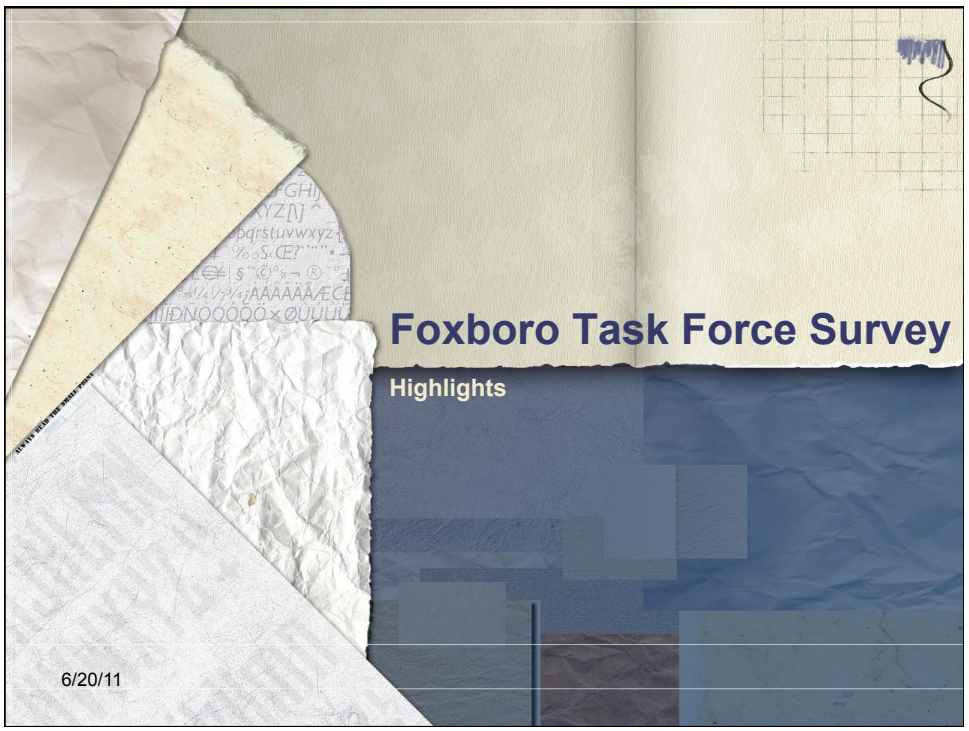

Objectives of Survey

- To assess levels and types of aggression
- To learn more about the experiences of targets, which might lead to actions to reduce the problem
- To learn more about cyber aggression with the objective of discovering aspects that could be targeted.
- To develop measures that can help evaluations of programs such as the Caring School Community

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Ensuring Validity

- While taking the survey, if students started answering more quickly than people can read, they were warned.
- An initial reading test ensures respondents can read and are paying attention. Students who failed this test were eliminated from analyses (25 in middle school, 21 in high school).
- All students who scored high on positive deceptivity were eliminated (11 in middle school, 12 in high school).

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What was Asked?

- Students were asked 6 to 8 questions on each kind of aggression.
- Parallel questions were asked about being the aggressor and being the target.

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Examples of Questions

- **Physical aggressor:** "I grabbed or held someone against their will."
- **Physical target:** "Someone has grabbed or held me against my will."
- **Nonphysical aggressor:** "I ruined or stole stuff from other students just to be mean."
- **Relational:** "I intentionally left someone out of an activity or conversation they really wanted to be a part of."
- **Cyber:** "I have excluded someone from a group or event on Facebook or similar internet sites."

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How Much Aggression in Middle School?

	Whole Middle School		Most Aggressive		
	% At Least Once	% Almost Daily	Subgroup	% At Least Once	% Almost Daily
Physical	48	4	7th boys	75	8
Nonphysical	63	4	8th boys	79	7
Relational	75	8	8th	79	9
Cyber	35	5	8th boys	87	13

- Relational and nonphysical aggression are the worst overall:
  - Approximately 70 per cent of students have aggressed.
  - Approximately 6 per cent do so almost every day.
- The highest subgroup is eighth grade boys doing cyber aggression
- Generally older middle schoolers are more aggressive.
- Boys are more aggressive, except in relational aggression, where girls are as aggressive as boys.

