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Investigating the Efficacy of the Coping Strategies Adolescents Use to Handle Cyberbullying

Stacey Neaville
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Stacey Lynne Neville

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Investigating the Efficacy of the Coping Strategies Adolescents Use to Handle

Cyberbullying

by

Stacey Lynne Neaville

MS, Walden University, 2011

BA.Ed, Central Washington University, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

Walden University

May 2017

Abstract

Cyberbullying can negatively influence adolescents' overall wellbeing. Previous studies on cyberbullying provided knowledge about ways youths cope with cyberbullying; yet the literature lacks information about the efficacy of the coping strategies of cyberbullying victims. The purpose of this straight qualitative study was to investigate what coping strategies cyberbullying victims found effective for handling cyberbullying. The transactional model of coping, approach-avoidance coping, and self-efficacy theory formed the conceptual model to explore, analyze, and understand coping with cyberbullying. Using flyers and snowball sampling, 6 adolescents in Grades 10 to 12 were recruited to participate in the study. Data from semistructured phone interviews were analyzed using the Colazzi method. Pattern matching was used to assess the validity of the findings and to examine the viability of previously used coping theories for explaining coping with cyberbullying. According to the findings, situational context influenced coping strategy development, use, and effectiveness. Adolescents' age, experience, and maturity were significant to their approaches to cyberbullying. Whether the adolescents were attempting to thwart or to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful were significant to coping strategy use and effectiveness. Future research would benefit from further exploring the role of context in coping strategy use and effectiveness, developmental differences in coping with cyberbullying, examining the efficacy of the support cyberbullying victims receive, and developing a practical coping model for cyberbullying. These findings may inform prevention and intervention efforts for cyberbullying and may foster new research on coping with cyberbullying.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to myself and to the cosmos. It is my personal evidence, and my message to others, that all things can be achieved through passion and determination.

I also dedicate this work to my daughter, Emily, who by no choice of her own came along for the ride. She is my joy; she is my hero. I admire and respect her more than she knows, and I hope that someday she will be inspired by this accomplishment. My wish is that she will draw from my desires to challenge myself, to continue growing as a person, and to make a difference, yet do so in her own way.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	2
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Conceptual Framework.....	7
Transactional Model of Coping	8
Approach-Avoidance Coping	9
Self-Efficacy Theory.....	9
Research Questions.....	10
Nature of the Study	11
Operational Definitions.....	11
Scope and Delimitations	12
Assumptions.....	13
Significance of the Study	15
Summary and Transition to Chapter 2	16
Chapter 2: Literature Review	18
Introduction.....	18
Literature Search Strategy.....	19
The Evolution of Cyberbullying	20
Cyberbullying	26

Nature of Cyberbullying	27
Prevalence of Cyberbullying.....	30
Impact and Effects of Cyberbullying.....	33
Coping	36
Coping Styles and Strategies	38
Coping Effectiveness	42
Coping in Adolescence	45
Adolescent Stress	46
Age and Coping	47
The Adolescent Brain and Coping.....	51
Coping Styles and Strategies of Adolescents.....	52
Coping with Cyberbullying.....	58
Issues Specific to Coping with Cyberbullying.....	59
Current Findings on Coping with Cyberbullying	61
Review of Previous Methodological Approaches for Studying Coping with Cyberbullying	86
Quantitative Versus Qualitative Methods.....	87
Use of Theory and Frameworks.....	90
Summary and Transition to Chapter 3	95
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	96
Introduction.....	96
Research Design and Rationale	97

Logic of the Straight Qualitative Approach.....	99
Role of the Researcher	102
Methodology	104
Context of the Study	104
Participant Selection Logic.....	104
Consent Process	107
Interviews.....	110
Instrument Development.....	110
Approval for Research	115
Treatment of Data	115
Other Ethical Considerations	117
Summary and Transition to Chapter 4.....	118
Chapter 4: Results	119
Introduction.....	119
Prior to Beginning the Study.....	120
Recruitment.....	120
Participant Selection	122
Background of Participants.....	123
Conducting the Study.....	123
Information Provided to Participants	123
Prior to Conducting the Interviews	124
Data Collection	125

Data Maintenance and Security	126
Transcription of Interviews.....	126
Data Analysis Framework.....	127
Data Analysis and Results	128
Research Question 1	128
Research Question 2	176
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	185
Credibility	185
Transferability.....	186
Confirmability.....	186
Summary and Transition to Chapter 5	188
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	190
Introduction.....	190
Summary of Key Findings	191
Key Findings for SQ1	191
Key Findings for SQ2	194
Key Findings for SQ3	196
Interpretation of the Findings.....	198
Interpretation of the Findings From Comparisons of Coping Strategy	
Effectiveness	211
Analysis and Interpretation of the Findings in the Context of Theory	214
Summary of Interpretation of the Findings in the Context of Theory	226

Limitations of the Study.....	227
Unanticipated Challenges During Data Collection and Possible Solutions.....	229
Recommendations for Further Research.....	230
Implications.....	233
Positive Social Change	233
Methodological, Theoretical, and Empirical Implications	235
Recommendations for Practice	236
Dissemination of the Findings	237
Conclusion	238
References.....	240
Appendix A: Announcement of Study.....	261
Appendix B: Snowball Sampling Script.....	262
Appendix C: Initial Contact and Screening Protocol.....	263
Appendix D: Expert Panel Invitation Letter	266
Appendix E: Pattern Matching Template	270
Appendix F: Resources for Distressed Participants.....	281

List of Tables

Table 1. Coping Styles and Strategies Comprising the ACS-2	53
Table 2. Summary of Findings on Coping With Cyberbullying From Previous Studies ..	86
Table 3. Interview Script and Interview Questions Derived from Research Question 1 and Subquestions	112
Table 4. Participant Demographics and Contextual Information Relevant to the Study .	123
Table 5. Selected Examples of Significant Statements of How Teens Developed Coping Strategies for Cyberbullying and Corresponding Formulated Meanings	130
Table 6. Selected Examples of Significant Statements of Strategy Effectiveness for Coping with Cyberbullying and Corresponding Formulated Meanings.....	131
Table 7. Selected Examples of Significant Statements of Teens’ Advice and Current Views on Coping with Cyberbullying and Corresponding Formulated Meanings..	132
Table 8. Selected Examples of Themes, Subthemes, and Formulated Meanings of How Teens Developed Coping Strategies for Cyberbullying	133
Table 9. Selected Examples of Themes, Subthemes, and Formulated Meanings of Effective Coping Strategies for Cyberbullying.....	134
Table 10. Selected Examples of Themes, Subthemes, and Formulated Meanings of Teens’ Advice and Current Views on Coping with Cyberbullying.....	135
Table 11. Summary of Coping Strategy Effectiveness as Reported by Teens	167
Table 12. Predicted and Reported Patterns of Coping Strategies for Managing and Overcoming Cyberbullying	177

Table 13. Comparisons Between Coping Strategies Identified in Findings from Previous Research on Coping With Cyberbullying and Findings from the Neville Study...200	
Table 14. Interpretation of Key Findings in the Context of the Theoretical Framework Used in Neville Study	217

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Cyberbullying occurs when an individual or a group uses electronic information and communication technologies (ICTs) to intentionally harass or harm others (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Although a relatively new phenomenon, researchers have indicated that cyberbullying is a global issue (Arıcak et al., 2008; Li, 2008; Machackova, Cerna, Sevcikova, Dedkova, & Daneback, 2013; Popović-Ćitić, Djurić, & Cvetković, 2011; Riebel, Jäger, & Fischer, 2009), particularly among adolescents (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Slonje & Smith, 2008) that negatively affects victims' overall wellbeing (Machmutow, Perren, Sticca, & Alsaker, 2012; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Spears, Slee, Owens, & Johnson, 2009; Sourander et al., 2010). During adolescence, youths contend with and have to overcome numerous personal, academic, and social stressors as they work to find their own identity and place in the world (Erikson, 1968). The stress of being bullied through a medium that has become a large part of teens' lives, and is central to young people's social development, is an issue that is important to address. As coping is a fundamental aspect of healthy adjustment, development, and wellbeing (Compas, Conner-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001), and researchers have suggested that enhancing adolescents' coping abilities is the best method for helping them deal with negative online experiences (Li, 2007b; Lodge & Frydenberg, 2007; Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2006), learning what strategies help youths cope with cyberbullying victimization can provide information that is applicable to supporting youths' development and success.

The contents of Chapter 1 provide an overview of the study. I begin Chapter 1 with a brief background of the problem and related research to inform the reader and to set the stage and need for the study. I present the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the conceptual framework for the study, the research questions, the nature of the

study, operational definitions of terms, and the scope and delimitations of the study. Also included are my personal assumptions and limitations pertaining to the study. The chapter concludes with the significance of the study in regard to advancing further knowledge and practice on coping with cyberbullying and effecting positive social change.

Background of the Problem

Research on cyberbullying began to appear in the literature around 2003, with a focus on gaining more knowledge of cyberbullying, on defining and operationalizing the phenomenon, and on examining the prevalence of and effects related to the problem (Belsey, 2004; Juvonen & Gross, 2009; Li, 2007b; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Willard, 2003; Ybarra et al., 2006). However, published studies on the topic of coping with cyberbullying did not emerge until the late 2000s. In 2007, scholars started to reveal suggested strategies for dealing with cyberbullying. Data came from focus groups and from survey questionnaires, to include anonymous self-report questionnaires and web-based questionnaires (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2007; Kraft & Wang, 2009; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalglish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Stacey, 2009). The majority of the researchers used quantitative methodologies. One of the studies employed a grounded theory approach and another was a mixed-method study. Although the findings were similar, many of the recommended coping strategies for cyberbullying came from either survey response options presented by the researchers or data gathered from youths who were not actual victims of cyberbullying. Moreover, with the exception of the Machackova et al.'s (2013) study, there was no validation of what strategies were effective for dealing with and preventing further incidents of cyberbullying victimization.

Examples of some basic strategies for coping with cyberbullying found in earlier studies were blocking the sender, ignoring the messages or the aggressor (doing nothing), changing usernames or contact information, warning or asking the aggressor to stop, and reporting to authorities (Agatston et al., 2007; Ariack et al., 2008; Craig, Pepler, & Blais, 2007; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Li, 2010; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009). Kraft and Wang (2009) learned that youths felt taking away or restricting cyberbullies' Internet and technology access was effective for averting cyberbullying activity. Kraft and Wang also found that youths believed punitive and restorative actions to be effective for discouraging cyberbullying. Study participants suggested not allowing the cyberbully to participate in extracurricular activities and requiring the cyberbully to engage in educational presentations about cyberbullying or attending netiquette classes in their free time. However, these actions would require knowing the identity of the cyberbully, which often is not the case. Machackova et al. (2013) reported victims of cyberbullying most frequently deleted or blocked the cyberbully, changed privacy settings, depreciated or avoided the cyberbully, sought support from someone, avoided thinking about the issue and focusing on something else, ignored the situation, and confronted the cyberbully as ways to cope with being cyberbullied. Less frequently used (and less effective) coping strategies were taking the incident lightly, disassociating with or reframing the situation, retaliating against the bully, searching for advice online, deleting personal pages or profiles, and reporting the incident (Machackova et al., 2013). Yet Machackova et al. did not study the effectiveness of coping strategies with differing forms of cyberbullying, leaving a question as to whether any strategy would work with

every type of cyberbullying incident. Additionally, numerous scholars revealed the majority of the youths surveyed or interviewed reported not telling anyone, especially an adult (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Mishna, Saini, & Solomon 2009; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Stacey, 2009). In a EU Kids Online survey of youths, ages 9 to 16 years, from 25 countries, Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, and Ólafsson (2011) showed that a greater number of youths seek support and talk to others about cyberbullying victimization than in the past, they also supported previous findings that youths hesitate to report to adults.

Starting in 2011, several researchers set out to investigate coping with cyberbullying in a more in-depth manner. The focus was to extend the literature by identifying what coping strategies youths used following incidents of cyberbullying, as well as to better understand coping with cyberbullying from adolescent victims' point of view (Parris, Varjas, Meyers, & Cutts, 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011). Although Parris et al. (2012) revealed strategies youth victims of cyberbullying use to cope with cyberbullying victimization, the researchers framed the results in terms of coping models, which did little to indicate the efficacy of the strategies reported. In addition, the findings included several strategies that Parris et al. declared previously were not reported in the literature (i.e., acceptance, justification, talk in person). Šleglova and Cerna (2011) also identified and categorized coping strategies adolescent victims of cyberbullying developed to deal with cyberbullying. Even though Šleglova and Cerna's study presented limited information in the form of quotes from participants regarding strategies that may or may not have worked well for coping with cyberbullying victimization, this aspect was not formally addressed in the study nor was the success of these strategies

confirmed. Völlink, Bolman, Dehue, and Jacobs (2013) quantitatively assessed coping strategies used by adolescent victims of cyberbullying to deal with being cyberbullied in terms of coping models. However, other than finding that victims primarily used emotion-focused coping strategies (e.g., anger, internalizing, feeling upset, worthless, or powerless), Völlink et al. found no significant differences in the use of other types of coping. Further, Völlink et al. did not report on participants' views of strategy effectiveness.

As only one scholar published in the literature, to my knowledge, quantitatively investigated the efficacy of the strategies adolescent victims of online aggression used to handle cyberbullying (i.e., Machackova et al., 2013), there is a gap in the research on this topic. There is a need to learn from actual victims of cyberbullying on what strategies best served to help them cope with cyberbullying victimization and to preserve their wellbeing (Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011). Working to ensure youths know how to cope with cyberbullying effectively is important, particularly because most adolescents do not report cyberbullying incidents to adults (Price & Dalgleish, 2010). To add, Craig et al. (2007) stressed the importance of providing youths with effective coping strategies to guard against the use of ineffective strategies that may increase, rather than decrease, cyberbullying victimization and associated distress, which is a need this study intended to address.

Statement of the Problem

Although prior researchers who addressed coping with cyberbullying yielded information about the ways that youths attempted to prevent and deal with cyberbullying,

the majority of these scholars used quantitative methods (e.g. survey questionnaires, comparative analysis) to examine either strategies limited to tactics presented by the researchers or focused on youths' reporting behaviors (Arıcak et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalglish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). In qualitative studies on coping with cyberbullying that used focus groups to collect data, researchers also contributed new knowledge to the field (Agatston et al., 2007; Spears et al., 2009; Stacey, 2009), but none of these scholars focused directly on finding out how youths, in their own right, set out to cope with cyberbullying, nor were any of the research questions geared to find out such information. Further, because many of the participants in the studies were not actual cyberbullying victims, responses about how youths would cope with incidents of cyberbullying were hypothetical (Machackova et al., 2013; Machmutow et al., 2012; Riebel et al., 2009) rather than on how young people actually responded to cyberbullying, and little was learned about the success or effectiveness of the different coping strategies youths used to manage and overcome cyberbullying (Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011). Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to address a gap in the literature by investigating the efficacy of the strategies that victims of cyberbullying used to cope with, counteract, and prevent incidents of cyberbullying.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to add to the existing literature on cyberbullying, most of which is quantitative, by qualitatively investigating the efficacy of the strategies youths used to cope with and prevent incidents of cyberbullying. I sought to identify the coping mechanisms that cyberbullying victims found to be the most effective for

minimizing the negative emotions associated with cyberbullying, as well as which strategies were most helpful for preventing the recurrence of cyberbullying victimization. Further, conducting a qualitative study that gave voice to former cyberbullying victims, specifically regarding the coping strategies they found to be effective, holds promise for helping future victims of cyberbullying.

The focus of the study was on learning directly from cyberbullying victims what coping strategies they found to be the most effective for managing and overcoming cyberbullying. Patterns of anticipated behavior from the theories selected to guide this study, previous research findings on cyberbullying, and my personal insight were compared to observed patterns from the data. The analytic method of pattern matching (Yin, 2009) was used to assess the validity of the findings and to learn of any new methods that former victims found to be effective in thwarting instances of cyberbullying. Providing validated data on useful strategies for coping with cyberbullying can contribute to addressing cyberbullying, to reducing the negative outcomes associated with cyberbullying, and to providing better support for cyberbullying victims.

Conceptual Framework

Coping strategy models and the concept of efficacy beliefs formed a conceptual model for qualitatively investigating the efficacy of coping strategies for cyberbullying. The conceptual model was comprised of theoretical aspects of the transactional model of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987), approach-avoidance coping (Roth & Cohen, 1986), and the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) as a way to explore, analyze, and understand the differences in the strategies that victims of cyberbullying felt were effective for

managing and overcoming incidents of cyberbullying. Because victims' perceptions of and responses to coping with cyberbullying likely were shaped partly by their individual experiences, as well as by their characteristics (e.g., age, personality, traits), learned behaviors, self-confidence and self-esteem, sense of control, and context of the situation (Compas et al., 2001; Frydenberg, 2008; Frydenberg & Lewis, 2009; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987), I examined the viability of this framework for explaining coping with cyberbullying. The findings from this study that address this issue are presented in Chapter 5.

Transactional Model of Coping

According to the transactional model of coping, coping begins with a series of cognitive appraisals that are prompted when individuals encounter a stressful event. These judgments sequentially allow individuals to evaluate the level of threat or challenge associated with the situation, to determine potential actions (i.e., coping strategies) for managing the stress related to the event, and to assess the effectiveness of the strategies used (Lazarus & Folkman, 1997). Lazarus and Folkman (1987) asserted that coping strategies typically fall into two broad categories—problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping consists of using behavioral strategies to alter the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Individuals tend to employ problem-focused coping strategies when they believe they can change or alter the stressor by their actions. In contrast, emotion-focused coping relies on cognitive strategies aimed at nurturing individuals' internal or emotional welfare during a stressful event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Individuals use emotion-focused coping strategies when their initial appraisal of a stressful situation results in the belief that they do not have the capability to

change the stressor; thus, they must adapt to the stressor emotionally (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Approach-Avoidance Coping

Using a theoretical lens similar to Lazarus and Folkman, Roth and Cohen (1986) categorized coping as either approach-oriented coping or avoidance-oriented coping. According to Roth and Cohen, approach-oriented coping consists of cognitive coping strategies used to directly address a stressor. Individuals may employ approach coping strategies in an active attempt to control a stressful situation and reduce the negative outcomes associated with the stressful event (Roth & Cohen, 1986). On the other hand, individuals who engage in avoidance-oriented coping work to direct their attention away from the stressor. Individuals who use avoidance coping strategies rely on forms of escaping, ignoring, or accepting the stressor, especially when individuals feel they cannot successfully change or adapt to the stressful event (Roth & Cohen, 1986).

Self-Efficacy Theory

Bandura (1989) defined perceived self-efficacy as individuals' subjective beliefs in their personal competences to successfully manage or succeed in particular situations, which, in turn, influence how people think, feel, and behave. Efficacious beliefs determine the extent that individuals are able to deal with stressful situations and events, as well as the ways that people deal with stressful events. According to Bandura, self-efficacy beliefs create cognitive patterns that either may help or hinder behavioral, motivational, and affective processes related to coping. Individuals who possess a strong sense of perceived self-efficacy will tend to view stressful events as challenging and search for ways to actively change and effectively manage stressors, whereas individuals

who experience self-doubt about their ability to cope will either avoid stressors or will be less motivated to endure and overcome stressful events (Bandura, 1989). Bandura noted that individual's perceptions of their efficacy may determine the expected outcomes; amount of effort; and levels of success, personal distress, and physiological reactions associated with coping. Accordingly, efficacy beliefs may play a role in and help explain both the strategies victims of cyberbullying used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied and the perceived effectiveness of the strategies they used.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions and subquestions for this study.

1. RQ1: What strategies did victims of cyberbullying use to cope with, counteract, and prevent cyberbullying?
 - SQ1: How did cyberbullying victims develop the strategies they used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied?
 - SQ2: How did victims of cyberbullying determine which strategies were effective and ineffective for managing and overcoming incidents of cyberbullying?
 - SQ3: What did victims of cyberbullying learn in the process of determining effective strategies for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?
2. RQ2: How did the strategies cyberbullying victims reported as being successful for coping with, counteracting, and preventing cyberbullying compare to the strategies research and theory predicted were effective for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?

Chapter 3 presents the interview questions. The interview questions were derived from RQ1 and its subquestions. An external panel of methodology and content experts vetted the interview questions prior to their use in the study.

Nature of the Study

This qualitative study included individual interviews to inductively investigate youths' perspectives on coping strategies for cyberbullying. The focus was on learning directly from former victims about the efficacy of the strategies that they used to cope with cyberbullying victimization. For RQ1, I interviewed teens, Grades 10 to 12, who previously were victims of cyberbullying and who successfully managed and overcame being cyberbullied. This method promoted greater understanding of the different ways in which teens coped with cyberbullying, as well as participants' perceptions regarding the strategies they employed. RQ2 included pattern matching (Yin, 2009) to compare predicted or expected patterns derived from theory and research with patterns from observed data. Pattern matching for this study also was used to begin to build a theoretical understanding of effective coping strategies for teens who experience cyberbullying victimization.

Operational Definitions

Adolescents: Common language used to refer to young people, aged 10-19 years (World Health Organization [WHO], 2014). For the purpose of this study, the terms adolescents, youth, youths, and teens all refer to young people, aged 13-18 years.

Coping: The use of thoughts, feelings, and actions to adapt to or manage the internal and external stressors and their related emotions (Lazarus, 2006; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) associated with cyberbullying victimization.

Cyberbullying: The use of electronic information and communication technologies by an individual or a group who exerts power to intentionally or repeatedly embarrass, harass, intimidate, threaten, or harm others or to cause fear or emotional distress (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Parris et al., 2012; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).

Efficacy: Belief in a person's ability to produce desired outcomes for a particular situation as a result of his or her own behavior or actions (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1989).

Information and communication technologies (ICTs): Communication devices or applications, to include personal computers, cell phones, text messaging, instant messaging, e-mail, audio, video, and pictures sent or posted on the Internet, chat rooms, and social media and newsgroup Web sites (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

Scope and Delimitations

The participants for this study were limited to prior victims of cyberbullying who endured and successfully overcame cyberbullying victimization. Researchers have stressed the need to learn directly from cyberbullying victims themselves to determine how they coped with being cyberbullied (Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011). Interview data were collected only from teens in Grades 10 to 12. This age group was able to remain engaged in an interview discussion for the time designated for this study (Zuckerberg & Hess, 1997), as well as possessed the cognitive abilities and maturity levels to articulate their experiences better than younger adolescents (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000). Teens were considered for the study as long as they met the criteria for prior

cyberbullying victim status and the age group specified.

Assumptions

The following assumptions applied to the research study. I assumed that

- participants would willingly participate in the study and be willing to share their views on coping with cyberbullying;
- participants would be open, honest, and unbiased in their responses;
- participants would provide valuable insight into effective coping strategies for cyberbullying;
- participants would be able to articulate their thoughts, recollections, and evaluations regarding the coping strategies they used for cyberbullying
- the study design would generate knowledge and information currently unknown in cyberbullying research;
- the chosen methodology would provide the best possible approach to answering the research questions;
- the interview guide would be appropriate for the intended purpose of the data collection; and
- researcher bias would not influence the results as I bracketed my assumptions at the beginning of the study.

Limitations and Resolutions

For this study, I realized that the identification of and access to cyberbullying victims might be difficult to establish. Therefore, announcement of the study and recruitment took place in several different venues that teens mingle and socialize in, such

as online, community youth and recreation centers, support services, churches, and public libraries. Because the participants were minors, parental consent was necessary before data collection could begin. To address parental concern about the possibility that teens might experience some form of distress during the interview process, a list of resources was made available to both parents and participating teens (e.g., 800 numbers, online chat support, free or low cost mental health services). Former victims of cyberbullying may not have communicated with their parents about what occurred because of their fear of losing technology privileges resulting in fewer teens being willing to participate. Both the consent and assent forms stated that only participants would receive a copy of the findings and that their names would not be identified. In addition, snowball sampling was employed where former interview participants assisted with the recruitment. An additional limitation was the act of self-reporting about an experience that happened in the past. Participants might fail to recall pertinent details of how they coped with being cyberbullied. Although semistructured interviews carried the potential to influence the interview process, this format also helped keep the interview on track, as well as promoted participants' recall of their experiences.

Furthermore, because the sample was chosen for a particular purpose rather than as a representation of a general population, and due to the small sample size, the results cannot be assumed to be generalizable to a larger population. However, the use of thick, rich description about coping strategies for cyberbullying and the development of an audit trail add to the transferability and dependability of the study. The study design and methodology, criteria established, quotes from participants, and knowledge gained from the study provide a basis for further research, as well for the reader's assessment of the

results.

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the existing body of literature on coping with cyberbullying victimization. Although previous scholars have broached the topic, there still is little known about what coping strategies actual victims of cyberbullying used to cope with cyberbullying (Machackova et al., 2013; Riebel et al., 2009). Even less is known about the efficacy of the strategies that victims employed to handle being cyberbullied (Machackova et al., 2013; Paris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011). Learning directly from adolescent victims' perspectives about what coping strategies helped them to manage and overcome cyberbullying gives firsthand knowledge, and a relatable source, that can be applied to help other youths who find themselves in the same situation. Identifying what strategies worked for victims to help prevent further cyberbullying also may provide information that can help potential victims of cyberbullying address the issue before it becomes a problem or to avoid the issue altogether. Additionally, learning about what strategies helped to lessen the negative effects of cyberbullying, as well as helped victims alleviate emotional distress (Machackova et al., 2013; Riebel et al., 2009), adds to the knowledge base for helping youths overcome an issue that can negatively affect their development and overall wellbeing.

