Rights and limits of online participation

Modern threats of the digital age

Topic 2

What is cyber-bullying?

The Cyberbullying Research Center formally defines it as: "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" The definition covers all the most important elements, which are:

Will: It is the deliberate behavior of an individual or a group of people

Repeated: It is repetitive behavior, so it is not a one-time act

Harm: The bully must feel that he / she has been harmed

Cell phones / Computers and other electronic devices: Cyberbullying takes place through electronic devices.

What does cyberbullying look like?

It can take different forms:

- it can be a repeated ridicule of a person via emails or text messages
- publishing various videos and photos of the victim who does not like it because, for example, showing him / her in a delicate situation
- hurtful comments on social media
- different types of threats
- disclosure of false information / rumors about the person
- impersonating someone and sending obscene messages to others on their behalf

What are the consequences of cyberbullying?

Online bullying is often even more dangerous than physical one (eg in a classroom) because, for example, posting a picture / video of the victim on social media can be seen by thousands of people and even if it's deleted, someone could download it in the meantime and the person will suffer ridicule, humiliation and shame for a long time.

The effects of online bullying can last a long time and can affect a person in different ways:

- Mentally - feeling upset, embarrassed, angry. It can cause depression, which in the worst cases can end tragically - even by suicide.
- Emotionally - feeling ashamed and losing interest in the things the person likes
- Physically - bullying can cause sleep disorders, tiredness, stomach pain or other pain.

Other forms of inappropriate online behavior

Cyber-Grooming

- It is establishing an emotional bond and intimacy with the child for the purpose of later physical or sexual abuse. In extreme cases, it can lead to sexual trafficking or child labor.

- Approaching a child online is often very easy - some attackers usually join a chat room where children meet, others start playing video games with them

- In comparison to classic sexual harassment, the cyber-grooming involves repeated activity, abuse of trust and the creation of a specific relationship between the victim and the cyber-groomer.

- Statistics also show that cyber-groomers are usually adult men looking for young girls. Risk factors that make it easier to become a victim of such predators are low self-esteem, loneliness, family problems or self-harming tendencies.

Other forms of inappropriate online behavior

Cyber-mobbing

- It is basically cyberbullying, but the difference is that there are more bullyers.

- In most cases, these are online attacks, intimidation or blaming of the victim.

- Victim may find himself/herself in a situation where the whole world seems to have conspired against him/her and has no one to help him/her.

- It can be difficult to identify the initiator of such attacks, the person may be hidden behind others who attack.

- It is extremely important for parents and youth workers to be aware of this phenomenon and to be able to help the young person before it is too late.

- Experience from abroad proves that cyber-grooming can result in the suicide of victims.

Other forms of inappropriate online behavior

Cyber-stalking

- It is a very dangerous form of cyberbullying, in which the victim is harassed or persecuted, e.g. via social media, e-mail, private messages, or discussion forums.

- The anonymity of the Internet gives cyber-stalkers the opportunity to persecute victims often and without being punished for a long time or never.

- It is a deliberate, methodical, and repeated action of the attacker.

- The content with which the victim is confronted often evokes a feeling of fear or anxiety.

Most common forms of cyber-stalking

- Posting offensive and annoying comments
- Joining the same groups and forums as the target
- Regular sending of threatening or obscene messages
- Spamming the victim with messages or emails
- Tagging the victim on a regular basis in various social media posts, even if they have nothing to do with her / him and are not friends
- Commenting and liking everything the target shares
- Creating fake profiles on social media in order to track the target
- Hack into the target's personal account
- Make false posts to embarrass the victim
- Hack into the victim's cell phone or computer and watch or record him / her via webcam
- Sending unwanted gifts
- Repeatedly send target a picture with sexual content
- Install the tracking device on the victim's device

Take an action when you see bullying

- All of the mentioned forms of bullying are really widespread and many times this may be happening right in front of our eyes without realizing

- Because a person feels ashamed, very often does not tell anyone about bullying.

- His / her mental state can be getting worse and worse, so whenever we notice online bullying, take an interest in a person, tell it to his / her friends or relatives and defend him / her

- Report bullying to the social network or his /her school principal / supervisor at work

- So let's pay attention to others and watch the changes in their behavior - this may be the result of cyberbullying.

- It is necessary to educate young people and be interested in how they spend their free time on the Internet, especially when it comes to our children.

What should youth worker do to prevent threats?

Mental health disorders have become more frequent in recent years, so it is important to educate young people and explain the threats they face on the Internet

Have an individual approach to each young person and when you see changes in behavior, have a confidential conversation and find out what is happening.

If you discover that a child / young person is a victim of cyberbullying, consider recommending a visit to a mental health professional.

Encourage young people, if they become the target of cyberbullying, to keep all the evidence and bring it to the parents / teachers or to a supervisor at work.

Give an advice to bully - the only way is to block the person, report to social media, in case of threat of injury report to the police.