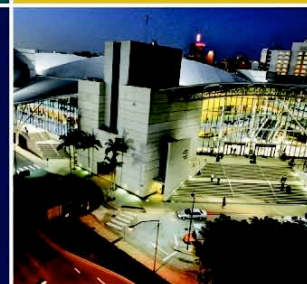


42nd APS Annual Conference



Media Release



25 – 29 September 2007: Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Study confirms girls are victims of cyber bullying

A preliminary study into bullying has found 14 per cent of female students aged 11 to 19 were cyber bullied this year.

The study found over half of those students were also bullied face-to-face.

“Far too many Australian children are living in fear of being bullied,” said psychologist and study author, Dr Marilyn Campbell.

“Bullying is no longer restricted to the playground or sports field - it has now entered the home environment through email, websites and mobiles.

“In many ways, cyber bullying is worse than face-to-face bullying, because it has no geographical boundaries and involves the power of the written word,” she said.

The study of 518 female students found 31 per cent were bullied online or offline this year. Most of the victims were aged between 12 and 15, and were more likely to be bullied at 13 years of age.

“We know that girls tend to taunt, ostracise, exclude and rumour monger more than boys, who are generally more physical,” said Dr Campbell.

“Bullying can increase anxiety and depression, and can make victims increasingly mistrustful of other people.

“Victims often think they are to blame. Common thoughts are ‘why would they pick on me?’ or ‘what is wrong with me?’ We need to teach students that it’s the bullies who need to change their behaviour, not the victims.”

Dr Campbell said clear bullying policies and procedures are needed in schools to increase reporting and reduce bullying.

“Students need clear guidelines on who to report bullying to and what will happen when they report the behaviour.”

<more>

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“Victims and bullies do not need to become friends. However, they do need to be able to co-exist together in a peaceful way.”

Dr Campbell said the study’s next phase would analyse the statistics on boys and bullying.

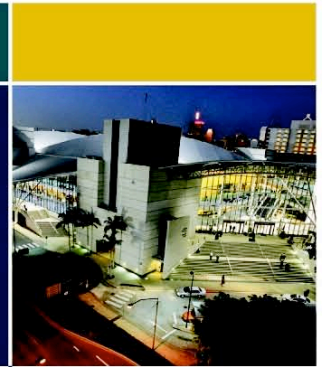
Dr Campbell will present the study at the 42nd Australian Psychological Society national conference, ‘*Psychology Making an Impact*,’ at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from 25 to 29 September.

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Dr Campbell has the following tips for parents to manage bullying:

- Look out for warning signs that your child is being bullied. This could include changes to sleeping, behavioural or eating patterns.
- Empower your child. It is a natural reaction for parents to want to jump in and save them from bullying. Instead, encourage your child to confide in you and say: ‘Thank you for telling me and I know that you trust me. How would you like me to help?’
- Help your child to develop a plan to tackle the bullying. Parents can say: “Let’s think about some of the ways we can manage this situation.”
- Do not to take away their mobile phone or computer, because it will not solve the problem. Why should you punish your child for being bullied?
- Remember that you can’t bully-proof your child. But, you can give them the support and tools they need to help tackle the problem.

To coordinate an interview with Dr Campbell, please contact Elaine Grant on 0412 683 068.



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