If youths are struggling emotionally, their learning, development, and wellbeing are jeopardized. Therefore, information that serves to improve social and learning conditions for teens, and that can help protect their dignity and self-worth, as they work to create their place in the world is valuable to promoting positive social change. Not

only can the findings of this study inform intervention and prevention programs for youths who are dealing with cyberbullying, but also the findings can be used as a measure to assess the effectiveness of the strategies currently used or believed to be effective for coping with cyberbullying victimization. Further, the information gained from this study can foster new research in the area of coping with cyberbullying, as well as provide data for researchers and policy makers in other countries where cyberbullying and cyberbullying research may still be in its earlier stages due to the later onset in use of and access to technology. As such, the findings from this study have the potential to contribute to positive social change at the individual, community, national, and global levels.

Summary and Transition to Chapter 2

Specifics about the effectiveness of coping strategies for cyberbullying are not prevalent in the current literature on cyberbullying, particularly in regard to what actual victims of cyberbullying found effective for coping with cyberbullying victimization. Some researchers (and experts) in the field have reported initial findings regarding general ways of coping with and preventing cyberbullying; but none of these studies were designed to investigate and identify effective strategies in the manner or to the extent of this study. Craig et al. (2007) asserted that having youths know how to deal with cyberbullying effectively is important, particularly because most teens do not report cyberbullying incidents to adults. Hoff and Mitchell (2009) also stressed the importance of providing youths with effective coping strategies to guard against feelings of helplessness that often occur with victimization and the use of ineffective strategies that may increase rather than decrease the cyberbullying. To accomplish these aims, and to

address an existing gap within the literature, required involving teens in the process—those who were closest to the issue.

In Chapter 1 I provided the reader with the information necessary to understand and to see the value of the study (e.g., background, problem, purpose, conceptual framework, nature of the study, significance). In Chapter 2, I move on with an in-depth review of literature that is relevant to the study. Contained in the literature review are a synthesis and discussion of current studies and seminal works found during the literature search that served to create an underpinning for the study, as well as to demonstrate the gap in the extant literature that I intended to address.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of the coping strategies that adolescent victims of cyberbullying used to manage and overcome incidents of cyberbullying victimization. This literature review provides an integrative review of existing literature on the framework and rationale for the study. The review begins with a discussion on the emergence of cyberbullying, and then continues with a general overview of cyberbullying and its reported effects. As coping provides a part of the theoretical underpinning for this study, the review continues with a discussion of coping, to include a review of coping theories and models, coping in adolescence, and coping with cyberbullying. Also included is a review of other theories relevant to the study of coping with cyberbullying and strategy effectiveness, as well as previous methodologies used to investigate coping with cyberbullying in the research.

I organized the review around major themes and ideas that emerged from the literature that I deemed relevant to the study. The themes are categorized to build the foundational and background knowledge needed for the reader to understand the problem and intent of the study. Concepts within each theme are described, citing related work to add coherence and support. In addition, I used the literature to define and demonstrate relationships among the concepts I discuss in the review, to show trends in cyberbullying research, and to show the gap in the research that I intended to address. A critical analysis of the research and literature I included in the review occurs either as a separate section or is infused throughout the review.

Literature Search Strategy

Collecting the literature for this review required a multistep process. An initial search for literature started with EBSCO Host from the Walden University library website. Specific databases searched were Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete, ERIC, MEDLINE, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and SocioINDEX databases. Although the initial search generated literature for a starting point, it did not produce sufficient information to adequately cover the topics searched or to complete the literature review. A second search ensued using the Search & Find option from the Walden University library website to search databases by name. Databases accessed through this search were Sage Premier, Science Direct, and ProQuest Central—none of which appeared as options through the EBSCO Host search. The majority of the articles selected during this second round of searching came from the Sage Premier database. A third round of searching included accessing journals by name from the Walden University library website to retrieve articles not found in the database searches. At this point, reference lists of the potential articles selected for the literature review were examined for additional pertinent sources. A final search, using Google Scholar, served to find articles not available through previous searches. All articles selected from Google Scholar were checked for credibility by using the Verify Peer Review tool from the Walden University library website. Published books and professional websites, namely by experts in the field, helped to fill any gaps of knowledge and information not obtained through academic articles.

The processes I used for selecting literature from all databases followed similar criteria. Each search was limited to full-text, peer-reviewed articles. My initial search

strategy was to use broad search terms to locate a pool of applicable research. A secondary strategy included revising search terms and creating different combinations of key words to locate the most relevant works for each topic searched. Key words I used to locate sources include various combinations and forms of the terms *bullying*, *cyberbullying*, *electronic bullying*, *online bullying*, *cyberspace bully*, *cyber-harassment*, *Internet harassment*, *relational aggression*, *peer aggression*, *peer harassment*, *coping*, *stress*, *coping strategies*, *coping theory*, *coping models*, *coping effectiveness*, *coping efficacy*, *development of coping*, *adolescence*, *middle school*, *adjustment*, *gender*, *gender differences*, *perceived stress*, *self-efficacy*, and *efficacy beliefs*. One or a combination of the name of the author(s), title of article, and name of theory also were used to locate sources during the search.

The Evolution of Cyberbullying

To better understand the context of cyberbullying, it is important to give some background on traditional bullying. Although bullying is an age-old phenomenon (Harper, 2013), public awareness and a heightened concern about bullying did not emerge until the early 1980s when reports of tragic consequences associated with bullying began making the news. In 1982, three Norwegian adolescent males committed suicide, reportedly as a result of harassment and bullying from peers at school (Olweus, 1993). This incident sparked a national campaign against bullying that prompted Olweus (1993) to launch a large-scale research project aimed at intervention and prevention of bullying in schools. In recognizing bullying as a social problem, researchers from other countries began studies to increase bullying awareness and to address issues related to bullying. Organized efforts by researchers and policy makers to address bullying in the

United States started in the mid 1990s (Limber, 2003) and still continue.

Traditional bullying consists of intentionally using aggressive or abusive behaviors to gain a sense of superiority or power over another individual or group who has little or no defense (Olweus, 2003). Traditional bullying occurs in face-to-face situations that normally present themselves through school or school-related environments (Olweus, 1994). For systematic research purposes, the accepted definition of traditional bullying is as follows: Bullying entails aggressive actions intended to cause harm or distress that occur repeatedly over time among individuals whose relationship is characterized by an imbalance of power (Olweus, 1994). Scholars further defined traditional bullying by distinguishing between direct and indirect bullying. According to Olweus (1994), direct bullying includes open attacks, such as harmful or embarrassing physical contact, threats, outwardly verbal assaults, or public humiliation. In contrast, indirect bullying takes more subtle approaches like rumor spreading, making mean or rude faces or gestures, teasing or taunting, or intentionally excluding someone from a group to promote social isolation (Olweus, 1994). Such attacks typically are unwanted by the recipient(s) and often occur without apparent threat or provocation by the individual or group targeted (Olweus, 1994).

Following the awareness created by Olweus's seminal work on bullying, studies of traditional bullying continued to increase in number, scope, and rigor over the next 30 years. However, the onset and progression of technology that accompanied the move into the 21st century brought new issues to bullying that motivated some researchers to widen their view and approach for studies of bullying. Although the advent of the Internet, digital communications, and social media allowed for positive changes to how

individuals interacted, the same advances in technology provided new opportunities for transgressions. Along with the enhanced access to and communications with others came an avenue for bullying behaviors to manifest in ways that, previously, were not possible. Technology gave rise to a new form of bullying, known as cyberbullying, which started to draw the attention of the research community.

Researchers who began incorporating cyberbullying into their studies of bullying started to reveal certain links and overlaps between traditional bullying and cyberbullying. Although scholars had found relationships between involvement in, as well as victimization of, traditional bullying and cyberbullying (Beran & Li, 2005, 2007) the findings were limited. In a study conducted to examine cyberbullying in relation to traditional bullying, Li (2007a) hypothesized that bullying behaviors—albeit among five other factors—would predict cyberbullying and cyberbullying victimization. For this study, Li examined two sets of data from 461 Canadian ($n = 130$ males, $n = 134$ females) and Chinese ($n = 107$ males, $n = 90$ females) middle school students that were collected in 2004. The survey instrument was a 22-item, anonymous survey questionnaire developed by the author. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, followed by logistic regressions to examine the extent to which bullying contributed to cyberbullying and cyberbullying victimization. Of the list of potential predictors, Li found the most significant predictor of cyber victimization was traditional bullying ($\chi^2 [3, N = 461] = 11.79, p = .008$). According to Li, involvement in traditional bullying was a strong predictor of engagement in cyberbullying, as well as for cyberbullying victimization. In addition, Li analyzed gender, culture (i.e., country of citizenship), technology use, knowledge of cybersafety, and academic achievement (i.e., self-reported school grades)

as possible predictors of cyberbullying and cyberbullying victimization. Of this list of variables, Li found that knowledge of cybersafety strategies ($\chi^2 [1, N = 461] = 3.43, p = .064$) and culture ($\chi^2 [1, N = 461] = 2.71, p = .100$) significantly predicted the probability of experiencing cyberbullying victimization. Gender was not a significant predictor of cyberbullying victimization, but Li suggested that males were more likely to cyberbully than females.

In two more studies conducted by Li (2007a, 2007b) during approximately the same timeframe, Li found similar results. In a survey study of 177 seventh grade Canadian students, Li (2007b) explored relationships between traditional bullying and cyberbullying issues. Li identified positive, significant correlation coefficients between traditional bullies and cyberbullies ($\tau = 0.298, p < 0.001$) and bullying victimization and cyberbullying victimization ($\tau = 0.305, p < 0.001$). These findings align with what Li (2007a) found in an earlier study and indicated that victims of traditional bullying often are victims of cyberbullying as well. Beran and Li (2007) also found that students who were bullied at school were likely to be cyberbullied (Spearman's $\rho = 0.52, p < 0.001$). Data used for the analysis came from 432 Canadian students ($n = 193$ males, $n = 239$ females), ages 12 to 15 years, who completed self-report surveys for a larger study Beran and Li conducted in 2005).

Other scholars who replicated the findings of overlaps between traditional bullying and cyberbullying also demonstrated links between traditional bullying victimization and cyberbullying victimization. To assess whether being a traditional bullying victim predicted being a victim of cyberbullying, Raskauskas and Stolz (2007) gathered data from a convenience sample of 84 U.S. adolescents, ages 13 to 18 years ($M = 15.35, SD =$

1.26), using a 28-item, self-report questionnaire designed by the authors for the purpose of the study. In chi square analyses comparing traditional and cyberbullying victimization, Raskauskas and Stolz showed significantly more cyberbullying victims were victims of traditional bullying than what was expected by chance, $\chi^2 (1, N = 84) = 7.62, p = .006$. Likewise, Smith et al. (2008) found an association between traditional and cyberbullying victimization. In chi square analyses on questionnaire data from 533 British adolescents, ages 11 to 16 years, Smith et al. showed a significant relationship between traditional victims and cyberbullying victims, $\chi^2 (1, N = 533) = 34.86, p = .0001$.

With cyberbullying research still in its infancy, the relationships identified in the research between traditional bullying and cyberbullying led to the assumption that what was known for dealing with and preventing traditional bullying might apply to cyberbullying. If cyberbullying were bullying that simply occurred in cyberspace (Li, 2007a), then intervention, prevention, and coping strategies for traditional bullying should extend to cyberbullying with a reasonable amount of success. However, there are differences between cyberbullying and traditional bullying that create question as to whether the strategies used to deal with traditionally bullying will work for dealing with cyberbullying. Smith (2012) identified several features of cyberbullying that make it distinct from traditional bullying. According to Smith, unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying

- depends on some degree of technological knowledge and competence;
- occurs primarily indirectly rather than face-to-face;
- provides a sense of anonymity for the aggressor;

- does not require the aggressor to have physical strength, size, or social status and support in order to bully;
- often conceals the target's reaction to the bullying from the aggressor, which can promote disinhibition and a lack of remorse;
- may not be motivated by the need for power and control that is typical of traditional bullying;
- creates more complex bystander roles (e.g., bystanders may be with the aggressor, the victim, or neither when the cyberbullying attack takes place);
- increases the latitude and potential audience for attacks; and
- makes it difficult for the target to escape from the aggressor and attacks.

Additionally, there is no typical profile for cyberbullies. Because cyberbullies do not have to rely on conventional forms of power, anyone can cyberbully. The (perceived) safety of being able to act from behind a screen opens up opportunities for those who, otherwise, may not bully. The victim of bullying or harassment seeking justice through retaliation, the high academic achiever, the mean girl, the popular kid, even the nerds, geeks, and the weak all have the power to bully online (Li, 2007a; Willard, 2006). These aspects make dealing with and preventing cyberbullying a challenge.

Even though cyberbullying often is thought of (and researched as) an offshoot of traditional bullying, cyberbullying has certain attributes that make it difficult to equate to traditional bullying, as well as to know whether the same strategies are effective for dealing with both types of bullying. Not only does cyberbullying take place through different means than traditional bullying, the use of technology makes it more difficult to

isolate and address the bully, as well as to prevent cyberbullying attacks. Given these factors, the information from the research presented and discussed in this section, and the limited knowledge of cyberbullying that exists in the literature, further study of cyberbullying as an individual topic is required to learn about the strategies that work for dealing with and preventing cyberbullying victimization.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying emerged with the onset of regular use of information communication technologies. Although technologies such as social networking sites, instant messaging, and text messaging are popular and integral mediums used by youths for exploring and defining their identities, as well as used by youths for building and maintaining relationships, there is an inherent risk to their use. The greatest, yet least studied, danger youths face online is the threat of cyberbullying (Collier, 2012; Donlin, 2012; Shariff & Gouin, 2006), which increases with time spent online (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Although the rates of cyberbullying incidents differ across studies, cyberbullying is on the rise (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012), and its negative effects and harmful outcomes are real. Cyberbullying is a global issue (Aricak et al., 2008; Li, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Popović-Ćitić et al., 2011; Riebel et al., 2009), particularly among adolescents (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Slonje & Smith, 2008), that negatively affects youths' psychological, social, academic, and physical wellbeing (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Spears et al., 2009; Sourander et al., 2010). Given the potential for harm that can occur with cyberbullying victimization, cyberbullying among youths warrants attention and must be understood

and addressed in its own right (Donlin, 2012; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

As of early 2000, cyberbullying research was nonexistent (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012). It was not until around 2003 that published research on cyberbullying began to appear. Thus, research in the field is relatively new. Although much is known about the nature and prevalence of cyberbullying among youths, little is known about the coping mechanisms youths use to deal with cyberbullying. Even less is known about the strategies that actual victims of cyberbullying have used to cope with cyberbullying and how effective they felt those strategies were for responding to and preventing further incidents of cyberbullying (Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dagleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011).

Nature of Cyberbullying

Researchers have defined cyberbullying—also referred to as electronic bullying, online bullying, and online social cruelty—as the use of electronic information and communication technologies by an individual or a group who exerts power to intentionally and repeatedly embarrass, harass, intimidate, threaten, or harm others or to cause fear or emotional distress (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Parris et al., 2012; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). However, a universal definition for cyberbullying still remains under debate by scholars and researchers in the field (Kowalski et al., 2012; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008) and often differs conceptually depending on the study. One reason for this debate is that researchers who conducted studies early on used the definition of traditional bullying, which includes the fundamental aspects of intentional harm, repetition, and an imbalance of power as a model to develop their own definitions of cyberbullying and to guide their inquiries

(Nocentini et al., 2010). As the study of the phenomenon evolved, question arose as to whether these definitions adequately captured the nature of cyberbullying. Some researchers argued that the criteria for traditional bullying as it was operationalized did not transfer well to cyberbullying, particularly regarding the inclusion of the imbalance of power (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2012), while other researchers stressed the need to incorporate the newfound aspects of anonymity and a wider audience as part of the criteria for defining cyberbullying (Slonje & Smith, 2008).

Cyberbullying consists of sending or posting harmful material, that ranges in severity along a continuum, via email, instant messaging, texting, multimedia messaging, social networking sites, web logs [blogs], chat rooms, personal web pages, online gaming sites, online polling sites, and bash boards (Belsey, 2004; Kowalski et al., 2012; Popović-Ćitić et al., 2011; Willard, 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). Types of cyberbullying behavior include (a) making insulting, hurtful, or defamatory remarks online; (b) sending offensive, harassing, or threatening messages; (c) posing as someone else to send or post negative, offensive, or hurtful information; (d) circulating derogatory, untrue, personal, or embarrassing information, pictures, or videos; (e) engaging in actions intended to socially ostracize or exclude someone from a group; and (f) using electronic communications to repeatedly harass, threaten, or stalk someone (Willard, 2007). Common reasons for engaging in cyberbullying behaviors are relationship issues (i.e., boyfriend or girlfriend breakups, friendship breakups), rejection, jealousy, picking on someone because they are different looking or acting than others, and to get revenge for being mistreated or bullied by someone else (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Strom, P., Strom, R., Wingate, Kraska, & Beckert, 2012).

With cyberbullying research in its infancy, there is a tendency by some researchers to consider cyberbullying an extension of traditional bullying and to use what is known from traditional bullying research as a launching pad for understanding and addressing cyberbullying. Correlations and overlaps between traditional bullying and cyberbullying found in some studies suggested cyberbullying was merely another form of bullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Kowalski et al., 2012; Riebel et al., 2009). For example, Shariff and Gouin (2006) referred to cyberbullying as covert, psychological bullying that occurred through electronic means. Based on these findings and perceptions some researchers asserted that cyberbullying can, and should, be studied as an offshoot of traditional bullying (Beran & Li, 2007; Li, 2007a; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Ybarra, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2007). Yet Ybarra et al. (2007) noted the overlap was small and argued, along with other researchers, that the unique features and some fundamental differences associated with cyberbullying required studying cyberbullying as a separate phenomenon (Dempsey, Sulkowski, Nichols, & Storch, 2009; Donlin, 2012; Spears et al., 2009).

Features unique to cyberbullying are the elements of anonymity (or the guise of anonymity), the potentially widespread audience, and the fact that there is no escape from cyberbullying attacks. Being (or feeling) anonymous shields aggressors from their targets, thereby allowing cyberbullies the opportunity and inclination to engage in behaviors they, otherwise, may not act out in person. Cyberbullying researchers Patchin and Hinduja (2006) noted most cyberbullies choose to attack their victims privately. Also, with technology, aggressors have quick and easy access to a large audience (Spears et al., 2009) and access to their targets at any time, from any place (Slonje & Smith,

2008).

Prevalence of Cyberbullying

The actual prevalence of cyberbullying victimization is difficult to determine. Researchers have found the prevalence of cyberbullying victimization to demonstrate a range of rates depending on several factors. The definition of cyberbullying used for the study, the types of technologies examined in the study, the methods used for the study, the country in which the data were collected, the age of the participants, and the way participants in the study conceptualized cyberbullying can all produce different findings (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012). However, despite differences in how studies were conducted, researchers throughout Europe, Asia, Canada, Australia, and the United States produced some similar results (see Aricak et al., 2008; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2008; Popović-Ćitić et al., 2011; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Price & Dalgleish, 2010). Based on the information presented in the aforementioned studies, the prevalence of cyberbullying victimization worldwide varies between 10 and 42 percent.

Although cyberbullying researchers have identified some general patterns, findings on the prevalence of cyberbullying victimization are inconsistent. Researchers Smith et al. (2008), Li (2007a), and Dehue, Bolman, and Völlink (2008) found females were more likely to be victimized than males. Patchin and Hinduja (2012) referenced a study using a random sample of 10-18 year old participants that also showed more females ($n = 2,162$) than males ($n = 2,212$) were victims of cyberbullying, with 25.1% of females reporting being cyberbullied and 16.6% of males reporting experiencing cyberbullying victimization. In contrast, Popović-Ćitić et al. (2011) found higher incidents of male victimization than female victimization—with twice as many male than

female cyberbullying victims—whereas Li (2006), Aricak et al. (2008), and Slonje and Smith (2008) found no significant gender differences in cyberbullying victimization. Although Li (2007a) and Patchin and Hinduja (2013) showed rates of cyberbullying victimization are highest among white students, the differences in rates were not substantial. Patchin and Hinduja (2012) conducted a study on cyberbullying victimization by race and produced the following results: White (21%), Black (11.1%), Hispanic (16.1%), and Other/Multi (17.8%), suggesting that all races are vulnerable to cyberbullying victimization. Additionally, Li (2007a) revealed cyberbullying and cyberbullying victimization were more common among individuals of average or above average academic achievement.

The only undisputed finding in the literature was the age at which cyberbullying is most prevalent. Although cyberbullying can occur at any age, researchers showed cyberbullying is most prevalent during adolescence. Rates of cyberbullying peak during the middle school years (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Slonje & Smith, 2008), followed by an increase in cyberbullying incidents during 11th and 12th grades (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012), which supports a research focus on cyberbullying in adolescence. Researchers estimate the number of adolescents who have experienced some form of cyberbullying to be between 6 and 30 percent (Kowalski et al., 2012; Dehue et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2008; Ybarra et al., 2006), with an average of around 24% (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012). These numbers are consistent with the findings of Patchin and Hinduja, whose extensive study of cyberbullying creates a gauge for comparison. Between 2002 and 2012, Patchin and Hinduja conducted numerous studies on cyberbullying. The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies

and included over 12,000 adolescent participants. Over the course of the studies they conducted, Patchin and Hinduja (2012) found that between 18.8 and 40.8 percent of the respondents reported experiencing cyberbullying of some sort, with an average of 27.3% of the respondents across the studies reporting being cyberbullied.

Additionally, researchers have shown the number of youths who reported being a witness to cyberbullying incidents is higher than youths who reported cyberbullying victimization. In a 2006 study conducted by Patchin and Hinduja, 47.1% of the respondents reported having witnessed cyberbullying—defined by the researchers as having seen someone bullied online. For the study, Patchin and Hinduja (2006) surveyed 571 individuals electronically, of which 384 (67%) were younger than 18 years ($M = 14.1$ years; referred to as the *youth sample*, p. 158). Because the researchers conducted the study over the Internet, responses came from participants worldwide. The majority of the respondents were female, which the researchers attributed to the survey being linked to the website of a female pop musician (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). The majority of the sample also consisted of Caucasian respondents. The findings discussed above only represent responses given by the youth sample. In 2009, Hoff and Mitchell found similar results. Data were collected using face-to-face surveys of 351 undergraduate students attending a university in the northeastern United States. Participants were asked to report on cyberbullying experiences that occurred prior to their attending college (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Hoff and Mitchell showed 89% of the respondents reported knowing someone who had been a victim of cyberbullying. Together, the findings from the studies discussed in this section indicate cyberbullying may be more prevalent than victims or witnesses wish to admit or report, which further supports the importance of

additional inquiry into cyberbullying.

Impact and Effects of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is potentially traumatizing (Sourander et al., 2010), but the range of effects of cyberbullying likely will depend on the individual, as well as the situational and contextual factors surrounding the incident. Negative effects can differ depending on the form of cyberbullying experienced, the victim's levels of social acceptance and integration, the effectiveness of the coping strategies employed, individual differences (e.g., development, temperament, reactivity, self-regulation, and intelligence), and the amount of self-blame the victim attaches to the incident (Compas et al., 2001; Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen & DeLongis, 1986; von Marées & Petermann, 2012). Juvonen and Gross (2008) posited some of the distress associated with cyberbullying might stem from the fact that victims often undergo cyberbullying attacks when they are alone and without support. Furthermore, the reluctance by victims to report or discuss cyberbullying incidents, especially for fear of being blamed or of losing access to their technologies, may serve to exacerbate negative consequences by causing victims to endure cyberbullying for extended periods of time (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Stacey, 2009). These factors support the need to work to help victims effectively deal with cyberbullying on their own.

