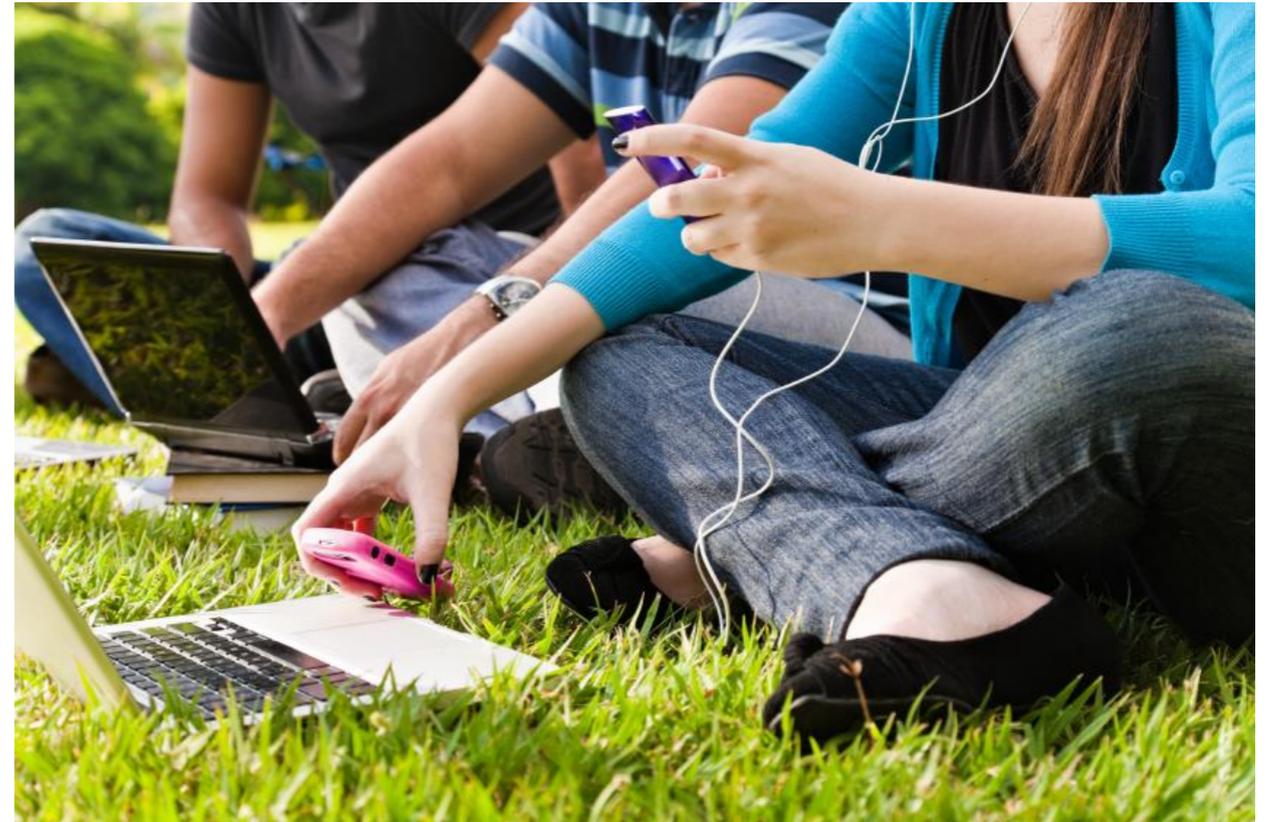


Adolescence and the Internet

Presented at
*Youth Work and Youth Support in a
Changing Society: Challenges,
Opportunities, and Innovations*