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How Much Aggression in High School?

	Whole High School		Most Aggressive: Males	
	% At Least Once	% Almost Daily	% At Least Once	% Almost Daily
Physical	56	6	72	8
Nonphysical	77	8	79	12
Relational	81.2	8	*	*
Cyber	59	6	*	*
Sexual (≥16 yr.)	52	7	56	16

- Cyber aggression is higher than in middle school.
- Sexual harassment (asked only of those 16 years or older) is as high as cyber aggression.
- There are generally no grade differences.
- Boys are generally more aggressive than girls except in relational and cyber aggression.

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Targets in Middle School

	Whole Middle School		Most Targeted		
	% At Least Once	% Almost Daily	Subgroup	% At Least Once	% Almost Daily
Physical	57	5	8th boys	71	7
Nonphysical	82	12	*	*	*
Relational	83	8	6th girls	94	15
Cyber	48	5	7th	53	6

- Approximately 70 per cent of 8th grade boys have been physically aggressed at least once and 7% almost every day.
- There are generally grade and gender differences, except in nonphysical aggression.
- 12% of all middle school students are targeted nonphysically almost every day.
- 15% of 6th grade girls are targeted relationally almost every day.

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Targets in High School

	Whole High School (521)		Most Targeted: Males	
	% Who Never	% Almost Daily	% Who Never	% Almost Daily
Physical	55	3	69	5
Nonphysical	75	5	*	*
Relational	76	6	*	*
Cyber	61	5	*	*
Sexual (≥16 yr.)	61	8	*	*

- Boys continue to be the target of physical aggression at the same rate as in middle school.
- Boys are as likely to be targeted as girls in other ways.
- The rates of very frequent targeting are all below 10%.

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Kinds of Aggression

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Kinds of Aggression

- Do aggressive students commit only one kind of aggression?
- Are targets victimized in only one way?
- Of particular interest was the question of whether cyber aggression is unique.

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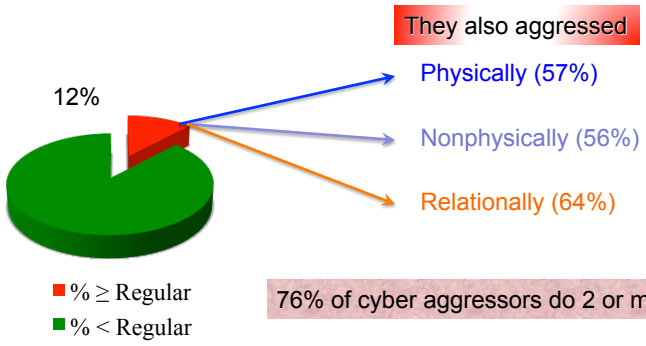
Cyber Aggression

Middle School

Aggressor Frequency



76% of cyber aggressors do 2 or more types

Regular: Several times a month or more frequent

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Cyber Aggression

High School

Aggressor Frequency

They also aggressed

20%

Physically (34%)

Nonphysically (58%)

Relationally (54%)

■ % ≥ Regular
■ % < Regular

80% of cyber aggressors do 2 or more types

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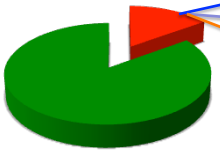
Cyber Targets

Middle School

Target Frequency

They were also targeted

15%



Physically (38%)

Nonphysically (64%)

Relationally (59%)

■ % ≥ Regular
■ % < Regular

77% of cyber targets are victims of other types

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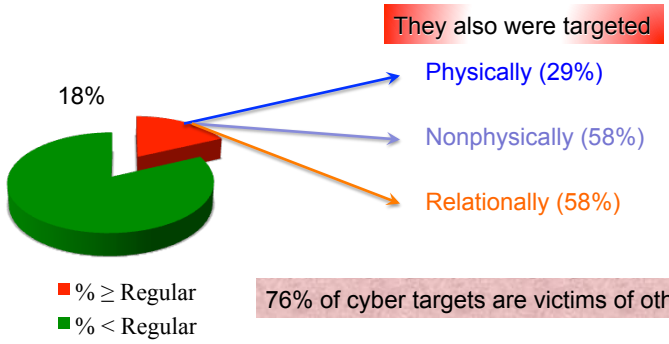
Cyber Targets

High School

Target Frequency



76% of cyber targets are victims of other types

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General Patterns of Aggression

- We can conclude that cyber aggression is not limited to retaliatory cyber nerds.
- Similar pattern holds
  - Whether we start with cyber aggression or one of the other kinds of aggression
  - With middle school and high school students
  - Whether we ask targets or aggressors
- That pattern is: Aggressors exhibit more than one kind of aggression and targets experience more than one kind of aggression.