Researchers have shown the negative effects associated with cyberbullying victimization are multiple. Kessel Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, and Coulter (2010) found a relationship between cyberbullying victimization and elevated levels of psychological distress. To arrive at this finding, Kessel et al. analyzed data collected from an anonymous, regional census survey given biennially to high school students ($n =$

20,2046), grades 9 through 12, in the Boston metropolitan area. Using documented information, the researchers examined relationships between bullying victimization and psychological distress, to include depressive symptoms, self-injury behaviors (e.g., cutting, burning, self-bruising), and suicidal ideation or suicide behavior. In bivariate analyses Kessel et al. showed victims of bullying reported elevated levels of distress, as well as lower academic performance and lower school attachment over a 12-month period, $p < .001$. Specifically, victims of cyberbullying reported elevated levels of depressive symptoms (33.9%), suicidal ideation (18.1%), self-injury (24.0%), and attempted suicide (9.4%), $p < .001$ (Kessel et al., 2010). In a second study conducted in Finland by Sourander et al. (2010), the researchers aimed to examine the psychological and social risk factors associated with cyberbullying victimization. The sample consisted of 2,215 adolescents, ages 13 to 16 years ($M = 14.4$ years, $SD = 1.1$ years), with an equal distribution of males and females (Sourander et al., 2010). Data were collected with an anonymous, self-report questionnaire, which included demographic variables, as well as items about participants' cyberbullying experiences, general health and psychopathology, psychosomatic symptoms and sleep issues, traditional bullying behavior, substance use, and school environment. In logistic regression analyses, Sourander et al. revealed cyberbullying victims suffered mostly from emotional and peer-related problems and higher levels of perceived difficulties, 95% CI, $p < .001$. The Patchin and Hinduja study discussed earlier in this section supports these findings. According to Patchin and Hinduja (2006), 42.5% of cyberbullying victims reported being frustrated by the incidents of cyberbullying, 40% felt angry, and 27% felt sad. Additionally, 32% of victims reported being cyberbullied affected their experiences and performance at school,

and 26.5% reported cyberbullying victimization affected them at home (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

A final study conducted by Patchin and Hinduja (2010) revealed a significant correlation between cyberbullying victimization and low self-esteem. Data for the study were collected from a random sample ($N = 1,963$) of middle school students ($M = 12.6$ years) in a large school district in the United States. Participants completed a 10-item self-esteem survey, which was constructed by the authors using a previously validated instrument for reference, and a self-report survey for cyberbullying also designed and validated by the authors (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). To test for a statistically significant relationship between cyberbullying victimization and low self-esteem, Patchin and Hinduja used ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models with an alpha level of .05, two-tailed. Patchin and Hinduja showed victims of cyberbullying had significantly lower self-esteem than both non-victims of cyberbullying and cyberbullying perpetrators, even when controlling for age, race, and gender.

The very nature of cyberbullying, particularly the features that make it distinct from traditional bullying (e.g., anonymity, 24/7 access, widespread audience), may serve to strengthen the negative impacts and outcomes of cyberbullying victimization. Because there are no barriers to the frequency, extent, and intensity of harmful acts carried out in cyberspace, (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006) there is little to no safety or reprieve from cyberbullying attacks. Just as there are no limitations to cyberbullying actions, the potential and perceived harm to cyberbullying targets is unchecked (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006) and can manifest itself in a variety of emotional, cognitive, physical, and behavioral ways. Some researchers even asserted the psychological pain and emotional

distress associated with cyberbullying victimization can be worse than the pain experienced from traditional bullying; physical wounds can heal more quickly than emotional wounds (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). von Marées & Petermann (2012) argued the negative effects of cyberbullying can last longer and be more damaging than those that accompany traditional, physical bullying.

Overall, cyberbullying victimization can lead to a variety of social, psychological, and psychosomatic issues. Potential negative outcomes associated with cyberbullying include strained peer relations, distress, low self-esteem, difficulty in school and at home, trouble sleeping, frequent headaches or stomach aches, and feeling powerless, embarrassed, unworthy, alone, and fearful (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Sourander et al., 2010; Spears et al., 2009). To add, levels of fear and desperation often increase when the aggressor's identity is unknown to the victim (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Though researchers have established links between cyberbullying victimization and psychosocial problems that may affect healthy psychosocial adjustment and growth, evidence of long term effects associated with cyberbullying still are understudied in the research, thus are unclear (Dempsey et al., 2009; Sourander et al., 2010).

Coping

Coping is the act of using thoughts, feelings, and actions to adapt to and deal with situations or events that occur in daily life. To cope, individuals engage in a variety of cognitive and behavioral attempts aimed at managing either internal or external stressors, or both (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Coping consists of a multidimensional, ongoing process of responses and behaviors that ensue in situations where the specific demands of

a situation exceed the personal resources individuals believe they have to deal with these demands (Frydenberg, 2008). Typically, attempts to cope take place without consideration of whether the strategy employed to cope will work (Frydenberg, Eacott, & Clark, 2008). Not all coping efforts are successful. Sometimes coping strategies fail (Compas et al., 2001) and failure to cope has potentially costly effects to individuals' socioemotional development and wellbeing.

The coping process begins with an individual evaluation of a situation or event followed by a response to the situation that, ideally, ends with a positive effect. The level of perceived threat, harm, or challenge of any given situation (i.e., appraisal) to one's personal wellbeing is what evokes either a positive or negative emotional response (i.e., coping strategy) associated with that situation or event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). The main goals of coping are to change or remove a negative or stressful situation and to manage emotional distress with the outcomes of preserving and strengthening one's subjective wellbeing, social functioning, and overall health (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Therefore, coping strategies should either facilitate individuals' ability to successfully meet challenges and deal with change or help individuals lessen or remove harmful effects associated with risk or adversity, serving to promote growth, health, and happiness, and to avoid dysfunction.

Whether or how people cope depends on multiple factors. Social, cultural, developmental, and psychological conditions and characteristics all play a part. Age and experience, personality and traits, learned behaviors, self-confidence and self-esteem, and sense of control all affect individuals' coping skills (Compas et al., 2001; Frydenberg & Lewis, 2009; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Frydenberg (2008) also noted personal

resources such as health, self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and even affluence influence coping. Additionally, the type of situation being dealt with and how individuals view the situation evoke different coping responses. The levels of perceived importance and stakes that surround an incident, as well as the coping options and resources available each influence the manner in which individuals attempt to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Coping Styles and Strategies

Coping styles are the general approaches to coping that characterize the types of reactions individuals have to a stressor (Frydenberg, 2008). Coping strategies are the specific processes and behaviors (i.e., thoughts and actions) individuals employ to cope with stressful situations or events (Latack & Havlovic, 1992). As the status of or stakes associated with the situation change, individuals may rely more heavily on one form of coping style or strategy than others (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). For example, Lazarus and Folkman (1987) found individuals were more likely to seek social support to cope with situations where a loved-one's wellbeing was at stake than in situations where one's self-esteem was jeopardized. Further, because there are so many factors that influence coping, not only will coping styles and strategies differ even among individuals attempting to cope with the same or similar situation, they also will differ as a single individual attempts to cope with different situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Coping styles generally fall into dichotomous models of coping. The most widely presented models of coping in the research describe coping in terms of problem-focused versus emotion-focused coping or approach versus avoidance coping. Other coping models found in the literature are similar to the models above, yet they are labeled in

many different ways (e.g., cognitive versus behavioral coping, functional versus dysfunctional coping, adaptive versus maladaptive coping, and engagement versus disengagement coping). The only distinct domain of coping I found in the literature was a proactive a style of coping that employs more active than reactive strategies typically found in traditional models of coping.

Problem-focused and emotion-focused coping are behavioral and cognitive in nature, respectively. In problem-focused coping, the major function is to alter the stressor through active means whereas an emotion-focused approach aims to manage the emotional distress associated with or triggered by the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Strategies indicative of problem-focused coping include seeking information, planning and generating possible solutions, and taking direct action to change the situation. Examples of problem-focused coping are taking control of, confronting, or blocking the source of the stress or learning and growing from the experience. Emotion-focused coping consists of strategies such as expressing or regulating emotions, seeking emotional support, and avoiding the situation. Individuals who use emotion-focused coping may vent to relieve stress, may cognitively reframe the situation, or may engage in some sort of relaxation or exercise. Although individuals may employ both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies to deal with a situation, problem-focused coping surfaces more when an individual believes something productive can be done to help the situation and emotion-focused coping strategies tend to emerge in situations where the individual feels the stressor is simply something that must be endured (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Approach-avoidance coping refers to the use of cognitive and emotional activity

that is either directed at or away from the stressor (Roth & Cohen, 1986). With approach-oriented coping, individuals attempt to manage the situation by actively confronting the stressor and working to deal with or overcome the issue (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Contrastingly, an avoidance-oriented approach to coping includes efforts to avoid or escape the situation as a way of dealing with the stressor (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Examples of strategies used in approach coping are confrontation, seeking support, and learning to think about the situation differently. Avoidance coping strategies include actions such as denial, escapism, and wishful thinking. As well, approach coping strategies are used more by individuals who believe the situation is controllable and who feel they have adequate resources for dealing with the stressor, while avoidance coping strategies are used more when individuals feel the way to deal with the stressor is to evade or accept the situation (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Similar to statements about coping strategy use by Lazarus and Folkman (1987), Roth and Cohen noted individuals may employ more than one type of coping orientation at any given time. Roth and Cohen stated, “strategies are not mutually exclusive” (p. 816). The formulation, combinations, and consistency of coping styles and strategies individuals employ develop as part of a universal process that not only fit the context and the demand(s) of the situation at hand, but also consider individual variation (Roth & Cohen, 1986).

In addition to the more traditional, reactive models of coping, there are several coping styles that stem from a proactive standpoint. Rather than working to deal with an ongoing stressor or a situation that has already occurred, as is the goal with traditional coping strategies, proactive coping styles include efforts to either prepare for, head off, or moderate stressful events or situations (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). Two such styles are

anticipatory and preventative coping. According to Greenglass (2002), anticipatory coping consists of strategies aimed at being prepared to cope with an upcoming (i.e., anticipated) stressor that is certain to occur. Greenglass stated the function with anticipatory coping lies in working to manage the perceived risk, loss, or harm associated with the stressful situation or event. Anticipatory coping strategies include actions such as seeking support, planning, and reflection. Preventative coping strategies help individuals build resources and make plans to minimize the severity of a stressful situation or event should it occur (Greenglass, 2002). The function of preventative coping is to prepare for potential risk, harm, or loss just in case a situation that warrants coping might occur (Greenglass, 2002). Strategies indicative of preventative coping are planning, accumulating resources, and developing skills.

To learn more about the variability of coping style and strategy use, Forns, Kirchner, Abad, and Amador (2012) conducted a study with adolescents to further investigate the combined use of coping styles. Forns et al. analyzed the use of an existing style of coping (approach-avoidance coping) against the use of two new combined forms of coping—combinations of approach-avoidance coping formulated by the researchers—in relation to different stressors. The researchers aimed to provide more reliable information about the specificity of coping strategy use than what was learned through a single approach analysis. The sample consisted of 828 adolescents (355 males and 473 females), ages 12 to 17 years ($M = 14.07$ years, $SD = 1.34$ years). Data were collected using an adapted form of a pre-established coping inventory to measure coping strategies, along with a separate measure for coding the problems reported by study participants. Three of the four researchers from the present study designed the latter measure in 2004.

Forns et al. analyzed the using MANCOVA and univariate post-hoc tests for coping styles and a Chi-square test to evaluate frequency of reported problems by gender. Forns et al. found the differences in coping style use were more related to the type of stressor present and less due to gender differences, but the effect size was weak ($F [9, 757] = 16.26, p < .001, \eta^2 = 1.62$). Forns et al. learned interpersonal and personal problems, especially problems pertaining to peers and relationships, evoked the use of more active coping strategies while more avoidant coping strategies were used to cope with problems related to family, school, and illness over which participants felt they had less control.

Coping Effectiveness

Coping is deemed effective when it removes a threat or when it reduces, controls, avoids, or prevents discomfort or emotional distress (Latack & Havlovic, 1992). Conversely, reactions or responses that do nothing to help individuals adapt to or change a situation, or that make the situation worse, are considered ineffective coping strategies (Lewis & Frydenberg, 2002). According to Roth and Cohen (1986), there are three important factors to consider when evaluating coping effectiveness. Roth and Cohen stated the first factor is the “point in time at which coping effectiveness is evaluated” (p. 816). The second factor is how controllable the stressful situation is, and the final factor is the goodness of fit between the coping style employed and the particular demands of the stressful situation (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Finally, because coping is a person-environment transaction that evokes situation specific responses, coping strategies cannot be considered effective or ineffective independently from the context in which they are used (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Researchers have warned against the practice of assuming certain coping

strategies will always be grouped in the same way across different contexts and suggest resisting making generalizations about the effectiveness of any form of coping until they have examined the process of coping under diverse conditions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011). Effective coping may require a synergistic approach using multiple styles and strategies in a complementary or cyclical manner. According to Skrzypiec, Slee, Murray-Harvey, and Pereira (2011), each form of coping may have favorable or unfavorable results depending on the who, when, under what circumstance, and type of outcome associated with the stressful situation or event, and any strategy that reduces stress may be viewed as effective. As well, what is an effective coping strategy for one person may not be for another; the perceived effectiveness of a coping strategy can differ depending on the perspective from which it is viewed. Often, the individual using the coping strategy may feel differently about the level of effectiveness of the strategy than someone observing or evaluating the strategy (Snyder & Dinoff, 1999).

Whether an individual copes effectively depends on the skills the person brings to the situation and how well those skills helped the individual reach a desirable outcome. deLara (2008) investigated coping strategies for dealing with bullying and sexual harassment and found individuals with higher levels of socioemotional intelligence were more successful at managing distress. Individuals who cope more effectively also tend to approach stressful situations or events as a challenge and as something to be overcome rather than as a threat that cannot be dealt with successfully (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). deLara asserted this approach requires regulating reactions and emotions while applying appropriate cognitive mechanisms to adapt to and manage the stressful situation or event. As noted by Frydenberg and Lewis (2009), self-

evaluation (i.e., reflection on how one copes), self-regulation, and perceived effectiveness of a coping strategy are key indicators for assessing coping effectiveness. So, the success of a coping strategy is influenced by internal and external mechanisms, as well as by the developmental level and needs of the individual who is attempting to cope.

Moving to a broader view, there is agreement among scholars about the coping styles that generally are effective. Researchers have shown that adaptive, constructive, problem-solving approaches tend to produce favorable outcomes and, typically, are thought to be effective. Fidan, Ceyhun, and Chirping (2011) found youths who used coping strategies such as positive cognitive reframing, adaptive coping, social support, or maintaining humor to deal with stress were less likely to suffer from suicidal ideation, whereas youths who did not use problem-focused coping strategies suffered more stress and were more likely to attempt suicide. Strategies referred to as maladaptive, nonproductive, and avoidant coping strategies (e.g., helplessness, worry, self-blame, aggression, wishful thinking, passive, and escape) are thought of being less effective coping strategies. One concern noted by Skrzypiec et al. (2011), was that although nonproductive, avoidant coping strategies neither increase nor decrease negative outcomes of a stressful situation, the lack of change may result in harm. Even though maladaptive coping strategies may temporarily ameliorate a stressful situation or event, they do not produce the long-term positive effects (Lewis & Frydenberg, 2002) necessary for a strategy to be deemed effective. With regard to adolescent bullying victims, Hampel, Manhal, and Hayer (2009) found the use of maladaptive coping strategies did not safeguard victims from the adverse psychological effects associated with bullying victimization, regardless of gender, while the use of emotion-focused and problem-

focused coping strategies did help to protect victims' psychological adjustment and wellbeing. Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) stated proactive coping—better preparing oneself to deal with anticipated or potential, stressful situations or events—is thought to be effective as long as preliminary coping efforts add to rather than tax the coping resources that support one's ability to cope. Aspinwall and Taylor also asserted that proactive coping strategies are effective to the extent that individuals can effectively build and preserve their resources (e.g., support, skills) and possess the emotional and physical capabilities to evaluate and handle stressors that arise. Given these criteria for success, a downfall to proactive methods of coping is that they may not work as well for individuals who have little or no access to personal and social resources.

Coping in Adolescence

Adolescence represents the time of significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes and challenges that occur as youths work to navigate toward adulthood. Working to develop one's sense of self, identity, increased autonomy, and relationships and support beyond the family structure are all essential tasks of adolescence (Erikson, 1968). Compas (1987) stated that what presents a challenge for youths is that they must tackle crucial developmental tasks while having to adjust to the demands of biological and neurological transformations and social and peer pressures. To add, Steinberg (2005) noted adolescents must deal with these demands during a period where conflict and stress are high and when control and regulation of affect and behavior often are difficult to achieve. Even though stress and conflict are a normal part of adolescence, and play an important function in adolescent development (Erikson, 1968), stressful situations and events that threaten youths' perceived competence, control, or sense of independence and

belonging can jeopardize healthy development and their overall wellbeing (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2008). How, and how effectively, adolescents deal with significant stress and adversity affects their adjustment, growth, and ability to transition into young adulthood (Compas, 1987; Erikson, 1968). Therefore, understanding the adolescent coping process and identifying the strategies and skills that help youths successfully adapt to life stressors play an important role in minimizing the risk of psychological, social, and health-related problems associated with unsuccessful coping (Compas, 1998).

Adolescent Stress

During early and middle adolescence, youths experience a significant increase in daily stressors (Hampel et al., 2009). According to Frydenberg (2008), stressors faced by adolescents, excluding those related to a major tragedy or death, typically fall into the categories of achievement related concerns, relationship concerns, and social issues. Some of the most common stressors and highest amounts of stress stemmed from social-related, interpersonal problems like peer conflict and bullying (Seiffge-Krenke, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2009; Williamson et al., 2003). In a study designed by Williamson et al. (2003) to develop and validate an interview instrument for assessing stressors in children and adolescents ($N = 60$; adolescents $= > 12$ years), participants reported a total of 390 events that met the inclusion criteria of being a stressful life event. Of the 20 most frequently reported events, fights or arguments at school was number 4 on the list and being bullied was number 8 (Williamson et al., 2003). Learning that bullying and social conflict were high on the list of reported stressors by adolescents provided relevance to my study and confirmed the need to better understand how youths go about coping with such situations.

Although female and male adolescents both experience stressful situations and events, Nolen-Hoeksema and Girgus (1994) found stressors reported by adolescent girls are much greater in number and differ in nature than those reported by adolescent boys. Stressors experienced by adolescent girls include concerns about physical appearance, being dissatisfied with their bodies, interpersonal relationships, social and self-imposed demands, school-related problems, and issues related to sexual abuse and harassment (Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994). In contrast, adolescent boys experience the most stress in situations that test their competence or where there is risk of failure, particularly regarding sports performance (Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994). This information mirrors the findings of a study conducted almost 25 years later. In 2012, Landstedt and Gådin conducted a cross-sectional study to investigate perceived stress in Swedish adolescents ($N = 1,633$). Data were collected through a survey method using a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire that asked participants to rate stress levels associated with various situations using a five-point scale. Landstedt and Gådin found females were more highly stressed than males, all around. The only areas in which males reported slightly more perceived stress than females were stressors related to relationships with friends and to leisure-time activities (Landstedt & Gådin, 2012). However, each of the stressors reported by participants in the studies reflected issues related to identity, autonomy, or social relationships that are central to adolescence, which indicates that there are developmental trends in the stressors experienced during adolescence.

Age and Coping

Researchers suggest that age plays a role in how individuals perceive, experience,

and adapt to stressors which, in turn, influences coping styles and future coping (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2008). Compas (2006) stated individuals' developmental levels may also determine the types of coping resources that will be available for their use, as well as the types of coping responses they can put into practice. Eacott and Frydenberg (2008) shared mid-adolescents, between the ages of 14 to 16 years, typically experience a slump in coping abilities, which Hampel and Peterman (2006) noted is often accompanied by an increase in maladaptive coping. During this time, youths are thought to be more susceptible to threats and more vulnerable to distress because they lack the evaluative and coping skills that develop in later adolescence (Ybarra et al., 2006).

In a longitudinal study, Seiffge-Krenke et al. (2009) examined perceived stress and coping styles of 200 adolescents (101 females, 99 males), ages 12 to 19 years (mean age 14.05 years at the beginning of the study), over a four-year period. The purpose of the study was to examine patterns of perceived stress and coping styles in adolescence. Data gathered on perceived stress that summed across seven different situations showed similar pattern changes. Although levels of reported stress varied according to the situation, Seiffge-Krenke et al. found perceived levels of stress were relatively fixed at higher levels during early and middle adolescence—up to age 15—and decreased during late adolescence. Regarding coping strategies, the researchers found differences in the use of active coping, internal coping, and withdrawal coping among adolescents. However, only one coping style was associated with developmental level. Seiffge-Krenke et al. found early maturing-adolescents showed a higher use of avoidance and withdrawal coping strategies (e.g., seeking emotional outlets, distraction strategies) than later-maturing adolescents.

In another study on adolescent coping strategies, Williams and McGillicuddy-De Lisi (2000) intended to clarify patterns of coping strategy use when considering age, gender, and type of stressor (i.e., daily hassles and traumatic events) simultaneously. Participants consisted of 109 students (58 females, 51 males) who were categorized as early, middle, and late adolescents by age. Mean ages (and *SDs*) for the three groups were 12.0 (9.1), 15.6 (.83), and 19.1 (1.2) years, respectively. Data were collected through self-report questionnaires, using a Likert-type rating scale. As Williams and McGillicuddy-De Lisi predicted, there were group differences in the total number and types of coping strategies used. The frequency of strategy use and the number of strategies used by youths increased with age from early to late adolescence (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000). Following a summative pattern, early adolescents tended to use mostly positive reappraisal coping strategies; middle adolescents used positive reappraisal and strategies that involved problem solving, accepting responsibility, and self-control aspects; and late adolescents used all of the aforementioned coping strategies and added seeking social support to the mix (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000). Explanations from researchers for the differences in coping by age were developmentally based. Williams and McGillicuddy-De Lisi suggested an egocentric view, lower cognitive abilities, a lack of sense of agency, and less peer support and resources inhibited coping in early adolescence, while the steady increase in frequency and number of coping strategy use with age reflected advances in complex cognitive abilities, skills, and maturity; increasing regulation behaviors; stronger social support systems; and more exposure to and experience in dealing with stressors.

There was one group of researchers, however, that revealed somewhat conflicting

findings regarding the relationship between coping styles and strategies and type of stressor. In an effort to learn more about patterns of coping strategies in children and adolescents, Donaldson, Prinstein, Danovsky, and Spirito (2000) set out to test the hypotheses that youths' coping patterns would vary by type of stressor and by age. For this study, Donaldson et al. defined coping patterns as "the use of multiple strategies" (p. 352). The sample consisted of 768 female ($n = 393$, 49.3%) and male ($n = 404$, 50.7%) children and adolescents, ages 9 to 17 years ($M = 12.35$, $SD = 2.33$). The sample was divided by age into groups of early (ages 9-11 years), middle (ages 12-14 years), and late (15-17 years) adolescents for analysis (Donaldson et al., 2000). Data collection took place through surveys in which participants reported on the coping strategies (from a list of 10 coping options provided by the researchers) that they used to deal with a self-selected problem. Donaldson et al. categorized the problems into school-, sibling-, family-, and peer-related problems. Contrary to Donaldson et al.'s first hypothesis, and to information presented by other coping researchers and theorists (see Forns et al., 2012; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987), youths' coping patterns did not vary significantly by type of stressor. Instead Donaldson et al. found all participants demonstrated similar cross-situational coping patterns across the four stressors examined. This led the Donaldson et al. to conclude that, although single strategy use may differ across situations, youths' coping patterns across situations remain relatively consistent. However, age differences and coping strategy use were consistent with previous coping research. Older participants reported coping patterns that demonstrated a wider variety of strategy use than younger participants, indicating that youths' coping behaviors increase with development and age (Donaldson et al., 2000).

Nonetheless, a proper understanding of coping in adolescence requires considering adolescent development as a piece of the puzzle. According to Compas et al. (2001), models and measures of coping developed through studies of coping in adults lack consideration of the developmental component and modifications necessary to understand adolescent coping. Additionally, Losoya, Eisenberg, and Fabes (1998) cautioned efforts to improve adolescents' coping skills may likely fall short if developmental data on coping is not considered in the process. Donaldson et al. (2000) further asserted that data on coping patterns during adolescence might be more relevant to developing effective intervention and prevention strategies than data collected on individual coping strategies alone.

The Adolescent Brain and Coping

Continuing through a developmental lens, it is important to understand the role the changing brain plays in coping. Along with the developmental shifts in cognitive functioning that affect coping, structural changes in the brain can influence how adolescents cope (Skinner & Edge, 1998). Spear (2000) asserted the stages of brain development during adolescence may contribute more to the behavioral changes seen in adolescents than the hormonal changes that accompany puberty. Steinberg (2005) described the second decade of one's life as a "period of great activity with respect to changes in the brain structure and function" (p. 69) in areas of the brain that are associated with response inhibition, goal-directed behaviors (Spear, 2000), regulation of behavior and emotion, and other executive functions that provide a foundation for coping (Compas, 2009). Biological and neurological changes during this time also heighten stress reactivity, vulnerability, and interfere with youths' abilities to solve problems

rationally (Steinberg, 2005; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2008). Such changes serve to create a period of what Hampel and Petermann (2006) described as a peak in psychological malfunctioning, which can lead to the use of maladaptive or adverse coping strategies. Because effective coping relies on higher-order cognitive function and control (e.g., planful actions, conscious thought, self- and emotion-regulation) that are dependent on brain development (Compas, 2009), younger adolescents may experience more difficulty than older adolescents in ensuring that coping attempts facilitate the outcomes they desire. Steinberg (2005) explained as the brain continues to develop, improvements in reasoning and information processing skills and abilities, as well as experience and expertise all help adolescents cope. Compas et al. (2001) also suggested that an increase in metacognitive skills representative of the developing adolescent brain provides youths with a greater range of coping responses, therefore a greater ability to cope.