Presented by
Mrinalini A. Rao, PhD

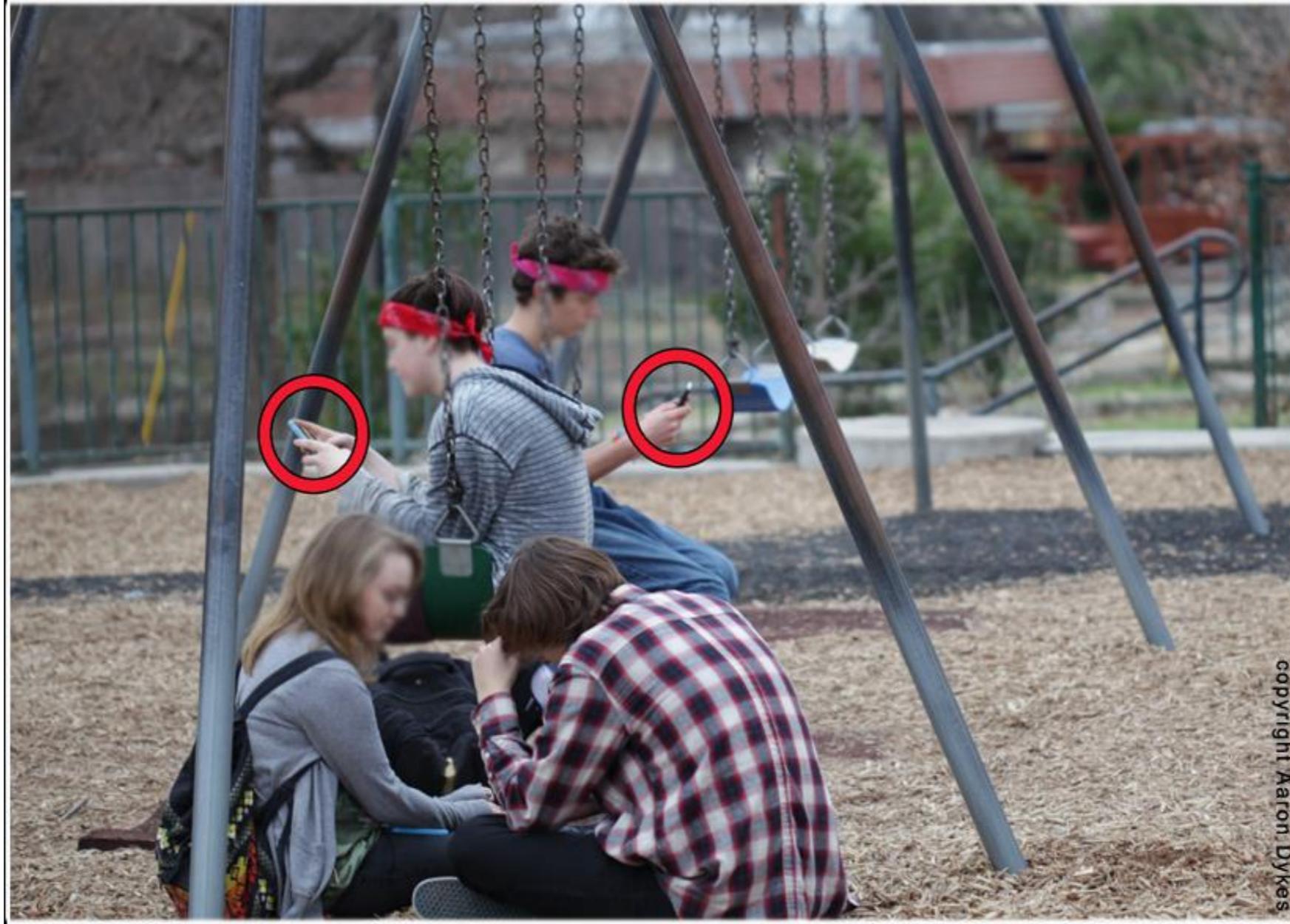
Yale *Center for Emotional Intelligence*



Adolescence and Technology



New Developmental Context



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Opportunities and Challenges

- Increased access to opportunities
 - Access to information
 - Education
 - Social equalizer
 - Social Support
 - Exploration
- Unique challenges
 - Distorted sense of reality
 - Bullying
 - Safety
 - Distraction

Adolescent Development

- **Biological**
 - Puberty
 - Neurological development
- **Cognitive**
 - Thought complexity
 - Self-centered
- **Social**
 - Interest in peers
 - Separation from parents

Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

Education

- Interest exploration
- Skill development
- Academic Achievement

Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

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Peer relationships

- Interest
- Time
- Well-being



“If you didn’t have Facebook when you were a kid, how did you know who your friends were?”

Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

Identity development

- Differentiation from family of origin
- Exploring boundaries
- Possible selves



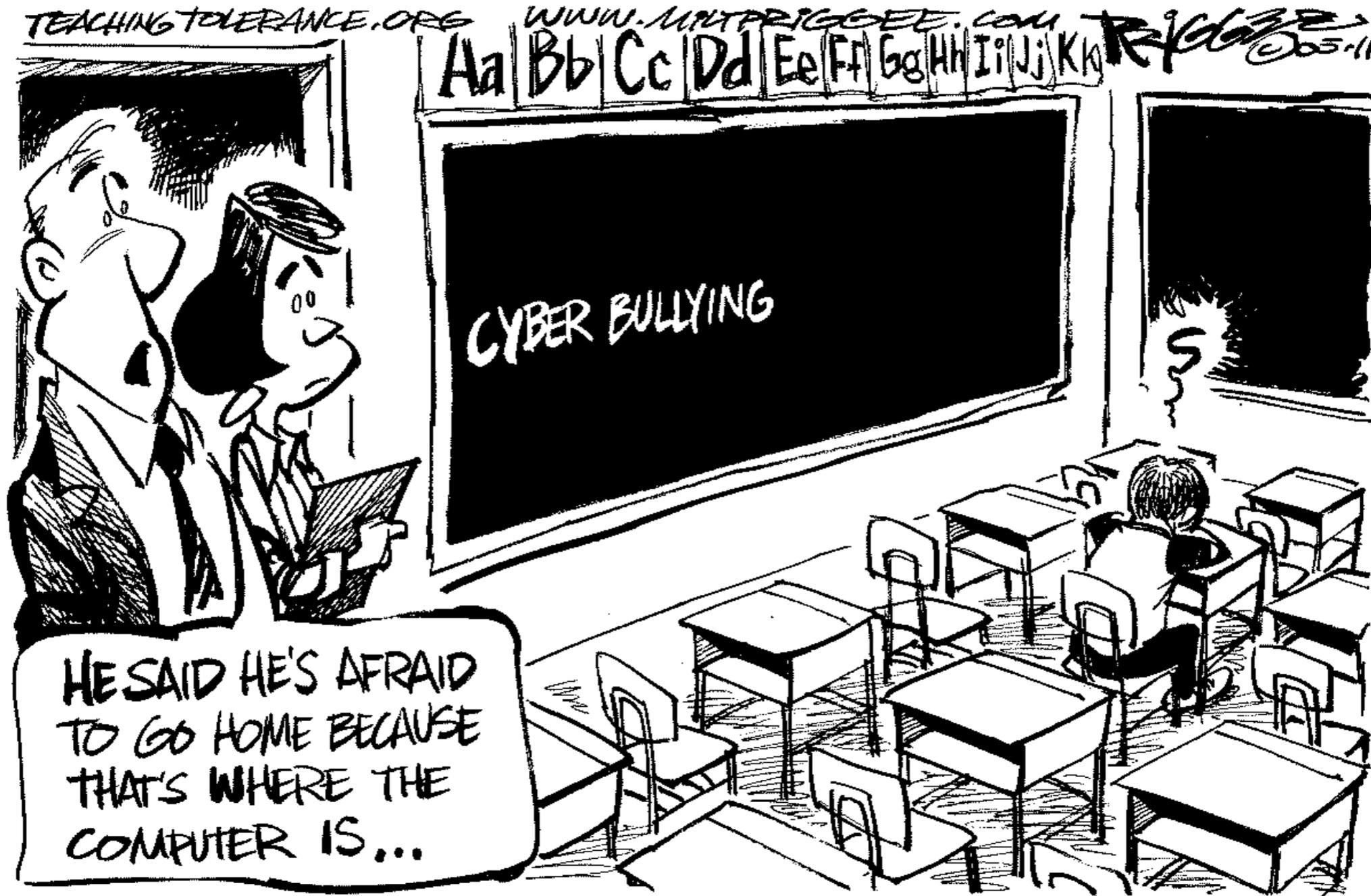
Role of Technology

- Popular belief is that technology is a negative influence
- Technology as a tool to express human behavior
- Unique characteristics of technology
 - Lack of non-verbal cues
 - Anonymity
 - Constant access
 - Broad audience
 - Permanence
 - Instant gratification

Focus on Skill Development

- Meet adolescents where they are
- Focus on developing social and emotional skills
- Examine our feelings about impact of technology
- Take advantage of the opportunities for education

Cyberbullying



Addressing Cyberbullying on Facebook

- Cyberbullying is a growing concern
- Similar and different from traditional bullying
 - Constant exposure
 - Broad audience
 - Permanence
- Challenges
 - Jurisdiction
 - Freedom of speech
 - Rapidly changing

Incorporating Psychological Science

- Engage youth: *Interviews and focus groups*
- Infuse developmental science: *relevant language*
- Integrate emotional intelligence: *labeling helps regulate emotions*
- Provide resources for positive action

Social Resolution Flows

New Message

Message Sent

Your message to Ashoke has been sent successfully. We're sorry that you've had this experience.

Okay

Chal



By Ashoke Chakrabarti

Tip: Write a note to Ashoke in your own words to help resolve the issue.

Send Cancel



Research findings

- Bullying less common than popularly believed
- Gender and age differences
- Different types of content are experienced differently
- Online bullying results in a range of emotional experiences for both boys and girls
- Teens' online lives look similar to their offline lives:
 - More girls than boys report being sad and embarrassed
 - Boys are less willing to disclose feelings
- When given the “tools” teens choose to send messages

Conclusion

- Technology is experienced as a valuable and positive space by youth
- It presents unforeseen opportunities and challenges
- Meet youth where they are spending time
- Focus on skill development
- Prepare them for the future
 - Norms not yet in place

Thank you!