

Cyberbullying: an over-estimated phenomenon?

Round-table discussion with an introductory statement from Dan Olweus. Chaired by Christiane Spiel.

With the increase and diffusion of modern technologies a new form of bullying has emerged. Many researchers refer to these new forms with the term *Cyberbullying*, *Electronic Bullying* or *Internet Bullying*. Studies on the impact of the new phenomenon and its possible links with traditional bullying show some consistency in findings e.g., that those who are traditional bullies and victims have a higher probability for being also cyberbullies and cybervictims than other students. The age of adolescence was shown to be the most at risk period for cyberbullying. However, it is of concern that many issues, approaches and findings are inconsistent, and furthermore, that many relevant topics have not yet been investigated at all. Also, it might be questioned whether cyberbullying is a specific form of bullying as e.g., verbal bullying, or a distinct phenomenon. Consequently, it needs to be considered whether cyberbullying fulfils the definition of bullying concerning all criteria. Above all, it might be discussed whether the high interest of researchers in cyberbullying is justified, or whether cyberbullying is an over-estimated phenomenon.

The round table discussion chaired by Christiane Spiel (University of Vienna, Austria) focuses on these topics. Participants are: Sheri Bauman (University of Tuscon, USA), Donna Cross (Edith Cowan University, Western Australia), Ernesilia Menesini (University of Florence, Italy), Peter K. Smith (Goldsmith College, London, U.K.), Dan Olweus (University of Bergen, Norway). Dan Olweus gives an introductory statement.