Coping Styles and Strategies of Adolescents

According to Compas (1987) and Skinner and Edge (1998), adolescents' ability to cope is affected by individual differences, developmental shifts in their cognitive function, social learning, and their experience. Therefore, adolescents' preferred ways of coping, as well as the efficacy of the coping strategies youths use, will develop and evolve with the different types of stressors youths experience (Compas, 1987), as determined by the particular demands and resources that are characteristic of adolescence at each stage (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000). Despite these factors, there is evidence that prominent coping responses in adolescence exist. Researchers have shown that adolescents favor four main coping styles that fall under the overarching categories

of problem-solving, support-seeking, wishful thinking, and avoidance or distraction coping strategies (Cicognani, 2011; Donaldson et al., 2000; Halstead, Johnson, & Cunningham, 1993; Hunter & Boyle, 2004; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011), yet within these categories lies a wide range of specific coping strategies. It is important to note, that these findings do not necessarily mean that certain coping strategies are always preferable in all situations. Zimmer-Gembeck and Skinner (2008) stressed the importance of being flexible in one's coping strategy use and suggested that adolescents who rely on or use only a few or a restricted range of coping strategies may experience less success in managing problems and stress.

The general ways adolescents tend to cope can be seen in the Adolescent Coping Scale Second Edition (ACS-2; Frydenberg & Lewis, 2012). The ACS-2 includes 20 coping styles that are reflective of the behaviors adolescents have shown to use to cope with a range of stressful situations and events. The ACS-2 is based on the Adolescent Coping Scale, which is shown to have sound psychometric properties (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1996). Table 1, which I created, shows the 20 coping styles from the ACS-2 as categorized by Frydenberg & Lewis (2012).

Table 1

Coping Styles and Strategies Comprising the ACS-2

Productive coping	Nonproductive coping	Other coping
Social support	Worry	Humor
Focus on solving the problem	Wishful thinking	Seek spiritual support
Physical recreation	Not coping	
Seek relaxing diversions	Tension reduction	
Invest in close friends	Ignore the problem	

Work hard and achieve	Keep to self
Focus on the positive	Self-blame
Accept one's best efforts	Act up/Act out
Social action	
Seek professional help	

There have been a number of studies conducted on adolescent coping in an attempt to learn more about the strategies adolescents use to cope. In 1995, Copeland and Hess conducted a longitudinal study that investigated whether adolescents' reported coping strategies differed based on gender and ethnicity. Participants consisted of 244 male ($n = 118$) and female ($n = 126$) ninth grade students. The mean age of the sample was 14.4 years and the ethnic breakdown of the participants was 77.46% Anglo and 22.54% Hispanic, which was representative of the entire school population. The Copeland and Hess used a self-report, 5-point questionnaire designed to measure adolescents' coping behaviors for dealing with frustrations and problems, without regard to coping efficacy. In order of frequency, males reported using humor, physical diversion, passive diversion, self-reliance, and proactive orientation coping strategies, whereas females reported using catharsis, self-reliance, proactive orientation, humor, and positive imagery (Copeland & Hess, 1995). Copeland and Hess found Hispanic and Anglo adolescents shared three of the top five reported coping strategies (i.e., catharsis, self-reliance, humor), but the order of use between the two groups differed slightly. Copeland and Hess reported that the main differences in coping strategy use based on ethnicity were that Hispanic adolescents reported more frequent use of social strategies and passive diversions to help them cope and Anglo adolescents relied more on proactive

strategies and physical diversions. The researchers suggested gender differences in coping may reflect differences in socialization patterns of young girls and boys, as well as differences in the ways males and females typically relieve stress (Copeland & Hess, 1995). As for differences in coping based on ethnicity, Copeland and Hess could only speculate that the importance of a social support network and the large role spirituality plays among the Hispanic community may have contributed to some the differences seen in the findings.

Williams and McGillicuddy-De Lisi (2000) investigated developmental patterns in coping and also reported on the types of coping strategies adolescents used to deal with daily hassles and major life events. Williams and McGillicuddy-De Lisi found that adolescents used problem solving and positive reappraisal coping strategies the most, while distancing, confrontation, and escape-avoidance coping strategies were used the least. However, the type of strategy adolescents used depended on whether the stressor stemmed from a daily hassle or a major life event (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000). Participants reported using problem solving more often with daily hassles, while the most reported coping strategies used to deal with major life events were escape-avoidance strategies and seeking social support (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000). Washburn-Ormachea, Hillman, and Sawilowsky (2004) explored gender and gender-role orientation differences (e.g., masculine, feminine, androgynous, undifferentiated) in relation to the strategies adolescents used cope with stressful peer-related situations. The sample included a total of 285 adolescents (male = 124; 43.5% and (female = 161; 56.5%) with an average age of 14.05 years. Ethnicities represented in the study were Caucasian (89.4%), American Indian (3.5%), Asian/Pacific Islander

(2.1%), African American (1.4%), Hispanic (1.8%), and Other (1.8%). The socioeconomic make up of the participants consisted of 16 (5.8%) upper class, 65 (23.4%) upper middle class, 116 (41.7%) middle class, 78 (28.1%) lower middle class, and 3 (1.1%) lower class families. Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire with a 4-point rating scale. Through factor analysis of the data, Washburn-Ormachea et al. revealed the four main coping strategies used by participants were active coping, avoidant coping, emotion-focused coping, and acceptance. Washburn-Ormachea et al. found no significant gender differences in coping ($F = 2.36$, $df = 4.273$, $p = .054$), but differences for gender-role orientation and coping were statistically significant ($F = 4.22$, $df = 12,815$, $p = .001$) for the use of active, emotion-focused, and acceptance coping strategies.

Researchers conducting more recent studies on adolescent coping continued to produce similar results. In a cross-cultural study, Gelhaar et al. (2007) set out to compare problem-specific coping strategies and styles of 3031 European adolescents from seven nations. The sample consisted of youths, ages 11 to 20 ($M = 15.7$, $SD = 1.93$), from Germany ($n = 466$), Norway ($n = 548$), Italy ($n = 167$), Portugal ($n = 462$), Croatia ($n = 230$), the Czech Republic ($n = 563$), and Switzerland ($n = 595$). The percentages of male ($n = 1497$, 49.4%) and female ($n = 1534$, 50.6%) participants were closely balanced in each age group and in each country across all nations. Gelhaar et al. asked participants to indicate which coping strategies—from a list of 20 alternatives divided into categories of active, internal, and withdrawal coping—they normally used to deal with specific problems from eight problem domains. For example, participants might report using the strategy “I talk with the person concerned” (Gelhaar et al., 2007, p. 144) to deal with a

peer-related problem, which Gelhaar et al. indicated would fall under the category of an active coping style. Gelhaar et al. found adolescents from all seven nations demonstrated similar preferences for certain coping styles and strategies. Participants, irrespective of culture, reported using mainly active and internal coping styles and showed similar rankings of the most and least preferred coping strategies within each coping style (Gelhaar et al., 2007). Gelhaar et al. also showed support for findings previously discussed on age and coping. Age effects were found for all three coping styles. Gelhaar et al. revealed that early adolescents reported a higher use of active coping, middle adolescents used more withdrawal coping, and late adolescents reported the highest share of internal coping. (Gelhaar et al. reported that strategy use by problem domain showed all participants used low levels of active coping and high levels of withdrawal to deal with self-related stressors, high levels of active coping and low levels of withdrawal to deal with peer-related stressors, and high levels of active coping to deal with future-related problems.

To address issues of stability and consistency regarding adolescents' coping responses, Kirchner, Forns, Amador, and Muñoz (2010) conducted a longitudinal study. Participants consisted of a convenience sample of 341 Spanish adolescents (females 51%, males 49%) ages 12 to 16 ($M = 13.1$, $SD = .90$) at Time 1 of the study and ages 13 to 17 ($M = 14.6$, $SD = .89$) at Time 2 of the study. A youth coping response questionnaire was used to collect data at two different times, with a 17-month interval between Time 1 and Time 2. From the results of their longitudinal study, Kirchner et al. (2010) concluded that coping among participants remained relatively stable over time for the age group and types of stressors studied. However, with further analysis, Kirchner et al. revealed some

within-group differences. For example, Kirchner et al. found females demonstrated slightly more stability in coping overall than males. For approach coping strategies, Kirchner et al. reported females showed more stability than consistency and males showed low stability and low consistency. With regard to avoidance coping, Kirchner et al. found females demonstrated equal stability and consistency, whereas males demonstrated more stability than consistency. Kirchner et al. also showed the coping responses reported by males at Time 1 did not predict those used at Time 2. Contrastingly, Kirchner et al. learned reports of the coping strategies used by females at Time 1 predicted the strategies used at Time 2, particularly for avoidance coping strategies.

Given the findings of the studies referenced and discussed in this section, I found there to be sufficient evidence to make some general assumptions about adolescent coping. First, there are similarities in coping strategy use among adolescents. Second, coping strategy use among adolescents remains reasonably stable and consistent over time. Third, the use of certain types of coping strategies may be predictable among adolescents.

Coping with Cyberbullying

As previously discussed, Lazarus and Folkman (1987) stated the overarching goals of coping are to preserve and strengthen wellbeing, social functioning, and health. In applying these principles to cyberbullying, coping strategies should help youths manage and reduce the immediate distress, as well as prevent the negative social and psychological consequences that may stem from cyberbullying victimization. Therefore, strategies for coping with cyberbullying should help cyberbullying victims reduce the

risks associated with cyberbullying, combat the problem of cyberbullying, and provide a safeguard against the harmful effects of cyberbullying victimization (Perren et al., 2012).

Issues Specific to Coping with Cyberbullying

Some of the characteristics of cyberbullying previously discussed add to the uniqueness of dealing with cyberbullying. First, cyberbullies have access to their targets 24/7 (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Willard, 2007). Unlike traditional, face-to-face bullying, opportunities to torment the victim are not limited by time of day or location. The latest report from the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2013) on teens and technology showed 95% of teens ages 12 to 17 in the United States ($N = 802$) go online. Seventy-eight percent had a cell phone and 37% had a smartphone, which is up 23% from 2011 (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2013). One in four teens had a tablet computer (23%) and nine in ten teens (93%) owned or had access to a computer (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2013). With the high numbers of youths owning a cell phone and being connected to the Internet, cyberbullies have greater access to their targets than the traditional bullies who typically bully at school. Cyberbullying targets cannot escape their aggressor(s) by either walking away from the situation or by seeking refuge at home, so they remain vulnerable to cyberbullying attacks at most any time and place. Further, because ICTs have become a popular means of social communication among youths of the always-on generation, turning off the cell phone or shutting down the computer is not an option if they want to remain in the social loop. However, the lines of communication youths rely on for social interaction are the same channels cyberbullies use to carry out cyberbullying behaviors.

Second, due to technology, cyberbullies have an easily accessible and widespread

audience that is not always available in traditional bullying situations, as well as the potential to extend the life of cyberbullying behaviors (Slonje & Smith, 2007). For example, a vicious, threatening, or embarrassing text, comment, picture, or video can be sent to an unlimited number of recipients with the simple click of a button. Once the damaging or embarrassing material is posted publicly, it may be very difficult or nearly impossible to remove. Posted material also can be changed or altered by others to make it worse, and can be shared repeatedly. With each viewing, comes a greater threat to the victims' self-esteem and their existing social network and support (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010) and, in each instance, the victim often has little to no defense or control.

Third, because incidents of cyberbullying do not occur face-to-face, it is easier for cyberbullies to conceal their identities than for those who bully in person (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Slonje & Smith, 2008). Feeling hidden and protected not only gives cyberbullies a sense of security from which to operate, but also removes the threat of getting caught or being punished significantly (Snakenborg, Van Acker, & Gable, 2011). Cyberbullies are able to remain virtually anonymous with the help of pseudonyms, the ability to make blocked calls and send blocked texts, fake profiles, and temporary email or social networking accounts. Additionally, because cyberbullies tend to act covertly, there may be less opportunity for bystanders or concerned others to intervene or to provide support to cyberbullying victims (Slonje & Smith, 2007). Although cyberbullying victims often feel they either know or are pretty sure they know the person(s) behind the cyberbullying attacks (Juvonen & Gross, 2008), the anonymity afforded by technology makes proving the identity of the aggressor(s) more difficult.

Finally, Patchin and Hinduja (2006) noted that the lack of supervision and

controls in the cyber world give cyberbullies more (perceived) freedom and confidence to act out. Although regulations and protocols are in place to guide cyber behaviors and interactions, it is up to the individual user to comply. Not all content is viewable publicly, nor is all content monitored or censored. The content of personal electronic communications can only be viewed by the sender(s) and the recipient(s) of the message, so unless either party chooses to share the information, or the information is requested by a legal authority, the content remains private (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs [OJP], 1986). Therefore, acts of cyberbullying that take place through email and text messages or instant messaging may be difficult to detect. Hoff and Mitchell (2009) also noted technological skills and jurisdictional knowledge about authority and responsibility regarding cyberbullying can give cyberbullies an edge. Further, the privilege many youths have of using ICTs in the privacy of their room or without scrutiny from adults may enable cyberbullying behaviors. Smith et al. (2008) cautioned that this freedom may also prompt youths, who otherwise would not normally engage in cyberbullying behaviors, to cyberbully simply out of boredom or as a form of entertainment.

Current Findings on Coping with Cyberbullying

Scholars began presenting research on coping with cyberbullying around 2007, although frontrunners in the field offered some general guidance for responding to and dealing with cyberbullying earlier (see Willard, 2005; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). During my search for relevant literature on coping with cyberbullying, I found 16 studies that were published between 2007 and 2013. Only four of the researchers specifically set out to address coping strategy effectiveness for cyberbullying. Although research on coping

with cyberbullying is young, researchers from initial studies yielded information and suggestions about ways for adolescents to attempt to prevent and deal with cyberbullying. Researchers used these findings to lead to a range of discussions from basic strategies for dealing with cyberbullying to models of coping with cyberbullying that included elements of coping strategy effectiveness.

Findings from the literature. Two researchers published in 2007 provided a start to learning about coping with cyberbullying. As part of a study designed to gain a better understanding of the impact of and possible need for prevention of cyberbullying, Agatston et al. (2007) learned about some basic strategies suggested by youths to deal with cyberbullying. For this study, the researchers conducted focus group interviews with 148 middle and high school students from the southeastern United States, ages 12 to 17 years and of a diverse socioeconomic status. The focus groups were divided by gender. Although participants did not view school personnel as helpful resources for dealing with cyberbullying, youths did suggest some basic strategies to use should cyberbullying occur (Agatston et al., 2007). Youths recommended blocking the sender and ignoring the message rather than responding and encouraging retaliation (Agatston et al., 2007). None of these actions addressed the psychological aspect of coping.

Craig et al. (2007) examined what works for responding to bullying, where cyberbullying was considered a form of bullying. The researchers analyzed data from a web-based questionnaire for 1,852 Canadian children and youth ages 4 to 19 years ($M = 12.6$, $SD = 2.4$). The sample consisted of 635 boys (35%) and 1,619 girls (64%). Sixteen percent of boys and 22% of girls reported being cyberbullied (Craig et al., 2007). Participants were asked to indicate which strategies, from a list of 12 strategies, they had

attempted to use to deal with bullying. The authors referenced Lazarus and Folkman's (1987) transactional (i.e., person-situation) model of coping as a basis for the strategies presented in the questionnaire, but no further information about the strategies was found. Participants also rated the strategies for effectiveness with a scale of 1 to 3, with a 1 indicating the strategy did not work at all and a 3 indicating the strategy worked really well (Craig et al., 2007). Craig et al found that while 20% reported not doing anything to deal with the bullying, an equal percentage reported attempting only one strategy. Ten percent of the participants reported attempting two to four strategies and less than 10% attempted deal with the bullying in five or more ways (Craig et al., 2007). Craig et al. learned boys typically endorsed no strategies or one strategy ($p < 0.01$) whereas girls reported using three to six strategies ($p < 0.01$) to attempt to stop the bullying. The most reported strategy was to try to ignore the bully, which was endorsed by almost 50% of the participants (Craig et al., 2007). Craig et al. revealed that older children and youths were more likely than younger children to ignore the bullying or to not do anything to stop the bullying, $p < 0.01$. Additionally, girls were more likely to seek support from others or to tell someone and boys were more likely to use physical aggression, humor, or revenge (Craig et al., 2007). As for effectiveness, ANOVA analyses indicated girls felt getting help from others or telling someone was effective ($p < .01$) while boys considered aggression, humor, revenge, distracting the bully and ignoring the bully equally effective (Craig et al., 2007). The researchers also found the effectiveness of using aggressive strategies increased with age, $p < 0.01$. Interestingly, the bar chart Craig et al. used to present the results of strategy effectiveness showed a strategy labeled as "Other" (p. 472) was rated as the most effective strategy by both boys and girls, but the researchers did not

indicate what strategy or strategies were representative of this category.

Moving into 2008, Slonje and Smith conducted a survey study on 360 Swedish adolescents ages 12 to 20 years ($M = 15.3$). Data were collected using a modified bullying questionnaire along with comments from open-ended questions where appropriate. The only aspect of cyberbullying Slonje and Smith examined that pertained to coping was to find out whether cyberbullying victims sought others for support and, if so, from whom. The researchers showed 50% of cyberbullying victims did not tell anyone about being cyberbullied, 37% told a friend, 8.9% told a parent or guardian, and 5.4% told someone else. Slonje and Smith stated none of the respondents reported telling a teacher. Aricak et al. (2008) surveyed 269 Turkish students (134 boys and 135 girls) ages 12 to 19 years ($M = 15.06$, $SD = 1.51$) about cyberbullying and coping strategies for cyberbullying using a 21-item, multiple-choice questionnaire developed by the authors (Questionnaire of Cyberbullying [QoCB]). Aricak et al. used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Regarding coping strategies, Aricak et al. showed 40.1% of respondents knew who to seek for help in dealing with cyberbullying, but there were no specifics reported about whom participants would seek. Overall, participants reported seeking more active than passive solutions for coping with cyberbullying. Thirty-six percent reported they would block unwanted messages or the person who was bullying, 16.4% reported they would tell the person to stop harassing them, 8.1% reported changing their usernames, 15% reported telling friends, and 10% reported telling parents (Aricak et al., 2008). Aricak et al. found only 1% reported telling a teacher about being cyberbullied. Nine percent of the respondents reported ignoring the situation and 3.4% reported not telling anyone (Aricak et al., 2008).

In the United Kingdom, Smith et al. (2008) conducted two separate survey studies using anonymous, self-report questionnaires with British youths ages 11 to 16 years. Smith et al. supplemented the first study (Time 1, $N = 92$) with focus groups and used the second study (Time 2, $N = 533$) to assess the generalizability of the findings from Time 1. The sample represented a reasonable ethnic and socioeconomic mix for the London area. The researchers piloted the questionnaires to establish construct and discriminant validity. Information about coping strategies for cyberbullying was solicited in several ways. Smith et al. asked Time 1 participants whether (and whom) they told about being cyberbullied and if they thought banning cell phones or Internet use at school would help reduce cyberbullying. Smith et al. also asked Time 1 study participants for suggestions of how to stop cyberbullying. Smith et al. tested the findings from the Time 1 questionnaire with focus group interviews ($n = 47$), during which time participants were asked to discuss practical suggestions for dealing with cyberbullying. In the survey for Time 2, the researchers asked participants to choose the best ways to stop cyberbullying from a list of options. However, the authors did not indicate from where the list was derived. Smith et al. found that, collectively, the majority of participants felt little could be done to stop cyberbullying (Smith et al., 2008). The main reason participants gave for not being able to stop cyberbullying pertained to anonymity; participants stated the ability for a cyberbully to hide themselves and change their identity made it difficult to determine the identity of and to report the cyberbully (Smith et al., 2008). Smith et al. reported the strategies recommended by participants for coping with cyberbullying, in descending order, were blocking the cyberbully's identity or avoiding messages, telling someone trustworthy, changing one's email address or phone number, keeping a record

of offensive emails and texts, ignoring the situation, reporting to authorities or service providers, and asking the cyberbully to stop. Participants recommended against retaliating (Smith et al., 2008). Smith et al also found that of the participants who experienced cyberbullying, 58.6% told no one about being cyberbullied.

On a larger scale, Juvonen and Gross (2008) conducted an anonymous Web-based survey of 1,454 youths (75% female) ages 12 to 17 ($M = 15.5$, $SD = 1.47$) to investigate several aspects of cyberbullying, as well as to test some common assumptions of cyberbullying. The sample comprised 66% Caucasian, 12% African American (or African), 9% Mexican American or Latino, and 5% Asian and Asian Pacific Islander. Although all 50 states were represented in the sample, the highest proportions of participants were from California ($n = 102$) and New York ($n = 100$). Four percent of the participants reported being home-schooled (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). To learn which strategies participants relied on to help them prevent cyberbullying victimization, the Juvonen and Gross asked respondents what tactics they used to help them “avoid mean messages online” (p. 499) using an online survey. The survey allowed participants to indicate multiple responses, from a list provided, regarding their experiences with cyberbullying, as well as for the tactics they used to deal with and prevent cyberbullying. Reliance on strategies for cyberbullying prevention was reported in percentages; gender and age differences were noted only when statistically significant (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Juvonen and Gross revealed that respondents reported using one or more of the following tactics: Sixty-seven percent blocked the cyberbully, 33% restricted the cyberbully’s username from the buddy list, 26% switched their personal screen name, and 26% sent a warning to the cyberbully. As expected by Juvonen and Gross, a high

percentage (90%) of the respondents reported they did not tell adults about being cyberbullied. The most frequently checked response from the survey by participants for not telling an adult (50%) was that youths felt it was important to learn to deal with the issue themselves (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). This reasoning seems consistent with what Erickson (1968) described as a need to develop competence, independence, and control by adolescents during this stage of development. Juvonen and Gross indicated other youths did not tell out of fear of having their Internet access restricted or of getting in trouble with their parents, which was a concern that occurred significantly more among 12- to 14-year-old girls (46%) than boys (27%), $\chi^2(1, N = 282) = 8.57, p < .004$. From the findings, Juvonen and Gross concluded that only a small percentage of youths tell adults about their experiences with cyberbullying and that youths do not take full advantage of the technological strategies (e.g., blocking the aggressor, restricting buddy lists, changing screen names, sending a warning) they have available for preventing cyberbullying victimization.

The greatest number of studies related to strategies for dealing with cyberbullying was published in 2009. Mishna et al. (2009) explored cyberbullying from students' perspectives through a grounded theory approach. The only aspect pertaining to coping with cyberbullying was to investigate whether children and youths told adults about being cyberbullied. Participants included seven mixed-gender focus groups ($N = 3$ to 7 participants) with 38 students, grades 5 to 8 (17 boys, 21 girls). Mishna et al. selected a purposeful sample from a large, urban Canadian school district. The researchers learned that participants unanimously concurred that youths do not tell adults about cyberbullying. Mishna et al. reported that the reasons participants gave for not telling

were fear of losing Internet privileges or making the situation worse; wanting to deal with the issue themselves; having a lack of evidence or ways to hold the cyberbully accountable; and the belief that adults could not, or would not, help. Although this information corresponds with other research findings in the literature, Mishna et al. noted the findings were from participants' general perceptions about cyberbullying rather than their personal experiences or involvement in cyberbullying, and was a limitation of the study.

To learn what youths did after being bullied or harassed online, Staksrud and Livingstone (2009) carried out a comparative analysis of findings from two previous studies conducted in Norway, Ireland, and the United Kingdom—the SAFT (Safety, Awareness, Facts, and Tools; see Staksrud, 2005) and UKCGO (UK Children Go Online; see Livingstone & Bober, 2004). For the SAFT project, researchers initially surveyed children and youths (ages 9 to 16 years) in Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, and Sweden using a self-completion survey given in schools in 2003, then was replicated in Ireland and Norway in 2006. According to Staksrud and Livingstone, the SAFT questionnaire also informed the design of the UKCGO project, which used in-home computer-assisted interviews, along with a self-completion portion for sensitive questions, to collect data from 1,511 children and youths (ages 9 to 19 years) in the United Kingdom. For the current study, Staksrud and Livingstone reanalyzed datasets from Ireland (2006), Norway (2006), and the United Kingdom (2004), using a sample of 9- to 16-year-olds who used the Internet at least one time per week. Staksrud and Livingstone showed the most common response to online bullying or harassment was to delete the message, followed by blocking the aggressor or telling a friend. The

researchers also discovered that most strategies used by youths did not include adult involvement.