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Who was Targeted?

- Students who reported being targeted more than once on any physical, nonphysical or relational target question were asked a series of questions about their experiences.
- 47% of middle school students
- 45% of high school students

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Most Frequent Sites of Aggression

- Middle school
  - Hallway (41% of targets report incidents)
  - Outside school (40% of targets report incidents)
  - Bus (26% of targets report incidents)
  - Classroom (25% of targets report incidents)
- High school
  - Outside school (45% of targets report incidents)
  - Cyberspace (29% of targets report incidents)
  - Hallway (29% of targets report incidents)
  - Classroom (25% of targets report incidents)

Note: Students could choose as many places as they wished.

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Social Context

- Their aggressors are only occasionally strangers (15% in middle school; 10% in high school).
- The majority of the incidents occurred in the presence of others, most frequently two to five bystanders.
- Bystanders are most likely not to help (as reported by targets).
  - Do nothing (reported by 47% of middle; 52% high),
  - Watch and laugh (21% middle; 21% high)
- Bystanders sometimes help.
  - Tried to stop the others (28% middle; 17% high).
  - Went for help (6% middle; 3% high).

Note: Students could choose as many places as they wished.

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Motivation for Aggression

- Targets' most common beliefs
  - "They thought it was funny" (46% middle; 48% high)
  - "They dislike me" (33% middle, 35% high)
  - "They were showing they had power" (23% middle, 29% high)
- Aggressors' claims
  - "It was a joke" (57% middle, 73% high school)
  - "I was angry" (53% middle, 54% high school)
  - "I wanted revenge" (38% middle, 35% high school)
  - "My friends pressured me" (16% middle, 22% high school)
  - "No reason—it was just something to do" (13% middle, 23% high school)

Note: Students could choose as many places as they wished.

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Cyber Target Follow-Up

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Objectives

- How large of a problem is cyber aggression in Foxborough?
- What media are most dangerous?
- What kinds of cyber aggression are most prevalent?

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Who was Targeted in Cyber Space?

- Students who reported being targeted more than once on any cyber target question were asked a series of questions about their experiences.
- 19% of middle school students
- 32% of high school students

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Media

- Prevalent media for cyber aggression
  - Cell phones or text messages
  - Social networking sites
- Media not frequently cited by of cyber targets
  - Email
  - Instant messaging or chats
  - Electronic forums

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Target Reports At Least Once

	Middle School (107)		High School (169)	
	% Cell Phone	% Social Network	% Cell Phone	% Social Network
Threatened, insulted	39	26	53	53
Gossip, jokes	35	32	41	46
Told my secrets	30	26	36	33
Excluded me	10	21	7	26
Posted upsetting pictures	11	6	20	17

- The three most frequent kinds of incidents mirror those in the real world.
- The types of incidents that get the most play in the media—exclusion and posting inappropriate pictures—occur, but are less frequent.

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Conclusions about Cyber Aggression

- Cyber aggression is a sizeable problem, particularly in high school.
- Cyber aggression most frequently comes from other students.
- Schools can focus programs on cell phone and social networking sites.
- Students are most likely to use cyberspace for verbal and relational aggression.

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Evaluating School Interventions

- This year we established a base line.
- We have reliable measures of several aspects of aggression
  - Types of aggression—physical, nonphysical, relational, cyber, sexual harassment
  - Related traits
    - Perceived social isolation
    - Emotional dysregulation
    - Proactive and reactive aggressiveness
- We can then repeat these measures with children who have experienced, for example, the Caring School Community program.
  - We'll learn whether there is improvement.
  - The pattern of what improves and what does not may help to fine tune the program.