference between what adults and young people think [about cyberbullying], that is a problem" "I think sometimes with your parents they might find it hard to understand what you are going through because they didn't have phones or anything they had like…bicycles" "help you understand what it [cyberbullying] means to us"
Lack of appropriate action from schools	"They [school] just don't care much…they care more about the school's reputation than the actual mental wellbeing of their students" "They are just so out of touch with everyone like. The cyberbullying campaign was like a cartoon of someone sending like a text on a Samsung like "I hate you" sad face. Like that just doesn't happen" "It is not like anything that actually happens, it is not realistic and you can't relate to it" "They were like how many people have their Facebook private and then like the hands went up and they didn't count them like, they didn't say why you should have your account on private or anything like that" "Like when we had a talk it was kind of just like OK now tell everyone you have had your cyber-talk" "to find ways to prevent cyberbullying instead of ignoring it"
Altruism	"make people more aware of cyberbullying" "to help people cope and deal with cyberbullying" "to help bullies understand the impact of their actions"
Learning opportunity	"to understand the impact cyberbullying has on people" "to get a better knowledge of cyberbullying and cyberbullies" "to share my view on cyberbullying and see if other people have the same view"
Cynicism	"not helping at all with the project"
Space	
Physical environment	"comfy couches around and stuff and bean bags" "nice and cosy"
Social environment	"a good experience to talk about things that we hadn't talked about in as much detail before" "an important topic that we could be open about" "it was easy to put forward ideas" "you do not have any previous opinion of who we are so we can just be completely open and honest and that is how you see us"
Voice	
Understanding of the issues being researched	"I feel that I have a better understanding of cyberbullying, better on a whole new level" "The focus group helped to give an insight into cyberbullying"
Peer interaction	"I found it interesting to share and see others views"
Audience	
Feeling listened to	"everyone is listened to" "we were listened to"
Feeling valued	"they [adult researchers] greatly appreciate your thoughts and opinions"
Recognition of young people's perspective	"We told you how it [cyberbullying] happens" "you [adult researcher] kind of know how we feel, how it [cyberbullying] works, a lot of older people wouldn't"
Influence	
Views acted upon	"you designed it [the study] around what we were saying." "I think it [young people's involvement] made the results more accurate than if only an adult were to do it"
Making a difference	"I feel like I have really changed something" "Really good way to make a difference"

(Continues)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Themes	Quotations to illustrate young people's experience
Personal impact on the Young Person's Advisory Group	
Positive experience	"Memorable" "Really good fun experience" "It was lit fam" "Made new friends and had loads of fun" "I really enjoyed contributing"
Knowledge and understanding	"I understand how not to take cyberbullying personally as I know the reasons behind it" "Taught me ways to help" "I told loads of people what I learned" "Amazing information learned"
Personal development	"Increased confidence" "Getting out of my comfort zone" "Good to try different things" "I can't wait for what will come next"

experiencing tokenistic participation in which young people are apparently given a voice but in fact have little or no choice within the space provided or opportunity to formulate their own opinions.[13,65] Findings indicate that the elements necessary for the effective realization of young people's participation were present in this study.[13,34] The implementation of a rights-based framework[26,34] strengthened young people's involvement and assured their right to have a say on an issue that affects them.[21] Supporting the Advisory Group to form as well as express their views on cyberbullying ensured that their involvement, and the involvement of their peers as research participants, was meaningful.[32] The study was adult-initiated and involved shared decision making with the Advisory Group, placing it at Level Six of Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation.[65] Given the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behaviour and the potential risk to the young people involved in the Advisory Group, and as research participants,[4-7] this was found to be an appropriate level of participation. In keeping with a rights-based approach,[34] shared decision making enabled adult researchers to give due weight to the views of the Advisory Group but also to make decisions, when necessary, in their best interests (Article 3) and to ensure their safety (Article 19).[21,34]