To seek information about youths' experiences with cyberbullying, Cassidy, Jackson, and Brown (2009) gathered data from 365 Canadian middle school students, ages 11 to 15 years. Approximately two-thirds of the sample was ages 13 or 14 years and in grades 8 or 9. The majority of the sample was of Asian decent (69%), with 21% identifying themselves as Caucasian, and 5% as South American or South Asian. Seventy-six percent of the participants rated themselves as being average (49%) or above average (27%) academically. Cassidy et al. labeled the section of the survey that addressed dealing with cyberbullying "Solutions to Cyberbullying" (p. 385). In the survey, Cassidy et al. included 192 close-ended questions (e.g., multiple-choice, dichotomous, categorical) and 10 open-ended questions strategically placed throughout the questionnaire. Using comparative analyses of the data, Cassidy et al. showed the most frequently identified solution for dealing with cyberbullying was telling friends ($n = 335$, 74%), followed by telling parents ($n = 330$, 57%) and telling school personnel ($n = 325$, 45%) about being cyberbullied. The least favorable solution was to seek police intervention—70% of the participants ($n = 313$) indicated they would not report to cyberbullying incidents to authorities (Cassidy et al., 2009). Almost 25% of the participants ($n = 321$) said they would not tell anyone about being cyberbullied (Cassidy et al., 2009). Cassidy et al. found that most of the reasons respondents gave for not telling adults were similar to the reasons indicated in other research studies; yet, the most common reason for not telling adults about being cyberbullied was fear of retribution from the cyberbully. A second reason Cassidy et al. revealed for not telling adults that

differed from previous studies was that participants did not want to be viewed as an “informer or a rat” (p. 392) by their peers. The three most selected solutions to the problem of cyberbullying found by Cassidy et al. (2009) were to set up anonymous phone lines for reporting (19%), to develop programs to teach students about cyberbullying and its effects (18%), and to punish students who participate in cyberbullying (11%). However, Cassidy et al. also found the suggestion of working to create positive self-esteem in students replaced punishing the cyberbully when the suggestions of setting up anonymous reporting and teaching students about cyberbullying and its effects were combined

A mixed-method study on undergraduate students conducted by Hoff and Mitchell (2009) took place over a 2006-2007 academic school year. Hoff and Mitchell included exploring students’ responses to cyberbullying as one purpose of the study. To do this, Hoff and Mitchell surveyed a total of 351 first and second year undergraduate students (females: $n = 212$, 60%; males: $n = 139$, 40%) from a New England research university. The mean age of the students was 19.9 years. Hoff and Mitchell collected data, in person, using a survey questionnaire asking participants to report on pre-college experiences with cyberbullying. The survey contained limited choice questions, scaled response items scored on a 10-point Likert-type scale, and open-ended questions for obtaining qualitative data. Although 65.3% of the participants reported believing the cyberbullying would stop on its own, Hoff and Mitchell noted participants also reported that not doing anything about being cyberbullied allowed the situation to escalate, often to dangerous or damaging levels. Hoff and Mitchell found participants who did attempt to counter and stop cyberbullying attacks reported changing their email and screen name,

staying off line, sending mean messages back, and threatening or physically assaulting the cyberbully. Overall, females reported using more passive and verbally retaliatory strategies, whereas males indicated taking a more active and physically retaliatory approach (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). As for reporting behaviors, Hoff and Mitchell shared that while only 35.9% of respondents indicated reporting cyberbullying to parents, an even smaller number (16.7%) reported being cyberbullied to school officials.

In a study using focus group interviews with 74 Australian students, ages 10 to 17 years, Stacey (2009) investigated how students coped with issues of cybersafety and cyberbullying. Participants were divided into three age groups (younger 10-13 years; middle 13-15 years; older 16-17 years) and separated into nine discussion groups. Stacey presented discussion group starter questions related to coping with cyberbullying prompt students to share their ideas for stopping or preventing cyberbullying and about what kids could do to protect themselves from cyberbullying. According to Stacey younger participants suggested individual strategies such as blocking or tracing the cyberbully online, though their preference was to develop peer group efforts to eliminate cyberbullying. Participants in the middle group reported they preferred to deal with the issue themselves, but they would solicit help from peers if needed, and all participants in the middle group agreed Internet education would be of value (Stacey, 2009). Stacey found older participants were less reactive to cyberbullying attacks and preferred to talk to others in person before taking other actions. The older group also felt better education about the Internet and privacy, as well as providing more positive support were helpful for stopping and preventing cyberbullying (Stacey, 2009). Stacey also learned that participants did not feel banning or restricting Internet use or punishing cyberbullies

should occur (Stacey, 2009). These findings are consistent with some of the previous research findings from Gelhaar et al. (2007) and Williams and McGillicuddy-De Lisi (2000) that I discussed earlier in this review on age and coping.

To find out about coping strategies victims of bullying and cyberbullying used to deal with being bullied other than telling adults, Reibel et al. (2009) surveyed 1,987 German students (64.3% female, 35.7% male), ages 6 to 19 years ($M = 13$, $SD = 2$). The researchers developed an online questionnaire that used a 4-point Likert scale to examine how students reacted to incidents of bullying, with cyberbullying being treated as one of three subcategories of bullying--physical bullying, verbal bullying, and cyberbullying. The reason Reibel et al. gave for having to create the questionnaire for the study was that no established instrument for the assessment of cyberbullying existed. The items Reibel et al. used to assess responses to physical and verbal bullying were identical and came from an already established bullying questionnaire developed for previous research conducted in Germany by Jäger and Jäger (1996) that I could not locate in the literature. To assess reactions to cyberbullying, the researchers modified the instrument by replacing coping strategies that would not likely work in cyberspace with strategies that were specifically geared to dealing with cyberbullying (see Willard, 2006). In exploratory factor analysis of the item responses, Reibel et al. revealed several factors that best fit the data. Reibel et al. found solutions for physical bullying and verbal bullying resulted in the same four factors: aggressive (e.g., insult or threaten the aggressor, retaliation), helpless (e.g., crying, not knowing what to do), cognitive (e.g., using reason, problem-solving, attempting to deal with oneself), and social (e.g., seeking help from others, using social resources) coping. Although the Reibel et al. showed

similarities between coping with physical and verbal bullying and cyberbullying for aggressive, cognitive, and helpless coping scales, the researchers also revealed a factor called technical coping (e.g., turn off computer, change email or screen name, restrict access) replaced the factor of social coping for coping with cyberbullying. Reported methods for coping with cyberbullying included turning off the computer, changing email or usernames, engaging in verbal or physical retaliation, threatening, crying or not knowing what to do, wondering why it is happening, or asking or begging the cyberbully to stop (Reibel et al., 2009). However, Reibel et al. noted that responses from the majority of the participants were based on hypothetical situations—not experience—and the researchers did not learn which strategies were effective for helping to reduce the negative emotions associated with cyberbullying or for avoiding further incidents of cyberbullying.

The final study I reviewed from 2009 did include findings on strategy effectiveness, albeit the focus was on cyberbullying prevention strategies. One purpose of the study was to measure the perceived effectiveness of the 14 strategies the researchers presented in the study. Kraft and Wang selected the 14 strategies from the literature, state regulations, and anti-bullying programs designed for schools. Kraft and Wang used a nationwide, online survey to collect data from 713 middle school and high school students throughout the United States, minus Hawaii and Vermont. No more than 10% of the participants were from any one state; the sample was representative in terms of race, household income, and gender of the 2000 census data (Kraft & Wang, 2009). Kraft and Wang divided the sample into four groups consisting of victim ($n = 60$); offender ($n = 61$); offender-victim ($n = 289$); and neither-offender-nor-victim ($n = 303$)

based on respondents' self-reports of their involvement in cyberbullying. Strategies assessed incorporated punitive and restorative measures and ongoing cyberbullying prevention. Of the 39 questions on the survey, Kraft and Wang asked respondents nine questions about their views on prevention strategies for cyberbullying. A professional market research firm recruited participants and collected the data. Using single regression analyses, Kraft and Wang showed views of strategy effectiveness varied significantly for eight of the 14 strategies examined among the four groups. Victims of cyberbullying tended to rate the effectiveness of the strategies examined higher than cyberbullies, $p \leq 0.056$ (Kraft & Wang, 2009). Kraft and Wang found that taking away or restricting cyberbullies' Internet and technology use were the only strategies all participants perceived to be effective measures. Victims rated taking away extra curricular activities, doing a presentation about cyberbullying, and attending Saturday netiquette classes as effective strategies for deterring cyberbullying (Kraft & Wang, 2009). Kraft and Wang reported strategies cyberbullies viewed as effective included restricting Internet and technology use, setting clear rules with enforced consequences, and having ongoing cyberbullying prevention programs. Kraft and Wang also learned that cyberbullies viewed penalties that affected their time or money as ineffective, whereas victims viewed such strategies as effective.

There were two relevant studies published in 2010. Price and Dalglish (2010) conducted a mixed-method, online study designed to investigate the cyberbullying experiences of Australian youth. The sample consisted of 548 self-identified cyberbullying victims less than 25 years of age (101 males, 447 females), with the majority of the participants being 10 to 14 years (50%) and 15 to 18 years (42%) of age.

Price and Dalglish designed a survey instrument that consisted of 18 web-based questions—16 quantitative questions and two qualitative questions. Price and Dalglish measured strategy use and perceived effectiveness with a usage indicator and a 3-point scale that first asked participants to indicate which strategy (or strategies) they had used and then to rate its effectiveness. Qualitative measures Price and Dalglish used to explore coping strategy effectiveness asked participants what advice they would give to a friend experiencing cyberbullying. The researchers showed most participants had tried several strategies, $M = 2.80$. Key themes Price and Dalglish identified in the strategies participants reported using to cope with cyberbullying included speaking out, ignoring, avoiding, being positive, and retaliating. Examples of the strategies victims used were (a) blocking or deleting the aggressor, (b) changing their personal contact information, (c) staying offline, (d) telling someone, (e) retaliating, (f) doing nothing, and (g) confronting the cyberbully, in order of reported effectiveness (Price & Dalglish, 2010). Although telling someone about being cyberbullied was a recommended strategy, over 25% of victims did not speak out about being cyberbullied (Price & Dalglish, 2010). Price and Dalglish asserted that this finding indicated a possible contradiction between what victims report is effective and what they may actually do.

A study conducted by Li (2010) was one of the first studies I found that not only aimed to present information about dealing with cyberbullying, but also clearly discussed a theoretical framework for the study. Guided by the theoretical perspectives of the dynamic systems theory and the theory of reasoned action, Li set out to examine what happened after students were cyberbullied. Li expressed a special interest in learning specifically what cyberbullying victims and bystanders did in response to cyberbullying

incidents. Due to the limited amount of available measures for assessing issues related to cyberbullying, Li designed the survey instrument for the study. Li used expert suggestions for dealing with cyberbullying (Willard, 2007), her previous research on cyberbullying, the theoretical framework for the study, and existing literature to inform the design. Li collected data from 269 Canadian students ($n = 148$ males, $n = 101$ females, $n = 20$ did not specify), grades 7 to 12, from randomly selected classes with a self-report questionnaire. Data analysis for this study consisted of only a preliminary analysis using descriptive statistics (Li, 2010). Li showed students reacted in the following ways to being cyberbullied: They did nothing (42.5%), removed themselves from the cyberbully (40.9%), told a friend (23.5%), told the cyberbully to stop (22.7%), told an adult (11.7%), cyberbullied someone else (3.6%), and bullied someone else (2.4%), in order of percentages reported. Although the findings were limited, Li showed that the majority of cyberbullying victims choose not to report cyberbullying. Instead, Li found victims either attempted to avoid the issue or to deal with it on their own—each of which can be problematic for the victim who lacks the proper knowledge and support to handle the issue successfully.

A shift took place in the literature on coping with cyberbullying starting in 2011. Although published studies in this area were fewer than in previous years, researchers employed more qualitative methodologies to provide more in-depth knowledge about the topic, as well as clearly framed their studies with coping models and theory. In an ethnographic study designed by Parris et al. (2012), the researchers set out to expand on previous research on cyberbullying by learning what coping strategies students used following a cyberbullying incident and what coping mechanisms students reported as

preventative strategies for cyberbullying. Parris et al. conducted the study in a suburban high school located in the southeastern region of the United States. Participants' ages were between 15 and 19 years ($M = 17.5$, $SD = 1.05$) and the sample ($N = 20$) included 40% African American ($n = 8$), 30% White ($n = 6$), 15% Hispanic ($n = 3$), 5% Asian ($n = 1$), 5% Middle Eastern ($n = 1$), and 5% Trinidadian ($n = 1$) youths (Parris et al., 2012). Parris et al. used two theories of coping—the approach-avoidance model (see Roth & Cohen, 1986) and the transactional model (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1987)—to provide a reference point for coping, in general; for coping with cyberbullying, in particular; to help categorize and explain the data; and to assess whether traditional coping models adequately explain coping with cyberbullying. Data were collected using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions; the researchers provided probes when needed and as appropriate. Parris et al. coded the data into three Level 1 themes with Level 2 subcodes reflecting the ways students reported for coping with cyberbullying. The first Level 1 theme was reactive coping strategies, which included four Level 2 subcodes of avoidance, acceptance, justification, seeking social support (Parris et al., 2012). The second Level 1 theme was preventative coping strategies, which included the Level 2 subcodes of talk in person and increased security or awareness (Parris et al., 2012). The third Level 1 theme was no way to prevent cyberbullying and did not include any subcodes (Parris et al., 2012). To add clarity to the results, Parris et al. used quotes from participants to provide examples while describing each theme and subcode. The researchers' discussion then focused on how, and whether, the reported coping strategies from the current study fit into and could be explained by existing models of coping

Parris et al. noted the findings of their study supported previous findings that

youths often use avoidance strategies (e.g., deleting or blocking messages) over other types of coping strategies for dealing with cyberbullying. Parris et al. also stated an important contribution of their study was to identify coping strategies (e.g., acceptance, justification, talk in person) that had not been reported in previous cyberbullying research. However, as I discussed earlier, Smith et al. (2008) did present the strategy of asking the cyberbully to stop in their results. Stacey (2009) and Riebel et al. (2009) also reported that talking to others in person to clarify intent before reacting and confronting the bully, if known, were strategies suggested by participants. Additionally, victims in the Price and Dalglish (2010) study suggested confronting the bully as a coping strategy, as well as doing nothing, which may qualify as a form of acceptance. Therefore, justification—strategies used to cognitively reframe cyberbullying to remove negative attributes from cyberbullying or from the cyberbullying victim or to rationalize why victims of cyberbullying should not suffer distress presented by Parris et al.—is the only strategy that was not found in the literature I reviewed for this study. The results of the Parris et al. also indicated students may not report cyberbullying because they do not believe adults can help. Parris et al. asserted that this finding, along with reports by many participants that nothing could be done to reduce cyberbullying, suggests a need to increase youths' knowledge of strategies and resources for dealing with cyberbullying incidents.

With similar goals to Parris et al. (2012), Šleglova and Cerna (2011) aimed to gain a greater understanding of cyberbullying and coping with cyberbullying from adolescent victims' perspectives by employing a grounded theory approach. For this study, the researchers incorporated one of the coping theories also used by Parris et al. in

their study (i.e., approach-avoidance coping), along with problem-focused versus emotion-focused coping (see Folkman & Lazarus, 1987), to help frame the study and to discuss the results. Data were obtained through semistructured interviews with 15 adolescent females ($n = 13$) and males ($n = 2$), ages 14 to 18 years, from the Czech Republic. Šleglova and Cerna assessed participants as either previous or current victims of cyberbullying. Interviews were conducted online through realtime chat. Although the interviews focused on cyberbullying in general, Šleglova and Cerna narrowed the focus of their study to the impact of and coping strategies for cyberbullying, which the researchers noted emerged as strong categories during the interviews. Šleglova and Cerna revealed that the coping strategies participants developed to deal with cyberbullying, based on their experience, fell into the categories of (a) technical defense; (b) activity directed at the aggressor; (c) avoidance; (d) defensive strategies, to include diversion tactics; and (e) and social support. Technical defense included strategies to restrict communication from the cyberbully, such as blocking the aggressor, changing personal accounts or usernames, contacting service providers for help, and reporting the cyberbully to administrators (Šleglova & Cerna, 2011). Activity directed at the aggressor involved threatening to report the cyberbully to authorities, communicating with the aggressor from a defensive or authoritative standpoint, or using some form of direct or hidden aggression to cope with the situation (Šleglova & Cerna, 2011). Šleglova and Cerna reported avoiding stressful situations took the forms of not responding or reacting; not answering the phone or hanging up; deleting, temporarily disabling, or staying away from the site where the cyberbullying was occurring; creating a new account; waiting it out; and not thinking about the problem. Defensive strategies and diversion tactics that

participants reported were excessive eating and engaging in hobbies or sports (Šleglova & Cerna, 2011). Šleglova and Cerna noted a second aspect of defensive strategies was personal psychological help, for which participants reported making efforts to put themselves in safe, comfortable situations and social environments or to trivialize and generalize the cyberbullying. I found it important to note here that trivializing and generalizing align with the newly identified coping strategy of justification by Parris et al. whose study, although not published until 2012, was carried out prior to this study. Finally, coping strategies Šleglova and Cerna categorized as social support consisted of confiding in others and receiving positive feedback or reassurance, receiving psychological support, mutual sharing of negative experiences, making fun of the situation or the cyberbully, and having someone intervene to help the situation. Five of the 15 respondents also indicated not telling anyone about being cyberbullied out of not wanting to burden or worry others, fear that others would not understand or overreact, guilt, or wanting to deal with the issue themselves. Even though one of the most frequently reported coping mechanisms for cyberbullying by respondents was using technical coping strategies, Šleglova and Cerna found that technical strategies often did not serve to end cyberbullying attacks or were inadequate. Overall, the coping strategies victims used to deal with cyberbullying varied, which Šleglova and Cerna suggested likely was influenced by the context of the cyberbullying, as well as the victims' personal traits and development.

Völlink et al. (2013) conducted a cross-sectional study of 325 seventh grade girls (53%) and boys (47.7%), ages 11 ($n = 163$; 50.2%) or 12 years ($n = 162$; 49.8%), from the Netherlands. Völlink et al. investigated the relationship between the ways

adolescents ($n = 325$) cope with general, daily stressors and the ways adolescent victims of cyberbullying ($n = 88$) cope with cyberbullying. Like Parris et al. (2012) and Šleglova and Cerna (2011), Völlink et al. used the approach-avoidance and problem-focused versus emotion-focused coping models to frame the study and for predicting coping strategy use and outcomes for dealing with cyberbullying. Völlink et al. modified a general coping scale to create a 26-item, 4-point scale to measure coping with cyberbullying that the researchers evaluated and pilot tested for appropriateness. Data were collected through mail-out surveys sent to and completed by students in three secondary schools (Völlink et al., 2013). In ANOVA and correlation analyses Völlink et al. showed cyberbullying victims scored highest on the use of depressive (i.e., emotion-focused) coping, such as feeling upset afraid, or angry, internalizing problems; and feeling worthless or powerless than non-victims of cyberbullying ($F[2, 294] = 15.96, p = 0.000; r = 0.69, p = 0.000$). However, Völlink et al. found no significant differences in the participants' use of problem-focused, avoidance, or optimistic coping styles.

Lastly, Machackova et al. (2013) conducted a quantitative study that most closely represents the aims my study. In the Machackova et al. study, which was part of a larger research project, the researchers aimed to examine the strategies victims of cyberbullying and online harassment used most often to cope with cyberbullying, as well as the effectiveness of the strategies victims used in terms of stopping and buffering the negative effects of the online victimization. The sample for the study ($N = 422; M$ age = 15.27, $SD = 1.84$; 68% females) consisted of a subsample of a random sample of Czech youths ($N = 2,092$), aged 12 to 18 years ($M = 15.1, SD = 1.86$; 54.7% females), who reported experiencing cyberbullying. Machackova et al. stated the purpose of examining

the subsample was to compare coping strategy use and coping strategy effectiveness between youths who experienced severe and long-term online victimization ($n = 115$) and less severe online harassment ($n = 307$). Data for the study came from anonymous online questionnaires filled out by the aforementioned random sample of Czech youths in 2011-2012, some of whom experienced cyberbullying in differing forms and intensity.

Machackova et al. developed the survey instrument to include a definition of cyberbullying; demographic questions about gender and age; questions about the type, duration, and severity of youths' cyberbullying experiences; and 26 coping strategies for either dealing with or stopping cyberbullying victimization. Machackova et al. drew the strategies they used in the survey from existing literature and current discussions on general coping strategy models, as well as on coping with cyberbullying. The researchers categorized the strategies into technological coping, reframing, ignoring, dissociation, cognitive avoidance, behavioral avoidance, seeking support, confrontation, and retaliation. Although Machackova et al. developed the survey partly from coping models and theory (e.g., problem-focused versus emotion-focused coping, adaptive versus non-adaptive coping, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral coping), the researchers had no intention of labeling or identifying reported strategies as such in the findings.

In statistical analyses comparing the two groups (i.e., victims of cyberbullying and victims of online harassment) Machackova et al. found no significant differences in age, $t(420) = -1.271, p = .205$, or the number of coping strategies (around 10 strategies for both groups) employed, $t(420) = -.194, p = .846$. However, Machackova et al. uncovered a significant difference in gender ($\chi^2(1, N = 422) = 31.807, p < .000$; $Phi = .27, p < .000$), with more girls than boys experiencing cyberbullying victimization.

Although both groups used a similar number of coping strategies, Machackova et al. discovered strategy selection, use, and reported effectiveness differed between groups. Machackova et al. learned victims of cyberbullying most often reported using (and found more effective) technical coping (e.g., deleting or blocking the aggressor, changing privacy settings), cognitive and behavioral avoidance (e.g., focus on something else, stay away from the aggressor or the site(s) where the attacks took place), seeking support, and confronting the aggressor. Contrastingly, Machackova et al. found victims of online harassment reported using (and found more effective) cognitive reframing (e.g., downplaying the situation, taking the situation lightly), ignoring, and dissociation (e.g., separating what happens online from reality or real life) along with technical coping, seeking support, and retaliation or confrontation. Considering the findings, Machackova et al. concluded that patterns of coping strategy use and their reported effectiveness did not fall into previously regarded categories of coping behaviors and suggested that strategies that may work to cope with online harassment may not be equally effective for coping with cyberbullying victimization.

Recommendations from experts. In addition to the information about coping with cyberbullying found in the research, suggestions for dealing with and preventing cyberbullying from experts in the field exist. Although numerous organizations and experts offer advice and guidance for coping with cyberbullying, the guidelines presented either follow or reference those provided by Willard (2007) and Hinduja and Patchin (2012a; 2012b). To deal with and prevent cyberbullying victimization, Willard suggested that youths should

- not share information or images that can be used against them;

- communicate with others in a kind manner;
- interact with individuals who are friendly and positive;
- refrain from retaliating or bullying back;
- save the evidence as proof, but refrain from reviewing it repeatedly as this can make reactions worse;
- tell an adult or ask for adult guidance;
- tell the cyberbully to stop or ignore the cyberbully; or
- file a complaint or report the cyberbully to someone who can help.

Hinduja and Patchin recommended that youths should

- educate themselves on and develop an awareness of cyberbullying;
- safeguard passwords, personal information, privacy, and account information from others;
- keep messages and images appropriate for all audiences;
- avoid messages, links, or invitations from unfamiliar individuals;
- monitor personal information or images that others have access to online;
- use online etiquette (i.e., netiquette);
- talk about the problem with others they trust;
- ignore or block the cyberbully, tell the cyberbully to stop, and try to maintain good humor and laugh off the situation;
- never retaliate or pass on hurtful or embarrassing content; or
- save the evidence and report the cyberbully to the appropriate authorities.

As I have demonstrated through the existing research and literature I presented in

this section, although researchers have gained knowledge about coping with cyberbullying, most of the researchers produced the same or similar results. Nonetheless, the sequence of literature I presented shows progression in the field, especially starting with Riebel et al. (2009) and Price and Dalgleish (2010) who included a qualitative component to their inquires. Additionally, researchers' recommendations for future research, such as those from Riebel et al., Price and Dalgleish, Parris et al. (2012), Šleglova and Cerna (2011), and Machackova et al. (2013), support the need for a more in-depth study of coping with cyberbullying, with a focus on learning what works to manage and overcome cyberbullying from cyberbullying victims' points of view. Accordingly, this is the gap in the research I intended to address.

Table 2 presents a summary of the findings for coping with cyberbullying from the studies I discussed in this section. The order of the strategies listed does not indicate any particular significance regarding use or effectiveness. Certain strategies appear under both categories (i.e., strategies suggested or used to cope with cyberbullying and strategies not suggested or not used to cope with cyberbullying), which demonstrates that there is some conflicting information about coping with cyberbullying in the literature.

Table 2

Summary of Findings on Coping With Cyberbullying From Previous Studies

Strategies suggested or used	Strategies not suggested or not used
Block or delete the cyberbully	Tell an adult
Block or delete unwanted messages	Restrict or ban internet use
Change account information or username	Report to authorities or administrators
Avoid the cyberbully	Search for advice online
Stay offline	Respond to the cyberbully or retaliate
Tell a friend, parent, or adult	Punish the cyberbully
Warn, confront, or retaliate against the cyberbully	
Tell, ask, or beg the cyberbully to stop	
Report to authorities or service providers	
Seek social support	
Seek psychological support	
Find diversions	
Depreciate the aggressor	
Trivialize or make fun of the situation	
Trace the cyberbully online	
Punish or restrict the cyberbully	
Provide internet and privacy education	
Cyberbullying prevention programs	
Deal with the issue oneself	
Do nothing, cry, wonder why	
Cyberbully someone else	

Review of Previous Methodological Approaches for Studying Coping with Cyberbullying

Most of the existing research on cyberbullying consists of descriptive research studies that serve to describe the phenomenon of cyberbullying. In looking at these

studies, I noticed that they appear to be fundamental research aimed at gathering knowledge to inform practice or to evaluate or develop theory. The focus of the studies I reviewed included defining cyberbullying, measuring frequencies (e.g., frequency of cyberbullying, types of cyberbullying experienced, reporting behaviors, coping styles and coping strategy use), and evaluating or developing theory for use in cyberbullying research. The majority of the researchers used survey or questionnaire methods to collect data. Often, the researchers designed surveys and questionnaires for the purpose of their study, which frequently entailed modifying existing measures to fit the needs of their particular inquiry. Only a small number of researchers employed interview techniques. However, researchers who conducted interview studies tended to address more the what of coping with cyberbullying, and reported on either what happened or what was happening regarding coping with cyberbullying. Few researchers provided information to expand the current knowledge of coping with cyberbullying.

Quantitative Versus Qualitative Methods

As I noted previously, in the majority of the research published on coping with cyberbullying the researchers used quantitative research methods. Although a handful of researchers included qualitative open-ended questions as part of their inquiry (see Cassidy et al, 2009; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Smith et al., 2008), qualitative studies were almost nonexistent in early cyberbullying research. Using quantitative or mixed-method approaches, researchers were able to learn information about the ways youths attempted to manage and overcome cyberbullying (see Aricak et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Kraft & Wang, 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al.,

2008). However, as the coping strategies examined often were limited to tactics presented by the researchers and because many of the researchers focused on either frequency of coping strategy use or youths' reporting behaviors for cyberbullying victimization, the findings were limited to producing a general understanding of coping with cyberbullying.

Qualitative researchers began increasing their contributions to the literature as they sought to gain a greater understanding of cyberbullying and further insight into the issues surrounding cyberbullying. In early qualitative studies on coping with cyberbullying, researchers attempted to add depth to the knowledge garnered through quantitative methods studies by giving voice to research study participants and by learning from respondents' own experiences within the context of the problem under investigation (see Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2007; Spears et al., 2009; Stacey, 2009). Even so, none of these researchers focused on finding out how youths, in their own right, set out to cope with cyberbullying, nor were any of the researchers' questions geared to find out such information.

As the field of study evolved, qualitative researchers began stressing the importance of conducting studies that included considering the perspectives of youths who were involved in or affected by cyberbullying victimization. Mishna et al. (2009), Parris et al. (2012), and Šleglova and Cerna (2011) each took this approach by using grounded theory or ethnographic designs with either focus group or individual, semistructured interviews to collect data. In each case, the researchers asserted the strength of their chosen methodologies was the ability to provide a more comprehensive understanding of coping with cyberbullying by learning about the topic from the

particular stories, experiences, and perspectives of youths, themselves. The outcomes were that the researchers were able to explore aspects of coping with cyberbullying that were difficult to achieve through quantitative method studies.

However, there were some limitations to these studies, along with suggestions for future research, that warrant conducting this dissertation study. A limitation to the Mishna et al. (2009) study was that the researchers did not collect data about participants' own experiences or involvement in cyberbullying. Instead, Mishna et al. elicited information from participants about cyberbullying, in general, and about the cyberbullying experiences of peers. Parris et al. (2012) also noted that a limitation of their study was the inclusion of youths who were not actual victims of cyberbullying in the sample. Paris et al. explained that including individuals who did not experience cyberbullying victimization first hand meant some of the coping strategies reported by study participants were either based on others' experiences or on hypothetical situations. In addition, Parris et al. did not conduct member checking or use some other strategy to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Šleglova and Cerna (2011) felt the lack of a clear concept of cyberbullying was a limitation. Šleglova and Cerna noted they were "working with cyberbullying as a fluid term" (p. 15) and cautioned that, until cyberbullying was clearly conceptualized, their results might be "used, read, and interpreted differently" (p. 15). Machackova et al. (2013) noted some limitations of their study were the use of cross-sectional data and the lack of ability to control for gender differences of victims—females were more heavily represented in cyberbullying victimization than males. As a result, Machackova et al. emphasized the importance of interviewing actual victims of cyberbullying to learn about the perceived effectiveness of the coping strategies they used

given the context of the cyberbullying experience. As each of the researchers from these studies stressed the need to learn more about the success and effectiveness of the different coping strategies actual victims of cyberbullying used to manage and overcome cyberbullying victimization, this is what I intended to accomplish.

Use of Theory and Frameworks

Because the study of coping with cyberbullying is new, theory and clear conceptual frameworks for studies in this area are underdeveloped. Although many of the researchers who conducted the existing studies on coping with cyberbullying lacked theoretical frameworks completely, some researchers drew from the theoretical perspectives of associated concepts (e.g., coping) to frame their studies. As a result, theories related to coping models and coping strategy use emerged as the most widely used framework for studying coping with cyberbullying. Additionally, traces of psychosocial development theory and social cognitive theory emerged as part of the frameworks researchers used to study cyberbullying as well.

Coping theory. For each of the studies I found in the literature related to coping with cyberbullying where the researchers used coping theory or coping models as a framework to guide their inquiry or analyses, the researchers opted to apply some form of either the transactional model of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) or the approach-avoidance model of coping (Roth & Cohen, 1986).

In a study where Hampel et al. (2009) investigated coping with different forms of bullying victimization, the researchers used emotion-focused, problem-focused, and maladaptive coping strategies as a framework for statistically examining the effects of direct and relational bullying victimization on coping and psychological adjustment

among children and adolescents. Hampel et al. justified their choice of coping model use by the similarities between cyberbullying victimization and relational bullying victimization. Using MANOVA and univariate ANOVA procedures, Hampel et al. were able to evaluate and explain group differences in coping strategy use and subsequent psychological adjustment. In a qualitative portion of a mixed-method study, Hoff and Mitchell (2009), who aimed to learn about youths' responses to cyberbullying, applied an offshoot of the transactional model of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) and the approach-avoidance coping model (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Using what the researchers categorized as active, passive, and retaliatory behaviors, Hoff and Mitchell evaluated participants' reactive behaviors to cyberbullying victimization.

Parris et al. (2012), who qualitatively investigated high school students' perceptions of coping with cyberbullying, noted using current coping theories (i.e., Lazarus and Folkman's (1987) transactional model of coping and Roth and Cohen's (1986) approach-avoidance coping model to interpret the findings of their study. However, during their analysis of the data, Parris et al. found some of the coping strategies for dealing with cyberbullying reported by study participants were not adequately explained by existing models of coping. To resolve the issue, the researchers adapted the models to fit their data. According to the Parris et al., this lack of fit also demonstrated a possible need for a new model of coping for studies of cyberbullying.

In a subsequent qualitative study, Šleglova and Cerna (2011) who explored the coping strategies chosen by adolescent cyberbullying victims to deal with cyberbullying, also referenced using the transactional and approach-avoidance models of coping as a means to analyze and understand their data. Yet, like Parris et al. (2012), Šleglova and

Cerna questioned the suitability of these models to effectively explain coping with cyberbullying. Even though there is argument for the usefulness of the transactional and approach-avoidance models of coping for understanding coping with bullying (see Hunter & Boyle, 2004), Parris et al. and Šleglova and Cerna explained the coping strategies used by victims to deal with cyberbullying did not always fit into coping categories representative of these existing coping models. Thus, traditional coping models may serve as a valuable framework for learning more about coping with cyberbullying as long as the interpretation of data is not limited by the use of predetermined, general coping categories.

Developmental theory. During my literature search I found a few researchers who examined coping through a developmental lens. In conjunction with Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of coping, Seiffge-Krenke et al. (2009) employed aspects of Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory of development (e.g., negotiating peer and family relationships, development of identity and self, development of independence, feelings of autonomy and control) to inform their research questions and to predict the use of and changes in coping styles and coping outcomes during adolescence. However, the remainder of the studies I found where the researchers investigated developmental changes in coping did so by examining variances in coping patterns and coping strategy use (e.g., problem-focused coping versus emotion-focused coping, approach-avoidance coping, cognitive coping) by age (see Donaldson et al., 2000; Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000). With this format, the researchers' focus reverted to the use of coping models rather than developmental theory as a framework to study changes in coping behaviors. To add, neither Donaldson et al. (2000) or Williams and McGillicuddy-De

Lisi (2000) studied coping with bullying or cyberbullying victimization, though Donaldson et al. assessed somewhat similar issues of coping with school- and peer-related stressors.

Social cognitive theory. Although smaller in number, there were researchers that applied social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 2001) as a theoretical framework for research related to coping with cyberbullying. deLara (2008), who conducted a study of high school students' reactions to bullying victimization and sexual harassment, applied SCT in several fashions. First, deLara used SCT as a framework for looking at the ways adolescents processed social encounters, which, for this study, meant examining the matters of social acceptance and exclusion associated with bullying. Additionally, deLara used SCT as an underpinning for examining students' perceptions of what constituted bullying and harassment and for how students' past experiences and knowledge influenced their behaviors for dealing with incidents of bullying.

For a multifaceted inquiry into adolescent coping, Cicognani (2011) applied a more specific aspect of SCT (i.e., self-efficacy) to help frame the study. For this study, Cicognani hypothesized that youths' personal coping resources, one of which was self-efficacy beliefs, would influence their coping styles and strategy use (e.g., active coping strategies, internal coping, withdrawal). As such, Cicognani used the concept of self-efficacy to help assess the relationships between coping resources and the specific coping styles and strategies youths employed for dealing with daily stressors.

My final example of a researcher who incorporated self-efficacy into a study of coping requires a statement of disclosure before discussion. A university student at a nationally recognized and accredited private liberal arts college located in the

northeastern United States conducted this particular research inquiry. Although the researcher conducted under the direction of a faculty advisor, and published the study in the university's social sciences journal, I did not find any information about whether the study was peer-reviewed. However, I decided to include the study based on the value of seeing another example of, as well as on hearing the researcher's rationale for selecting the concept of self-efficacy to help frame the study. According to Hamill (2003) self-efficacy facilitates the development of adaptive coping mechanisms, thus self-efficacious beliefs are important to adaptive coping. As a result, Hamill focused on self-efficacy and perceived self-efficacy beliefs to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and coping responses of resilient and competent adolescents when dealing with adversity. In doing so, Hamill hoped to learn about the coping strategies youths use to successfully navigate the difficulties of daily life.

I presented and discussed the research studies in this section to inform and to provide support for the methodological and theoretical frameworks I considered for my study. Based on previous studies, I decided a qualitative study would allow me the flexibility and opportunity to develop a richer understanding of the complexities associated with coping with cyberbullying that a quantitative study design does not afford. Although the transactional model of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) and approach-avoidance coping (Roth & Cohen, 1986) may not serve to adequately explain adolescents' coping behaviors for coping with cyberbullying, they provide a solid, starting theoretical framework for guiding the inquiry and analyzing the data. Elements of Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory of development can be used to inform the research questions and to make sure they are developmentally appropriate for the targeted

group of study. As well, the concept of efficacy beliefs drawn from Bandura's (2001) SCT can add a necessary element for evaluating and explaining coping strategy effectiveness.

Summary and Transition to Chapter 3

Researchers' efforts to learn about and address cyberbullying have increased over the past decade. However, the research community still lacks specific knowledge regarding strategy effectiveness for coping with cyberbullying. While there is argument that the similarities between traditional bullying and cyberbullying indicate that similar methods for dealing with the two types of bullying would work, not all researchers agree. Smith (2012) asserted that are distinct features associated with cyberbullying that Reibel et al. (2009) suggested creates a question about whether strategies used to deal with traditional bullying are effective for dealing with cyberbullying. Further, because most victims of cyberbullying choose to deal with the issue themselves rather than to report to an adult (Stacey, 2009), it is important learn what strategies contribute to reducing further incidents of cyberbullying, as well as what strategies help protect victims' emotional and psychological wellbeing (Popović-Ćitić et al., 2011; Riebel et al., 2009). To do so requires a more in-depth investigation of strategy effectiveness for coping with cyberbullying from the victim's point of view.

In Chapter 3 I start with presenting the research method chosen for this study. I discuss the rationale for using a qualitative research design, to include the reasoning behind my selected strategy of inquiry. I continue with the role of the researcher, specifics regarding the research methodology, instrument development and the interview instrument. Finally I present the ethical procedures related to the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of the strategies that teens used to manage and overcome cyberbullying. To do so required learning directly from former victims of cyberbullying about the strategies that they employed to cope with cyberbullying. Accordingly, I used a qualitative research approach for this study.

As a primary goal of qualitative research is to investigate how individuals experience particular situations and make meaning of their experiences (Nelson & Quintana, 2005), a qualitative method was the logical choice for this study. By emphasizing textual analyses, the qualitative research method enabled me to move beyond the controls of quantitative study (Nelson & Quintana, 2005). Rather than being constrained to investigating the frequency or extent of human behaviors through objective means, which are typical of quantitative research, the qualitative method allowed me to examine individuals' experiences and the personal meaning given to those experiences free of predetermined hypotheses (Nelson & Quintana, 2005; Patton, 2002). The qualitative method allowed for examining and identifying meaningful patterns of behaviors among the participants studied (Nelson & Quintana, 2005). In essence, qualitative researchers seek to develop insight into and explain a social or cultural phenomenon through an inductive, holistic perspective, based on the experiences, perceptions, and feelings of individuals as they occur naturally (Patton, 2002). Qualitatively exploring individuals' experiences provided me the opportunity to gain a rich, detailed understanding of how individuals think and why individuals behave or act the way they do given certain contexts (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Patton,

2002). This was important to gaining an understanding of an intricate and complex phenomenon, such as coping with cyberbullying. Further, qualitative research is appropriate for exploring a phenomenon for which little knowledge or proper instrumentation exists (Nelson & Quintana, 2005; Patton, 2002), as well as to learn about processes that Maxwell (2012) stated are difficult to identify through quantitative survey research. As I intended to investigate a relatively unresearched topic area and required learning about processes and perspectives participants hold toward the research topic, the qualitative analysis was appropriate.

In this chapter, I present the rationale for the qualitative method chosen for my study, along with a description of the research design and methodology. Included are the role of the researcher, the setting and sample, the validation of the interview instrument, and the structure for data collection. In addition, I provide specifics about the context of the study, the sampling strategy, participant selection, and measures for ethical protection of participants.

Research Design and Rationale

Having chosen a qualitative research approach to carry out this study, the next step was to provide the rationale for this decision and show how the qualitative method would best serve to achieve the purpose of this study. The phenomenon under study for this research was coping strategy effectiveness in regard to coping with cyberbullying. Cyberbullying occurs when an individual or group uses electronic information and communication technologies to intentionally harass or harm others (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Coping within this context includes the processes and behaviors that victims employed to handle being cyberbullied. I aimed to learn what coping strategies worked

(and what strategies did not work) to effectively manage and overcome cyberbullying from individuals who directly experienced being cyberbullied. The following are the research questions and subquestions that guided this study.

1. RQ1: What strategies did victims of cyberbullying use to cope with, counteract, and prevent cyberbullying?
 - SQ1: How did cyberbullying victims develop the strategies they used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied?
 - SQ2: How did victims of cyberbullying determine which strategies were effective and ineffective for managing and overcoming incidents of cyberbullying?
 - SQ3: What did victims of cyberbullying learn in the process of determining effective strategies for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?
2. RQ2: How did the strategies cyberbullying victims reported as being successful for coping with, counteracting, and preventing cyberbullying compare to the strategies research and theory predicted were effective for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?

Because the majority of the findings from studies on cyberbullying have been quantitative and have relied on what researchers and nonvictims of cyberbullying determined would be methods victims of cyberbullying used or would use to cope with cyberbullying, this study provided an opportunity to establish whether there were differences in findings when a qualitative approach was used to gather information directly from former victims of cyberbullying.

Logic of the Straight Qualitative Approach

According to Patton (2002), there are no set rules for designing a study; the foremost requirement is that the research approach fits the purpose of the study. Miles et al. (2014) stated, “No study conforms to exactly a standard methodology; each one calls for the researcher to bend the methodology to the uniqueness of the setting or case” (p. 7). Additionally, all decisions about study design and research methods should derive from the overarching purpose of the inquiry, as well as work to ensure maximum rigor (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). To accomplish these tasks, Miles et al. advised researchers to select the research strategies from formal methodologies that will be most useful to their own study. Operating too narrowly within a single research paradigm can limit the researcher’s ability and creativity to achieve the best and intended results of the study (Patton, 2002). To avoid such limitations, Patton (2002) recommended selecting methodologies by using their “methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for methodological quality” (p. 72), as different situations require different methods.

There were several qualitative research designs I considered for this study. Of the options available, an initial evaluation of appropriateness began by assessing the foundational question tied to the research design. After determining whether the broad typology fit the purpose of the study, further analysis of the components within each design took place before I came to a final decision about the design and approach for this study.

The first design I considered was ethnography. Researchers who employ this design aim to learn about the cultural characteristics of a group or cultural scene (Patton, 2002). Ethnographic researchers seek to describe shared meanings, knowledge, values,

and beliefs a group attaches to certain events, activities, and behaviors, while focusing on the relationship between culture and behavior (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). Although ethnographic scholars emphasize individuals' perspectives and interpretations (Miles et al., 2014), this type of study involves extensive fieldwork and requires extended contact with the group under study. Further, ethnographic researchers use participant observation in a natural setting as the primary source of data collection. As none of these practices were feasible, I concluded that an ethnographic design would not work for this study.

The second potential study design was a case study design. In case studies, scholars seek to learn in-depth information about the how or why of a contemporary event (Yin, 2009) or to compare the characteristics of an entity, an activity, a process, or an event (Creswell, 2009). Although a case study design can be used to richly describe, explain, or extend what is known about a case or multiple cases pertinent to a phenomenon, the focus and type of analyses planned for this study made a case study design inappropriate. Namely, in case study designs, scholars tend to focus on a detailed analysis of a limited number of events or situations and their relationships (Yin, 2009), which would not serve to explore the lived past of individuals and their experiences.

Narrative analysis is an interpretive process that focuses on learning about people and situations by methodically examining individuals' stories about their experiences (Patton, 2002). Through this process, researchers aim to understand life and culture through those who create it (Patton, 2002). Data acceptable for narrative research includes any material that provides a pure description of individuals' lived experiences (Patton, 2002), including in-depth interviews. However, what made narrative analysis an inappropriate fit for this study was that, as a part of the process, the researcher combines

his or her own views with those from participants to create a collaborative narrative, which was not inherent in the design of this study.

In phenomenological research, the goal is to learn what it is like to have a particular experience or how individuals experience a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Phenomenologists assume that there is a shared essence, meaning, or structure (e.g., perception, thought, emotion, choice, action) to the events that individuals experience in daily life (Patton, 2002). As such, phenomenological methods are used to understand what it is like to experience a certain phenomenon by looking for themes and patterns in the data—participants’ description of a phenomenon after the fact—that will provide insight into the lived experiences of individuals who shared the same phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). To do so requires studying a small group of individuals, particularly those whose shared experience pertains to a longstanding cultural issue that may also inform a philosophy or theory (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). Although these criteria ruled out phenomenology as being the best approach for this study, I employed the phenomenological perspective of the importance of learning from the participants’ lived experiences, as well as drew from the strategy of bracketing to account for personal biases and predispositions during data collection and analyses (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002)

One methodology that did not fit the purpose of this study was the grounded theory approach. Grounded theorists use specific processes to generate theory that derives from the participants’ views, as well as to consider alternative meanings of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2002). Even though some propositions may arise from

this study, developing or verifying a theory was not the end goal of the study. As a result, I did not use a grounded theory research design.

Given that the aim of this inquiry was to contribute fundamental, practical knowledge and understanding about a topic in the literature that does not have a long history and that researchers have stated needs further investigation, the approach I selected for this study was the qualitative research approach. A basic qualitative research methodology allowed for the exploration and explanation of the reality of coping with cyberbullying, which can contribute to and extend the existing knowledge of the topic (Patton, 2002). Further, qualitative research suits inquiries that generate knowledge and understanding to inform practice or aid in evaluation of a problem of interest (Patton, 2002), which was an intended implication of this study.

Role of the Researcher

Contrary to quantitative research where the researcher may not be present during the collection of data, I served as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis for this study. Because I was involved in each step of the research process, the possibility of researcher bias (and error) also existed (Patton, 2002). Therefore, I applied the same rigor to myself throughout the research process as I did to the research design (McCaslin & Wilson Scott, 2003). I did not impose assumptions or allow my experience, personal point of view, or bias to influence data collection processes or study results (Patton, 2002). Instead, I worked to adopt a neutral, objective role to promote an understanding of coping with cyberbullying as it emerged from the data (Patton, 2002).

To accomplish the goals of adopting neutrality and minimizing researcher bias and error, I employed the following strategies:

- I reflected on and reported any personal background or attributes that might have influenced or shaped the study (Creswell, 2009).
- I used bracketing throughout the research process—recognizing and setting aside my preconceptions (e.g., values, interests, personal experience, emotions, assumptions, biases)—to focus on understanding and authentically relaying participants’ perspectives of managing and overcoming cyberbullying (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002; Tufford & Newman, 2010).
- I described my level of participation and relationship with the participants. This included exercising “empathetic neutrality” (Patton, 2002, p. 50), which entailed enough involvement to adequately understand participants’ experiences but not enough to compromise the results.
- I accurately recorded the reality of coping with cyberbullying as reported by the participants. I did not have expectations of what I would find nor did I manipulate data to support any particular perspective, hypothesis, or conclusion (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002).
- I kept a detailed record of observations and personal thoughts, feelings, and impressions (i.e., reflexivity) that surfaced while collecting data, as well as changes that occurred in the study as it evolved that could be used to reduce any personal bias (Creswell, 2009).
- I used structured data collection, analysis, and reporting procedures that were trustworthy, authentic, and balanced (Patton, 2002).

- I considered participants' perspectives, my interpretation, existing literature and theory, and the emerging themes from the data when discussing the findings of the study (Creswell, 2009).
- I remained aware of and addressed all ethical issues, including obtaining proper permissions, throughout each step of the research process (Creswell, 2009).
- I ensured there was a plan for the fair and ethical treatment of all participants involved in the study (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002).

Methodology

Context of the Study

Setting. Due to the nature of this inquiry, there was no determined site for the study. Participants came from different geographic locations. As a result, data collection took place by phone. To ensure that the interview conversations would not be overheard by others, I asked the teens to make sure that they were in a private space (e.g., room by themselves with the door closed), that no one else would enter the room or interrupt them during the interview period, and to wear headphones for the duration of the interview if they were on a device that had an external speaker.

Participant Selection Logic

Sample. The research sample for this study was adolescents who were former victims of cyberbullying and who had figured out how to successfully manage and overcome being cyberbullied. To clarify the criteria further, a victim of cyberbullying included anyone who had been harassed, disparaged, mocked, embarrassed, impersonated, or threatened with the use of some form of ICT. Consideration for the

criteria for determining what constituted cyberbullying came from a similar study conducted by Šleglova and Cerna (2011) on coping with cyberbullying that I discussed in the literature review, from Patchin and Hinduja (2012) who are experts in the field, and from the National Crime Prevention Council (2014) website on cyberbullying. Examples of ICTs include cell phones, iPads or tablets, computers, and online gaming devices. Examples of actions used to cyberbully include (a) sending mean or threatening text messages, instant messages, or e-mails; (b) posting comments, pictures, or audio or video clips on websites that make fun of, put down, rate, or ridicule someone; (c) excluding or blocking someone from buddy lists or online forums for no reason; (d) tricking someone into sharing personal or embarrassing information to send to others; and (e) hacking into someone's account and posting mean messages or untrue information while impersonating that person (National Crime Prevention Council, 2014).

I elected to interview participants in Grades 10 to 12 who directly experienced and overcame cyberbullying and who could provide insight into the effectiveness of the coping strategies they chose to deal with and prevent further incidents of cyberbullying. The rationale for targeting older adolescents, rather than youths in middle school and junior high school where the bulk of cyberbullying activity occurs (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Slonje & Smith, 2008), was that selecting a sample of teens who had dealt with cyberbullying firsthand and who had time to process and make sense of their experiences would produce more valuable results. Additionally, selecting participants of high school age helped to create a more homogenous group of participants who were more developmentally aligned; who likely would be able to better communicate their experiences; who possessed higher levels of cognitive abilities, skills,

and maturity; and who had more exposure to and experience in dealing with stress (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000).

I also intended to include equal numbers of male and female participants (e.g., six female and six male participants) for the study as Machackova et al. (2013) stated the need to understand if there are differences in the ways males and females cope with being cyberbullied and the nature of these differences. Although the *N* for the study was small, the exploratory nature of the study allowed me to learn more in-depth information about coping strategy use. Determining whether there were any differences between the strategies females and males used to manage and overcome cyberbullying victimization could provide information to be used for future study.

Sampling Procedure. To gain insight into effective coping strategies for cyberbullying, I incorporated purposeful sampling to select “information rich cases” (Patton, 2002, p. 230)—teens who could offer detailed accounts of an experience from a perspective that would provide useful knowledge about coping with cyberbullying. Criterion sampling (Patton, 2002) was used because the sample was limited by grade and to victims of cyberbullying who endured, but overcame, cyberbullying. There were no restrictions for gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disabilities. However, as part of the screening process, I asked three demographic questions regarding grade, age, and gender. During the interview, I asked teens how long ago the cyberbullying took place, if they were cyberbullied more than once, whether the cyberbullying started after being involved in some other type of bullying or cyberbullying situation, and about the general focus of the cyberbullying (e.g., threats, criticism, put downs, spreading rumors, impersonation). This information provided an important context that I used during the

analysis to determine if coping strategies selected by teens were in any way related to the type of cyberbullying the participant experienced, as well as to learn if coping strategy use differed between males and females. All aforementioned questions are included in the Initial Contact and Screening Protocol in Appendix C and in the interview script included in this chapter.