Motivations for participating in the Advisory Group were similar to those reported in a previous account of young people's participation.[31] Members were motivated primarily by the relevance of the research topic to their lives. Effective intervention development requires a thorough understanding of the behaviours associated with cyberbullying[11,12] from the perspective of young people.[1,13] However, the advisory group highlighted a lack of understanding and appropriate action from parents and schools. Concurring with previous research,[13] findings suggest that the omission of young people's voice in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying has led to a misinterpretation of their needs and misguided prevention and intervention strategies, particularly in the school setting. The present study underlines the importance of involving young people in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying.[16] It is reportedly difficult to maintain young people's involvement in research;[23,66] however, all 16 members of the Advisory Group remained involved for the duration of the process and reported a fun and memorable experience. It is likely that their on-going involvement was enabled by the nature of Transition Year and the conduct of sessions during school hours. Findings from this study indicate that the use of participatory enabling techniques contributed to open and honest discussion and to the positive experience reported by the Advisory Group. This supports previous research which suggests that young people enjoy activity-oriented methods and that these can facilitate the discussion of difficult topics.[31,67] The collaboration was also an enjoyable and beneficial process for the adult researchers. The knowledge coconstructed during the capacity building session enabled adult researchers to approach data collection and analysis in a more informed manner. The Advisory Group's involvement in the interpretation of study findings, an area which is often neglected in efforts to involve young people in research,[68,69] revealed a unique perspective on the issues to be considered in the development of cyberbullying interventions.

The local youth service provided a safe, appropriate[26] and youth-friendly space for the Advisory Group sessions at no cost to the project. Monetary costs associated with the process were low and related to the purchase of refreshments and materials. Due to a limited budget, it was not possible to pay members for their time; however, there was no expense involved for the Advisory Group. Similar to an Advisory Group in another Irish study,[28] members requested help in updating their CV's to reflect their new skills and experience, suggesting that this is a valued practice for young people. As in previous accounts of patient and public involvement,[19] the practical aspects of involving young people were time-consuming with the process described in this study taking 15 months from inception. The initial recruitment of schools to the project was a challenge; however, commencing recruitment in the school year prior to the school year when the study began[36] proved beneficial as it allowed researchers adequate time to negotiate access with gatekeepers without impacting on the time spent working with the Advisory Group. The option to appoint a contact person[36] for the study was welcomed by principals as it assured them that their workload would not be increased, thereby facilitating their participation.

4.1 | Strengths and limitations

The implementation of a rights-based model to frame young people's involvement[21,26,32,34] strengthened this study, and the experience and skills of the adult research team contributed to its safe and effective conduct. Recruiting through schools is more likely to result in a representative sample than recruiting via youth services or other channels. However, young people's behaviour in schools is influenced by the expectations and norms of that environment, which may encourage them to contribute perspectives considered socially desirable in that context.[31] Holding the Advisory Group sessions in the youth centre facilitated the meeting of students from four different schools and enabled members to express their views freely. While focus groups were held in schools, the involvement of the Advisory Group in designing the study helped to create a safe and appropriate space within this setting, allowing for the meaningful participation of their peers as research participants. The Advisory Group evaluation was conducted with the adult researchers involved throughout the project, and this may have influenced responses. However, the strong rapport built over the course of the collaboration and the use of participatory methods in the evaluation, which anonymized the personal contributions of the members, may have contributed to more honest feedback.

5 | CONCLUSION

Young people can provide a unique perspective on the design, conduct and interpretation of research that is otherwise not accessible to adult researchers. Collaboration can help to ensure that the research process and resultant outputs are reflective of the experiences, interests, values and norms of young people, thereby increasing the relevance and appropriateness of intervention and policy development. The approach described in this paper enabled the meaningful participation of young people as coresearchers and as research participants. It is a feasible and worthwhile way of operationalizing young people's involvement in health research and could be adapted to explore other topics of relevance to young people. It is intended that the findings from the on-going qualitative study conducted with the Advisory Group will inform the development of relevant and appropriate interventions to tackle cyberbullying in young people.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

None to declare.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

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