Sample size. Decisions about sample size included considering the purpose of the inquiry, the depth of the information sought regarding the topic, and how the data would be used (Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002), the sample size in purposeful sampling depends on the number of interviews needed to produce rich, useful data. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) and Patton stated sampling stops when no new information or themes emerge from the sample and saturation of the data occurs, and Guest et al. found data and thematic saturation in qualitative research typically occurs at 12 interviews. Research conducted by Guest et al. showed new themes and information became progressively less when analysis after 12 interviews continued. Further, Guest et al. found the amount of interviews for data saturation to occur depended on participants' experience or knowledge about the phenomenon under study, how similar participants' experiences or perceptions of the phenomenon were, and the extent participants were asked the same set of questions. Based on this information, the proposed sample size for this study was 12 to 14 participants.

Consent Process

The informed consent process I used for the study comprised three documents: A consent form for parents or guardians, an assent form for youths younger than 18 years, and a consent form for any individual who was 18 years or older. All youths under the

age of 18 years had to have parental consent to participate in the study. Individuals who were 18 years or older did not. The guidelines I followed for obtaining informed consent were adopted from the APA (2010) ethical standards for research and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS; 2009) code of federal regulations for protection of human participants. The consent and assent forms were written in language that would be understood by participants. I included the following information

- the purpose of the research;
- how the information obtained would be used;
- the expected level of involvement and time commitment of participants;
- the procedures of the study;
- any foreseeable risks, discomfort, or benefits associated with the study;
- the right to decline to participate and to withdrawal from the study at any time and without penalty or repercussions;
- procedures for dealing with already collected data should the teen withdraw from the study;
- reasonable guarantees to privacy and confidentiality, including any limitations to confidentiality, and the concept and promise of anonymity;
- incentives for participating in the research study;
- whom to contact should teens have any questions about the research or their rights regarding participating in the research; and
- the protocol for and resources available to teens should they experience any adverse effects or discomfort due to the research process.

As a cautionary measure, I appended a list of no to low-cost mental health facilities and 800 numbers to the consent form for each participant involved in the study. The list of resources can be found in Appendix F. I also included sample interview questions in the assent and consent documents to let potential participants (and parents or guardians) know I planned to ask questions regarding how teens dealt with being cyberbullied (coping strategy use), how they came up with the strategies they used (strategy selection), and how they felt about the strategies they employed (strategy effectiveness). This action not only gave teens time to reflect on their experiences of coping with cyberbullying before the actual interview (Englander, 2012), but also helped to focus the interview. Following the consent process, I ensured participants (and parents or guardians) that they had the opportunity to ask any questions and receive clear answers about the research study.

Special provisions for research with minors. When conducting research with underage populations, Heath, Brooks, Cleaver, and Ireland (2009) emphasized the need to consider greater ethical care. Therefore, I took extra care to ensure potential participants fully understood the research study (and their role in the research) and I assured them that they could agree or decline to participate in the research and that they could decide not to participate at any time during the study. To adhere to these guidelines, and to protect the wellbeing of youth participants, I addressed these aspects when designing the youth assent form for research for this study.

Additionally, in accordance with the DSSH (2009) guidelines for research involving youths, the process of informed consent included obtaining parental (or guardian) permission for research along with youth assent. After initial contact from

interested participants and screening took place, I asked the teens to provide contact information (e.g., phone number, email address, mailing address) for the parent or guardian whom I could contact to obtain parental consent for research. I then emailed or mailed the cover letter to the parent or guardian, along with the parental consent form and the youth assent form for research. The cover letter explained the study and asked for parent permission to have the teen participate and, if permission was granted, to please share the assent form and discuss the study with the interested youth. If the teen agreed to participate in the study, the parent/guardian was asked to return the signed consent and assent forms to me. When the consent and assent forms were received, signed by me, and the signed copy returned to the parent, I scheduled the interview.

Interviews

Semistructured interviews served as the primary source of data collection for the study. I planned to conduct the interviews over a 12-week period with each interview lasting between 60 to 90 minutes. Zuckerberg and Hess (1997) found youths, ages 12 to 17 years, had little to no problems sitting and staying on task for hour-long interviews. Interviews were audiotaped with participants' permission. I discuss the specifics regarding interviewing, data collection, and data analysis in Chapter 4.

Instrument Development

Because selected participants for this study were youths, it was important to design the interview guide accordingly. As per Armstrong, Hill, and Secker, I worded the interview questions in a way that did not convey assumptions or lead participants, and in terms and language assumed to be appropriate and understood by the youths involved in the study. To alleviate potential apprehension or discomfort participants might feel I

designed the interview guide to create an informal, safe, and friendly atmosphere. Doing so allowed participants to relax and focus on the topic of inquiry (Patton, 2002). This was especially important for young people who might feel uncomfortable with the nature of an adult-youth exchange. Heath et al. (2009) warned that if participants were to view me as an authority figure, they might feel pressured to provide answer(s) they believe I expect, try to give what they think is the 'right' answer, or not be able to provide any answer at all to questions I ask during the interview. To avoid such instances, I selected non-directive questioning for the interview. Approaching the interview in a non-directive format helped me to avoid getting into a question-answer type dialogue with participants, as well as to avoid simple 'yes' or 'no' answers that often occur within the context of interviews with youths (Heath et al., 2009).

Interview instrument. The interview instrument included contextual questions, as well as the interview questions and probes and prompts to be used as necessary to elicit greater detail (Patton, 2002). I designed the interview questions to address RQ1 and its subquestions. Although the interview questions were sequenced in a manner that encouraged teens to describe how they handled being cyberbullied before being asked to provide any opinions or perceptions about the experience (Patton, 2002), participants were free to explore and discuss relevant themes on their own terms (Heath et al., 2009). This method helped me promote a conversational approach to learning how participants managed and successfully overcame being cyberbullied from their personal experiences and stories, rather than through a question and answer format.

An expert panel consisting of content experts and methodology experts vetted the instrument to assess whether the interview questions were developmentally appropriate

for the selected participants and accurately represented what I aimed to learn. Changes were made based on the expert panel's recommendations. A copy of the letter I sent to the experts and the template they were asked to complete can be found in Appendix D. Table 3 presents the interview script and interview questions I designed for the study.

Table 3

The Interview Script and Interview Questions Derived from Research Question 1 and Subquestions

Opening and Contextual Questions
<p>Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study on coping with cyberbullying. I appreciate your willingness to share your story about how you successfully dealt with being cyberbullied. I believe the information I can learn from you is important to helping other teens that might be in the same situation.</p> <p>Before we begin our conversation, is there anything you would like to say or ask? I want to make sure all of that your questions are answered and that you are fine before we begin. Okay then, if you have no [further] questions or comments, let's get started?</p> <p>Please remember, I am recording our conversation to make sure I get all of the information you share with me correct. However, all of the information recorded during our talk will be kept private. Is this still okay with you? I also want to make sure you know that you can tell me if you become uncomfortable, feel upset, or if you need to take a break. If there are any questions you do not want to answer, please let me know and I will respect your wishes. Also, remember you are free to end our conversation at any time.</p> <p>Before we start talking about how you handled being cyberbullied, I would like to ask you a few questions that will help me better understand the information you are going to share with me.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How long ago were you cyberbullied? 2. How long did the cyberbullying go on? For example, was it a single incident, multiple incidents, over a period of days or weeks? 3. Did the cyberbullying start after being involved in some other type of bullying or cyberbullying situation? 4. I am going to read you a list of different types of cyberbullying that people can experience. For each type of cyberbullying, please tell me either "yes" or "no" if someone <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. spread rumors about you b. criticized you c. put you down d. made fun of you e. said mean things to you f. excluded you or blocked you from a buddy list or group forum for no reason g. embarrassed you h. harassed you i. stalked you

-
- j. tricked you into sharing something personal or embarrassing to send to others
 - k. hacked your account and sent cruel or untrue messages to someone else while pretending to be you
 - l. threatened you (National Crime Prevention Council, 2014).

Thank you. Now I would like to hear your story about how you dealt with being cyberbullied. I will not ask you to describe the cyberbullying experiences you had. I simply want to learn how you successfully managed to get through being cyberbullied. There are no right or wrong answers to any of my questions, so I hope you will be yourself and allow me to learn from your experience.

Interview Questions

<p>RQ1: What strategies did victims of cyberbullying use to cope with, counteract, and prevent cyberbullying?</p> <p>SQ1: How did cyberbullying victims develop the strategies they used to manage and overcome incidents of cyberbullying?</p> <p>SQ2: How did victims of cyberbullying determine which strategies were effective and ineffective for managing and overcoming cyberbullying incidents?</p> <p>SQ3: What did victims of cyberbullying learn in the process of determining effective strategies for managing and overcoming incidents of cyberbullying?</p>	<p>The first interview question is based on the contextual questions (questions #1 - #4) above.</p> <p>Probes will be used throughout the interview when needed (e.g., “Please tell me a bit more.” “Please explain that further.” “Please give me an example.” “I am not sure I understand what you are saying, please help me understand.”)</p> <p>Prompts will be used during the interview to aid recall by triggering a memory association with a cue.</p> <p>1. You mentioned that you were cyberbullied in the past. What types of technology or sites did the person use to cyberbully you? (<i>Prompt: computer, smart phone, online gaming, social media, specific website, chat room, email, texts, video</i>)</p> <p>2. Okay, so for the [identify the type(s) of cyberbullying experienced] you experienced, what kinds of strategies did you come up with to try to handle the cyberbullying? (<i>Probe for examples</i>)</p> <p>2a. You’ve just shared with me the strategies you used to handle being cyberbullied. How did you select the strategies you used for each type of cyberbullying you experienced? (<i>Probe: how strategies differed, when strategies differed</i>)</p> <p>3. For the strategies that you used, can you recall where you got the ideas? (<i>Prompt: You mentioned... what about ... own ideas? information found online? recommendations from others— friends at school, online friends, specific adults?</i>)</p> <p>4. Of the strategies you tried, which ones were the most helpful for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful to you? (<i>Prompt: Ways to alleviate negative psychological or emotional effects. For example, talking to someone for support, trying to think about something else</i>) (<i>Probe: specific strategies that were effective for which types of cyberbullying</i>)</p> <p>5. Now that we know what you did to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful to you, can you tell me about any strategies that were helpful for getting the</p>
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cyberbullying to stop? (*Prompt: Mechanisms to stop the cyberbullying all together, to keep it from happening any more. For example, block the cyberbully, ignore the situation*) (*Probe: specific strategies that were effective for which types of cyberbullying*)

6. Can you tell me about any strategies that you tried that did not work? (*Prompt: How did you determine whether or not the strategies you used were working? Was there anything specific that happened to make you realize that something was not working?*) (*Probe: strategies that did not work to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful, strategies that did not work to stop the cyberbullying, specifics for each type of cyberbullying*)

7. Finally, can you tell me about any strategies you tried that made the cyberbullying worse? (*Prompt: Were there any strategies you chose not to use because you felt they would make the situation worse?*) (*Probe: ask for examples and probe for understanding*)

8. So based on your experience of being cyberbullied, what advice or suggestions would you give to someone else who is being cyberbullied? (*Probe for examples of suggestions and recommendations for teens who are being cyberbullied; lessons learned*) (*Prompt: What about the strategies that you found effective? Would you suggest those to someone else?*)

9. Okay, that covers all of the information I wanted to ask you. Thank you for your thoughtful responses. Before you go, can you think of anything else that you would like to add or that you feel is important to say about managing or overcoming being cyberbullied?

Concluding and Debriefing

All right. If that is all, I would like to thank you again for taking part in this research project. I am truly grateful that you allowed me to hear your story. Please remember that if you begin to feel stressed or upset by anything we talked about here today, you can contact someone from the resource list I gave you for help. Do you still have the list and know where it is? Great [or if not, I will provide another copy]. It was a pleasure to meet you and thank you again for talking with me.

I conducted member checks during each interview where I would pause periodically and I briefly summarize the main points of each participant's responses to the interview questions and ask participants if what I was learning was accurate.

Ethical Procedures

Approval for Research

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the recruitment and data collection phases of the study. Walden's approval number for the study is 02-12-15-0083084 and it expired on February 11, 2016. Because no interested parties, gatekeepers, or specific sites were needed to conduct the study, no further permissions were necessary. Additionally, as I completed all data collection procedures before February 11, 2016, there was no need to request an extension of IRB approval for the study.

Treatment of Data

In consideration of the American Psychological Association (APA; 2010) general principles, Principle E, I respected participants' rights to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination regarding the treatment of data throughout this study. As well, I followed the APA (2010) ethical standards for reporting, sharing, and publishing data and research results.

Data maintenance and security. I kept all material data (e.g., forms, participant files, audio recordings, transcriptions, reflective and analytic memos, external hard drive with backed up files), when not in my possession, in a locked file cabinet in my home study. Computer files related to the study were password protected. I saved and updated all documents and computer files after each change I made to the data, and then I backed them up to an external hard drive that was password protected. No one in my home, other than myself, had access to any form of the data for this study.

Personal information and research records remained confidential. Only I knew identifying information (e.g., names, contact information, distinguishing characteristics or traits, geographic location) associated with the participants. To ensure participants' privacy, I used pseudonyms for recorded and written transcripts, analysis, verification, reporting, and dissemination of the findings. I kept identifying information only as long as needed (e.g., to communicate with participants during the data collection phase, to send a copy of the findings to participants) and I destroyed identifying information as soon as contact with participants was no longer necessary. Doing so increased the security of the data, as well as decreased the risk of exposing personal information or breaching confidentiality (Kaiser, 2009). Collected data is and will remain locked and stored for five years after completion of the study, then destroyed by shredding hard copy documents, permanently deleting computer files, and reformatting the hard drive containing back up files to erase the study data.

Data access and ownership. In accordance with the APA (2010) ethical principles, any individual who has access to, reviews, or uses the study data must respect the confidentiality and proprietary rights of the of those who contributed to and presented it. For this study, the only individuals who had access to the data were myself, my dissertation chair, and the participants themselves. Upon publishing the results, other researchers or competent professionals can access the study data for the purpose of reanalyzing the data to confirm the study's findings (APA, 2010). In such cases, the data may only be used for the aforementioned purpose, and only if proper measures are taken to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality (APA, 2010). Any individual, including myself, who wishes to use the data for any other purposes than reanalysis and

confirmation of the results, must obtain written permission to do so (APA, 2010).

Participants knew at the onset of the study who would be allowed access to the data, as well as the guidelines for data use. Accordingly, I covered information related to data access and use with participants (and parents and guardians) during informed consent procedures.

Other Ethical Considerations

Conflict of interest. Other than being passionate about youths and their wellbeing, and possessing a strong sense of justice (particularly for adolescents), I was not aware of any potential biases or conflicts of interest that might influence the study. Any biases or conflicts of interest that surfaced did so during the bracketing and reflexivity processes. Such information was noted, addressed, and is discussed in Chapter 4.

Incentives for participating in research. Research participants received one movie ticket voucher each for participating in the research study. In my professional and personal experience and opinion, this type of token gift is appreciated by youths, yet it did not influence their participation in the study. At minimum, research participants knew that they were participating in research (i.e., adding to the knowledge base) that likely would contribute to the greater good. I emphasized to the teens that learning from their experiences and views related to coping with cyberbullying could provide information either to help others deal with cyberbullying or to prevent others from getting into the same or similar situations.

Summary and Transition to Chapter 4

In Chapter 3 I discussed the chosen research approach for the study along with the rationale for the research design I selected. After careful consideration of several potential research methods, I decided a straight qualitative study design was best fit the purpose of this research endeavor. The chapter continued with detailed explanations of the role of the researcher, methodological procedures, instrument development and the interview protocol, and ethical considerations for the study. In Chapter 4 I present a detailed account of the procedures I used for the study prior to data collection, during data collection, and for the data analysis. Chapter 4 continues with a report of the findings on the efficacy of the strategies youths used to cope with cyberbullying victimization, followed by issues of trustworthiness of the findings.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative was to investigate the efficacy of the strategies that former adolescent victims of cyberbullying used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied. The research questions and subquestions that guided the inquiry were

1. RQ1: What strategies did victims of cyberbullying use to cope with, counteract, and prevent cyberbullying?
 - SQ1: How did cyberbullying victims develop the strategies they used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied?
 - SQ2: How did victims of cyberbullying determine which strategies were effective and ineffective for managing and overcoming incidents of cyberbullying?
 - SQ3: What did victims of cyberbullying learn in the process of determining effective strategies for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?
2. RQ2: How did the strategies cyberbullying victims reported as being successful for coping with, counteracting, and preventing cyberbullying compare to the strategies research and theory predicted were effective for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?

In Chapter 4, I present the setting of the study, recruitment procedures, participant demographics, and contextual information relevant to the study. Also discussed in Chapter 4 are the data collection procedures and the methods I used to analyze the data. I organized the results of the study by the research questions and presented them using the voices of participants where appropriate. Following the presentation of the results, I

discuss the methods taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. The chapter concludes with a summary and transition to Chapter 5.

Prior to Beginning the Study

Recruitment

Participant recruitment began immediately upon receiving approval from the Walden University IRB to conduct this study. Recruitment commenced in March 2015 and ended in January 2016, lasting a total of 11 months. Strategies I used to recruit participants consisted of

- contacting 12 organizations and one listserv group affiliated with cyberbullying for permission to post the study announcement flyer on their website and its listserv distribution;
- posting the study announcement (see Appendix A) on Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and Twitter;
- posting and leaving extra copies of the study announcement with 10 dance and theater companies, one competition cheer company, three gymnastics companies, and two trampoline parks;
- leaving flyers with seven behavioral centers after the center agreed to post or share the announcement as appropriate;
- posting flyers in churches, book stores, public libraries, youth centers, parks and recreation centers, grocery stores, Starbucks, and Subway in various cities;

- sending flyers to Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and YWCAs (approximately 65 organizations) with a request to post the announcement; and
- presenting information about the study and handing out study announcement flyers at one YMCA organization.

Teens who had seen the announcement, and who were interested in participating in the study, contacted me for more information. During this exchange, I determined whether the interested youth met the criteria for the study by asking several questions using the Initial Contact and Screening Protocol that can be found in Appendix C. If the teen met the criteria, I took care of the proper assent and consent procedures, and then I worked to schedule the interview. The above recruitment efforts yielded only one participant.

A second wave of recruitment efforts took place after requesting and receiving approval from Walden IRB to use other recruitment strategies. During the second wave of recruitment, I contacted private and online schools to request permission to post the study announcement flyers either online or in a common area of the schools. This strategy proved unsuccessful; schools were not willing to post or distribute the study announcement. I also posted flyers in private businesses that sell technology. The rationale for posting flyers in businesses that sold different types of technology was that teens populate these types of stores (e.g., Apple, AT&T store, Best Buy). This strategy was not successful for attracting teens to the study either.

At this time, I contacted Asha, my first research study participant, for help in finding additional participants for the study. I provided a copy of the snowball sampling

script (see Appendix B), along with a copy of the original study announcement flyer, to Asha followed by a reading of the script together. I then asked her to pass on the flyer to anyone else she knew who fit the criteria of the study and who might be interested in participating in the research. This procedure not only provided for consistency within the methods, but also helped to avoid confidentiality and coercion issues. I did not have to disclose the name of the study participant who made the referral to later participants and there was less pressure on later participants (i.e., recruits) to participate in the study because I did not ask them to participate directly.

After some time, I received a phone call from an interested teen as a result of snowball sampling. The teen met the criteria for the study and was willing to participate in the study so now I had two participants for my study. Over the next 7 months, I was able to recruit four more participants. The third participant contacted me by phone after seeing a study announcement flyer, and the remaining three participants were recruited through snowball sampling methods.

At the end of the 11-month recruiting period, although I did not obtain the planned number of participants or the desired equal number of male-female participants, I made the decision to end recruitment. At six participants, I felt that data saturation could be achieved where no new findings were likely to emerge (Guest et al., 2006). During the analysis of data, I was able to confirm that I had reached data saturation.

Participant Selection

All six participants met the four criteria for participating in the study: (a) they were in Grades 10 to 12, (b) they had been cyberbullied in the past, (c) they had figured

out ways to handle being cyberbullied successfully, and (d) they were willing to share their stories about how they had managed and overcame cyberbullying.

Background of Participants

Table 4 presents the participant demographics and contextual information that are relevant to the study. Pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy of the participants.

Table 4

Participant Demographics and Contextual Information Relevant to the Study

Participant demographics	Asha	Yori	Ivy	Grace	Skylar	Mia
Grade	10	10	11	10	10	12
Age	15	17	16	15	16	19
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Contextual information						
Grade cyberbullying occurred	9	6	9	8	9	9
Associated with other bullying or cyberbullying	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Number of incidents	Multiple	Single	Multiple	Multiple	Single	Multiple
Duration (approximate)	6 months	1 week	2 weeks	1 month	1 month	1 month
Where cyberbullied						
Facebook		X	X	X		
Instagram	X		X	X		
Text messaging	X			X	X	X
Kik	X			X	X	
Mobile tablet			X			
Ask.fm	X					
Website						X

Conducting the Study

Information Provided to Participants

As a result of the recruitment process and the informed consent process, the participants came into the interview knowing the parameters of the study. Teens had been informed of the types of questions they would be asked regarding their experiences with managing and overcoming cyberbullying, the expected amount of time for the

interview, their ability to end the interview, and that they would be presented with a summary of key findings from their interview. Teens also were reminded that the focus of the interview was on their experiences in coping with cyberbullying and that the conversation would not include revisiting the actual cyberbullying incident itself.

Prior to Conducting the Interviews

Before conducting the interviews, and prior to working with any of the data, I bracketed any presumptions of which I was aware in a reflexive journal. Because I planned to transcribe the interviews myself, this was an important step to take prior to collecting any data. The bracketing process included listing any personal assumptions, biases, beliefs, opinions, and experiences regarding cyberbullying and coping with cyberbullying that I felt might influence the study. These included the following:

- As an educator, and mother of a teenage female, I was familiar with adolescent issues and behaviors.
- I was familiar with bullying and cyberbullying as experienced by this age group, particularly with its effects on their emotional and social wellbeing.
- I was well read on the topics of bullying and cyberbullying and knew the research findings from national and international studies.
- I talked often with colleagues and friends about bullying and cyberbullying and held beliefs about how to protect teens from the dangers of cyberbullying, as well as how to support teens who were experiencing cyberbullying.
- I anticipated I would find gender differences in the types and use of coping strategies for handling cyberbullying.

In order to hold my beliefs, opinions, and presumptions at bay, I used the aforementioned list as a checklist when designing and conducting the study and when analyzing and interpreting the data. For example, I made sure that my experience did not make me think I understood participants' experiences beyond what they expressed during the interviews. Additionally, I was careful not to base my interpretations of teens' stories about how they managed and overcame being cyberbullied on what I had learned about how participants in prior studies on coping with cyberbullying had dealt with their experiences. Instead, I took care to ensure that the findings reflected teens' actual experiences and perceptions of coping with cyberbullying.

Data Collection

The individual, semistructured interviews with each of the six participants served as the source of data for the study. The primary objective of data collection was to represent the subjective viewpoints of teens who had been cyberbullied, specifically focusing on the coping strategies they had used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied. Interviews took place over a period of 8 months and varied in duration between 35 to 60 minutes depending on the participant. Interviews were set up with each participant by phone or text after completing the initial screening and consent processes. All participants designated the interview times themselves. I used audio voice calls to conduct all interviews from my private home office and recorded the interviews on my personal computer using WireTap Studio (2013) from Ambrosia Software, Inc. No interviews took place in person. Although I asked each participant to be in a private space for the interview, the exact location of each participant during the interview was unknown. At the end of each interview, I jotted down any descriptive or reflective

thoughts that emerged during the interview in the form of reflective memos. The only unusual circumstance during data collection was the occurrence of an interruption by someone in a participant's home halfway through the interview. This interruption did catch the participant off-guard and momentarily disrupted the flow of the interview. The participant paused briefly, apologized for the interruption, and was able to continue with and complete the interview successfully. However, I did note the participant did not sound as relaxed as she was before the interruption occurred, and the last part of the interview felt somewhat rushed.

Data Maintenance and Security

Throughout each stage of the data collection and analysis, I made sure to keep the data secure. I stored all material data, when not in use, in a locked filing cabinet in my private home office. I saved all computer files, to include the reflexive journal, analytic memos, interview transcripts, and audio recordings, on a password-protected personal computer and on a password-protected external hard drive. No one other than myself had access to any form of the data. To ensure participants' privacy, I removed all identifying information before starting the transcription and data analysis processes, and I used pseudonyms when reporting the results of the analysis. Additionally, I checked to make sure that all verbatim quotes used during the write up of the findings did not contain any identifying information that would compromise the privacy of the participants or anyone else.

Transcription of Interviews

I started the transcribing process by listening to the entire interview to develop familiarity and to help with accuracy in transcription. I transcribed each interview

verbatim, including voice inflections (e.g., pauses, hesitations, emphases) that occurred during the interview. Transcriptions were checked against original interview recordings until I was confident that each interview was transcribed accurately.

Data Analysis Framework

The data analysis framework I selected to answer RQ1 and the subquestions was the Colaizzi (1978) method used in phenomenological studies. I chose this method of analysis because formulated meanings from key statements in the interviews could be used to develop themes. The themes represent what was learned from the key statements presented by participants in their answers to the interview questions. The process takes raw data from the interviews to the development of themes that reflect what was learned from the participants. The steps from the Colaizzi method I used to analyze the data included the following:

1. I read and reread the interview transcripts to get a sense of participants' experiences.
2. I extracted significant statements from each transcript that directly pertained to coping with cyberbullying.
3. I formulated meanings for each of the significant statements extracted.
4. I organized the formulated meanings into themes and subthemes.
5. I integrated the findings into an exhaustive description of the strategies teens used to cope with cyberbullying.

For RQ2, I used an adaptation of the analytic method of pattern matching (Yin, 2009), which I borrowed from case study design. Using this framework, I compared predicted and expected patterns for coping with cyberbullying derived from theory and

research with observed patterns from my study data to determine the extent that the patterns matched. I then used any new findings from my study to build on previous findings for coping with cyberbullying to enhance the existing knowledge about how adolescents who experienced cyberbullying dealt with the cyberbullying they had experienced. The a priori template I developed for this process can be found in Appendix E.

Data Analysis and Results

In this section, I illustrate the steps and procedures I took to analyze the data for RQ1 and its subquestions, as well as for RQ2. At the end of each stage of the analysis, I present the results for each research question and subquestion. I elected not to use data analysis software or spreadsheets for the analysis processes. Instead, I formatted the data into tables using Word and manipulated them by hand for all phases during the analysis.

Research Question 1

For RQ1, I analyzed the data by RQ1 subquestions and then I used these data to answer to the overarching research question. Using this approach I moved methodically through the analysis processes to arrive at the findings that would describe in detail how teens coped with being cyberbullied. Furthermore, by analyzing the data by RQ1 subquestions I learned more about how teens developed the strategies they used to cope with, counteract, and prevent cyberbullying, how teens determined the effectiveness of the strategies they used, and what teens learned through their experiences of managing and overcoming cyberbullying.

Step 1: Review of transcripts. I began the analysis by reading and rereading the interview transcripts several times to develop a sense of the content and context of the information teens provided during the interviews.

Step 2: Isolation of significant statements. Next, I extracted significant statements from each interview that directly pertained to managing and overcoming cyberbullying. If there was any question about the relevancy of a statement, I included the statement initially with a note to reexamine it for its usefulness in addressing the research question or the subquestions. During this time, I referred to the list of presuppositions I noted in my reflexive journal to ensure the statements being extracted from the interview data served to explore coping with cyberbullying as experienced by the teens themselves. Ultimately I ended up with a total of 145 significant statements.

Step 3: Converting significant statements into formulated meanings. After completing a chart of significant statements for each interview, I developed corresponding formulated meanings for each significant statement. I then compiled an aggregate list of significant statements and formulated meanings from all six interviews. Because I designed the study to answer RQ1 through subquestions, significant statements and formulated meanings overlapped depending on the specific subquestion being addressed. As a result, the patterns of coping with cyberbullying I revealed from the data depended on the context of teens' responses.

Table 5 illustrates examples of significant statements and formulated meanings that address subquestion 1: How did cyberbullying victims develop the strategies they used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied?

Table 5

Selected Examples of Significant Statements of How Teens Developed Coping Strategies for Cyberbullying and Corresponding Formulated Meanings

Significant statements	Formulated meanings
1. Common knowledge, also common sense... friends that have been cyberbullied before or have dealt with similar incidents. I asked them what I should and they said to me... to block and report them, so that's what I did.	1. Common knowledge and common sense helped her to know how to handle the cyberbullying, but she also got advice from friends who had been cyberbullied before.
2. I would talk to my mom about it and she's like... can you block them.	2. Her mother suggested a strategy for her to use to deal with the cyberbullying.
3. That was something that I just did on my own.... [I]t was kind of like my instincts because... whenever my friends needed my help I would always give them my best advice. I would always say... if something happens you, you have to just go to just directly to the person.	3. Her ideas for how to handle the cyberbullying came from instinct and from the advice she gives to friends when they come to her with a problem.
4. I just handled the situation because he was... saying stuff to... me and my friend and I just got tired of it.	4. His approach to handling the cyberbullying was guided by instinct, but prompted by annoyance.
5. I went to a therapist and she helped me through everything. She said that every time they say something or make me sad to get a journal and write it down every day.	5. Her therapist suggested strategies to help her handle the negative effects of the cyberbullying.
6. He [her uncle] just told me to ignore it. Told me that they were idiots for trying to do things that I didn't want.	6. Her uncle gave her with advice that helped her get through the cyberbullying emotionally.

Table 6 presents examples of significant statements and formulated meanings that address subquestion 2: How did victims of cyberbullying determine what strategies were effective and ineffective for managing and overcoming incidents of cyberbullying?

Table 6

Selected Examples of Significant Statements of Strategy Effectiveness for Coping with Cyberbullying and Corresponding Formulated Meanings

Significant statements	Formulated meanings
1. And that was pretty much when it ended, when I blocked him.	1. Blocking the cyberbully helped her get the cyberbullying to stop.
2. It was helpful...blocking them...because...there was no way for them to continue on commenting, and continue on with...their hate comments and their threats and stuff. I didn't have to see that anymore so it wasn't a big deal. I didn't have to...listen to that and I didn't have to deal with it, so I just blocked it and I wouldn't see it.	2. Blocking the cyberbullies hateful comments and threats was helpful for her to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful.
3. I guess after...a while and...after not talking to them I think they just...got bored of me not answering [because] I wasn't getting any messages.... [B]y me not getting affected by it anymore I think they got...bored of it.	3. Her decision to stop responding to the cyberbullies' comments and to no longer let their comments affect her helped her to get the cyberbullying to stop.
4. I tried to...message him on Facebook and it was just making things worse, so I...confronted him in school.	4. Confronting the cyberbully online only made matters worse, but confronting the cyberbully in person helped him get the cyberbullying to stop.
5. The school principal wasn't doing anything about it and the school counselor just told me it was part of life.	5. Her requests to the school principal and school counselor for help in handling the cyberbullying were ignored.
6. I would...not go to school. I didn't want to go to school and I would...stay home from school a lot and that didn't work for me. That was a bad idea because...you get like really far behind and it's a lot.	6. Staying home from school to avoid the cyberbullying did not work. It was a bad idea because it made her fall behind in school and created more stress.

Table 7 shows examples of significant statements and formulated meanings that address subquestion 3: What did victims of cyberbullying learn in the process of determining effective strategies for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?

Table 7

Selected Examples of Significant Statements of Teens' Advice and Current Views on Coping with Cyberbullying and Corresponding Formulated Meanings

Significant statements	Formulated meanings
1. That's why now when something like that happens I'd rather just confront the person in person.	1. He figured out that if something like this should happen again he would rather just confront the cyberbully in person.
2. Just to keep a positive mind and...keep your hopes up. Don't let anyone...discourage you in doing stuff. If you're getting cyberbullied then just ignore it. That's the best thing you can do.	2. She realized that it's best to remain positive and optimistic and to not let the cyberbully discourage you.
3. There is always that one person that will stick with you no matter why and will always be on your side...when everybody else turns against you, even your family when they...[don't] really understand what's going on.	3. She realized that it is important to have the support of someone you can trust and who you can count on to.
4. What I learned was that you [have to] find out who your true friends are. And not everybody's [going to] be there for you.	4. She realized that you cannot always count on others or trust what they say.
5. Just that it's best to block it, ignore it, and move on.	5. She figured out that it's best to block the cyberbully, to not let the situation get to you, and to move on with your life.
6. Asking for help...doesn't mean that you're...not able to like deal with it [cyberbullying].	6. She realized that asking for help to handle being cyberbullied does not indicate personal limitations or inability to cope.

Step 4: Using formulated meanings to develop themes. During the analysis, there were five themes and 12 subthemes that emerged from the data. The themes and subthemes that emerged from the formulated meanings were derived from the key statements teens made during the interviews about their experiences of coping with cyberbullying. In the following tables, I give examples of the decision trail I used to identify the themes and subthemes that emerged for each subquestion, along with their corresponding formulated meanings.

Table 8 illustrates examples of themes, subthemes, and formulated meanings that address SQ1: How did cyberbullying victims develop the strategies they used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied?

Table 8

Selected Examples of Themes, Subthemes, and Formulated Meanings of How Teens Developed Coping Strategies for Cyberbullying

Theme 1: Teens' instincts, experience, and maturity levels influenced the initial strategies they tried to handle the cyberbullying.

Subtheme 1.1. Self-reliance

Formulated meanings:

- Some decided to handle the cyberbullying on their own, while others chose to seek help.
- She relied on common knowledge and common sense to know how handle the cyberbullying.
- She thought about what she tells friends to do when they come to her for advice to deal with a problem.

Subtheme 1.2. Avoiding

Formulated meanings:

- He tried to ignore and avoid the situation.
- She stopped using Facebook and checking her messages for a while.
- She stayed home from school to avoid the situation.

Subtheme 1.3. Talking/confronting

Formulated Meanings:

- She tried to be nice to the cyberbully online and treat him as a friend.
- She requested to meet and to talk with the cyberbully face-to-face.
- She responded to the cyberbullies texts with pleas for them to stop attacking her.

Theme 2: Teens incorporated reasoning and help-seeking^a when developing and choosing strategies, particularly when their initial attempts to handle the cyberbullying did not prove successful.

Subtheme 2.1. Talking/confronting

Formulated meanings:

- She attempted to assuage the situation by telling the cyberbully that she wasn't interested in him.
- She approached the cyberbully and asked him why he would let his friends join in and perpetuate the cyberbullying.
- He decided to confront the cyberbully in person after he became tired of the cyberbullying.

Subtheme 2.2. Blocking

Formulated meanings:

- They blocked the cyberbully on Facebook to deter further contact.
- They blocked or unfriended the cyberbullies after continually getting hurtful text messages.
- She blocked the cyberbully after he continued to make advances and attack her.

Subtheme 2.3. Deleting

Formulated meanings:

-
- She deleted the apps the cyberbullies used to cyberbully her when not responding to, blocking, and unfriending the cyberbullies did not work.
 - She attempted to delete the cyberbullies' hurtful comments and webpages used to cyberbully her when she did not receive the cooperation she expected from the cyberbully.
-

^aHelp-seeking involves asking for or receiving support from others.

Table 9 presents examples of themes, subthemes, and formulated meanings that address SQ2: How did victims of cyberbullying determine what strategies were effective and ineffective for managing and overcoming incidents of cyberbullying?

Table 9

Selected Examples of Themes, Subthemes, and Formulated Meanings of Effective Coping Strategies for Cyberbullying

Theme 3: While teens were able to figure out effective strategies for getting through the cyberbullying, in some cases their strategies did not work or ended up escalating the cyberbullying.

Subtheme 3.1. Talking/confronting

Formulated Meanings:

- Confronting the cyberbully in person was helpful for getting the cyberbullying to stop.
- Having adults talk directly to cyberbully was helpful for getting the cyberbullying to stop.
- Talking directly to the cyberbully in person was helpful for getting the cyberbullying to stop.
- Messaging the cyberbully online to try to resolve the issue did not work.
- Getting mad and confronting the cyberbully online made the situation worse.

Subtheme 3.2. Blocking

Formulated meanings:

- Blocking the cyberbully was helpful for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful.
- Blocking the cyberbully was helpful for getting the cyberbullying to stop in some cases, but not in others.
- Blocking the cyberbully was not effective when the cyberbully created a new account or profile to continue the cyberbullying.

Subtheme 3.4. Avoiding

Formulated meanings:

- Keeping to herself and removing herself from the cyberbullying-related drama was helpful for getting the cyberbullying to stop.
- Switching schools was helpful for getting the cyberbullying to stop.
- Avoiding the cyberbully at school made the situation worse.
- Staying home from school made the situation worse.

Subtheme 3.5. Seeking support

Formulated meanings:

- Talking to others and having someone to confide in was instrumental to keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful.
 - Seeking help from the school principal and school counselor was not effective because they offered her no support.
-

Table 10 shows examples of themes, subthemes, and formulated meanings that address SQ3: What did victims of cyberbullying learn in the process of determining effective strategies for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?

Table 10

Selected Examples of Themes, Subthemes, and Formulated Meanings of Teens' Advice and Current Views on Coping with Cyberbullying

Theme 4: Advice to others for managing and overcoming cyberbullying came from teens' personal experience.

Subtheme 4.1. Talking/confronting

Formulated meanings:

- They advised approaching the cyberbully in a confident, non-combative manner to have a calm, firm talk with the cyberbully in person.
- They advised against responding back to the cyberbullies online.
- They advised against confronting the cyberbully in an aggressive manner.

Subtheme 4.5. Seeking support

Formulated meanings:

- She recommended seeing an independent therapist.
- They recommended going to an adult for help if you cannot handle the cyberbullying on your own.
- They suggested talking to people you know you can trust.

Subtheme 4.7. Remaining positive and confident

Formulated meanings:

- They recommended sticking up for yourself against the cyberbully.
- They advised not letting the cyberbully or the cyberbullying negatively affect you or your confidence.
- They advised remaining positive, optimistic, and moving on with your life.

Theme 5: Teens' current views regarding cyberbullying reflect what they discovered through the course of coping with cyberbullying.

Subtheme 5.1. Remaining positive and confident

Formulated Meanings:

- Cyberbullying should not be taken personally.
- Believing in yourself and your talents and not letting the cyberbully discourage you from being who you are or doing what you want to do is important.
- It's best not to pay attention to people who are being stupid and shallow.

Subtheme 5.2. Learning acceptance

Formulated meanings:

- The best thing to do if you are being cyberbullied is to block the cyberbully, not let it affect you, and move on with your life.
 - Cyberbullying happens, and to a lot of people. So if it happens to you, you are not alone or being singled out.
 - There are some aspects of cyberbullying that cannot be reversed and that you regretfully
-

have to accept.

Subtheme 5.3. Developing awareness

Formulated meanings:

- Asking for help from others to deal with cyberbullying does not make you any less of a person or mean that you can't handle things on your own.
 - Cyberbullying was not as difficult to deal with or as hurtful as face-to-face bullying.
 - You may not always be able to trust or count on the people you thought you could.
-

Step 5: Using themes and associated sub-themes to illustrate the experiences of teens.

Theme 1: Teens' instincts, experience, and maturity levels influenced the initial strategies they tried to handle the cyberbullying. I found the initial strategies teens used to handle the cyberbullying consisted of strategies teens came up with on their own to deal with the cyberbullying when the cyberbullying began. The subthemes that emerged from teens' responses for the initial strategies they tried were (a) self-reliance, (b) talking/confronting, (c) blocking, (d) avoiding, (e) reporting, and (f) shifting of focus.

Subtheme 1.1: Self-reliance. Three of the six teens mentioned that the ideas for the initial strategies they tried to handle the cyberbullying came from having an instinctive sense of knowing what to do, from previous knowledge and common sense, or from experience. When asked about how he came up with the ideas for the strategies he tried, Yori stated, "I just handled the situation." Mia also noted she followed her instincts about what to do when deciding how to handle being cyberbullied: "That was just something I just did on my own.... [I]t was kind of like my instincts to go up to the guy because I know that's where...it all started." Additionally, Mia commented that the idea about how to handle the cyberbullying came from thinking about what she would tell her friends to do when they came to her for advice on how to deal with a problem. Mia said

whenever her friends needed her help she always would give them her best advice. She would tell her friends, “You know if something happens...you have to just go...directly to the person because if you go to directly to...the source...that’s how you could solve the case.”

Mia further explained that, even though parents always tell their kids to go to a teacher or an adult for help, she elected to handle the cyberbullying on her own, without adult intervention or support. She said since she was in high school, and was trying to become an adult, she needed to handle it herself. Mia expounded,

You know you tell your kids...always tell a teacher or always go to an adult for help [but]...I figured since it was in high school you know...we’re trying to become adults. You’re [going to] be out in the real world and no one is [going to] be holding your hand. So you have to, you know, kind of figure it out on your own. I know there [are] counselors...[who] can help you, but I think that in this kind of bullying...you just have to deal with it on your own.

During the interview with Ivy about the strategies she used initially to deal with the cyberbullying, she stated common knowledge and common sense allowed her to know what to do.

Subtheme 1.2: Talking/confronting. A common approach participants used to attempt to handle the cyberbullying initially was to try and talk to the cyberbully or to confront the cyberbully. Skylar shared that at first she was trying to be nice to the cyberbully online and treat him as a friend because she thought that would help her avoid a cyberbullying situation. Yori and Ivy tried direct messaging the cyberbullies online. Yori tried messaging the cyberbully on Facebook and asking him to stop, while Ivy

messaged the cyberbully on Instagram one time to ask if there was some way to resolve the issue. Grace shared that she tried messaging the cyberbullies on Facebook, Instagram, and Kik. Grace reported that after the cyberbullies continued to send her messages, she tried to get the cyberbullies to stop but they would not stop. Similarly, Asha responded to the cyberbullies' text messages on Kik with pleas for them to stop attacking her. Asha also mentioned that initially she reacted to the cyberbullies' texts by getting mad and trying to stick up for herself. Neither Grace's nor Asha's attempts to get the cyberbullying to stop by messaging the cyberbullies proved successful.

Unlike the other participants who attempted to talk to or confront the cyberbully online, Mia went directly to the cyberbully and requested to talk to him face-to-face. Mia stated, "I had texted him and I said, 'Hey, do you mind meeting up for a minute. I just wanna, you know, talk to you.'" When Mia met up with the source of the cyberbullying she asked him why he would let his friends engage in behaviors that put her in a compromising situation and that perpetuated the cyberbullying. Mia said to the boy, "Why would you let your friends take your phone and send [...] pictures around and making it seem like it's me when it's not me? It's not me, it's not right. This is totally twisted and turned around."

The meeting between Mia and the boy ended with the boy denying any responsibility for starting or perpetuating the cyberbullying and stating that there was nothing he could have done to prevent the situation.

Subtheme 1.3: Blocking. Ivy stated she blocked the cyberbullies on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter immediately when the cyberbullying started. When talking about the reason she decided to block the cyberbully immediately, Ivy shared "I was always

told if there was someone that made me uncomfortable on any social media just to block and report them.” Even though Ivy used blocking initially for each incident of cyberbullying she experienced, none of other participants mentioned using blocking as an initial strategy for attempting to handle being cyberbullied.

Subtheme 1.4: Avoiding. Avoiding or ignoring the issue was another initial strategy used by teens. Three participants tried to find ways to avoid or ignore the situation. Yori noted that when the cyberbullying started, he simply tried to ignore it and tried to avoid the situation. Grace decided to stay off of Facebook and not check her messages for a while in order to avoid the cyberbullying. Grace shared, “I just like left it there and I didn’t go to it [Facebook].” In Asha’s case, she started staying home from school to avoid the issue. Asha said, “I would just...not go to school. Like I didn’t want to go to school and I would...stay home from school a lot.”

Subtheme 1.5: Reporting. Only one participant chose to report the cyberbullies to service providers and authorities as an initial strategy for handling the cyberbullying. Ivy reported the cyberbullies to the service provider and followed up with filing a police report about the incidents that occurred on Facebook. Ivy also reported the cyberbullies to the service providers for the cyberbullying she experienced on Instagram and Twitter. For the cyberbullying that took place at school on a school-owned mobile tablet, Ivy reported the incident to her teacher who then reported the incident to school administrators. Ivy explained, “[I] told my teacher [because] it was during class and they took it and did a further investigation with the school.” According to Ivy, after reporting the incident to the teacher and having the school administration address the issue, she did not have any further problems with the cyberbullying that took place at school.

Subtheme 1.6: Shifting of focus. The final strategy teens used initially to handle the cyberbullying was to shift their focus from the cyberbullying to activities or hobbies they engaged in that would help them keep their mind off of the situation. Grace shared she would listen to music as a way to help her not think about the cyberbullying and to keep it from being hurtful. Skylar noted spending time with her cats, drawing, reading, and writing were activities she used to help her alleviate the stress and help keep her mind off of the cyberbullying. She stated, “I’ve always used reading or writing as an escape. It’s just something I did when things were stressful—when I was stressed out—and needed a break.” Ivy mentioned engaging in hobbies she enjoyed and focusing on improving her skills helped her ignore the cyberbullying. Ivy explained, “I like doing special effects [makeup] and I really wasn’t [going to] stop doing that because other people didn’t like it. I like doing it and I wanted to improve so I kept doing it and I just ignored it [the cyberbullying].”

Theme 2: Teens incorporated reasoning and help-seeking when developing and choosing strategies, particularly when their initial attempts to handle the cyberbullying did not prove successful. In Theme 2 I demonstrated the processes teens went through to develop strategies to handle being cyberbullied. Often teens used different approaches for strategy development when the initial strategies they tried did not achieve the results they intended. The associated subthemes identified for Theme 2 were (a) talking/confronting, (b) blocking, (c) deleting, (d) reporting, (e) seeking support, (f) avoiding, (f) consciously ignoring, and (g) remaining positive and confident.

Subtheme 2.1: Talking/confronting. Teens talked to and confronted the cyberbullies through technologies and in person. All but one teen attempted to talk to or

confront the cyberbully online or through text messaging. One of the five teens resorted to having adults confront or talk to the cyberbullies in person after talking or confronting online did not help to resolve the issue.

When trying to be nice online did not thwart the cyberbully's inappropriate advances, Skylar further attempted to assuage the situation by telling the cyberbully she had a boyfriend and that she was not interested in him. In Yori's case, when initial attempts to message the cyberbully directly on Facebook with requests to stop attacking him did not help the situation, Yori got tired of the cyberbullying and decided to confront the cyberbully in person. Yori described the process of deciding to confront the cyberbully as follows:

I tried to...talk to him...like message him on Facebook and it was just making things worse...[because] he was...calling me in the mornings and stuff. Then after...a week, or before a week...I kind of got tired of it so I...confronted him in school.... I got...in his face and I was really mad [laughs]. I told him...if he wanted to say something...[to] say it to me and...not...say...it on instant messages or anything and I told him...to stop.

After figuring out the person responsible for starting the cyberbullying, Asha had the school security guard confront the boy at school and tell him to make the cyberbullying stop. Additionally, Asha, her mom, and the school counselor scheduled a meeting to confront boy in attempt to rectify the issue. Asha shared,

I mean like I ended up figuring out like who was starting the rumors and who was really like the main part of it and like, I talked to them. I think that's, and like I

had a teacher and more like...my counselor to talk with me with them. Or you know like for that one kid I had the security guard talk to him.

Mia's approach of confronting the cyberbully and talking to him in person consisted of multiple attempts and ranged a continuum of requests to pleas. During Mia's initial conversation with the cyberbully where she asked him to take care of the problem, the boy told her the situation was beyond his control and that there was nothing he could do. According to Mia, "[H]e was like...there was nothing I could've done." At first, Mia didn't really say much to the boy's lack of response and cooperation, but then she tried reasoning with him again by telling him that what he had done was not right and that he needed to do something to stop it. Mia explained,

You know I didn't really say much about it when it happened...[H]e was kind of basically denying it and saying...he didn't know what to do and I told him, "Well you know this is how you ruin people's lives and this isn't right," and I tried talking to him and basically...it...didn't really get through to him.

After a second attempt at talking to and trying to reason with the boy did not bring results, Mia pleaded with him at least ask his friends to delete the hurtful webpage they created and to stop spreading rumors and posting nasty things about her online. Mia explained,

I tried to tell him, you know, "Can you please to talk to your friends then...just please have them...delete the [webpage].... Can you please just delete the picture off your phone and just you know have them stop this whole rumor and take down whatever was posted on Facebook or...the website...[I]t just needs to stop."

Although the boy's response to Mia's pleas was favorable, and he agreed to see what he could do, Mia emphatically told the boy he needed to do something immediately because her reputation was at stake and she felt her life was being ruined over something stupid and silly. To add, Mia informed the boy that she thought she was stupid for even trusting him in the first place and that she never would have confided in him or talked to him in the beginning if she knew all of this was going to happen. Upon hearing the urgency and sense of seriousness in Mia's voice, the boy agreed to try his best to do whatever he could to fix the situation. However, the only action the boy took to help out was to let Mia know that he checked online and found there still were hurtful things being said about her. With a final plea, Mia responded, "Well, can you at least take down the page? Can you delete...the Wikipedia webpage? You know, please just do something to stop it [clears throat]." After some time of monitoring the webpage and realizing that nothing had changed, Mia decided to ask the boy to please talk to his friends again to get the webpage taken down. With this attempt, Mia tried to appeal to the boy's moral sense by telling him what his friends were doing was not very nice and by asking him, "How would they feel if they were in my shoes?" At this point Mia felt finally the boy must have listened because, after a little bit, he got his friends to delete the hurtful webpage.

Subtheme 2.2: Blocking. Four of the six teens interviewed used blocking the cyberbully as a strategy. Grace mentioned blocking the cyberbullies on Facebook to deter further contact and attacks. According to Grace, "When I finally went to it [Facebook], my phone had like, over like 10 messages—long messages from them—and I just like blocked them." On the texting app Kik, Asha and Grace blocked or unfriended the cyberbullies after continually receiving hurtful text messages. Skylar also blocked

the cyberbully on Kik after her initial efforts to end the cyberbully's advances through being nice and talking did not work. After an attempt to message the cyberbully on Instagram to see if there was some way to solve the problem did not work for Ivy, she blocked the cyberbullies by setting her Instagram profile to private. Similarly, Asha had to resort to setting her Instagram profile to private to block the cyberbullies from seeing her profile and from making hurtful comments. Asha explained, "You can put...your Instagram user private, so only like people you know can follow you so they [the cyberbullies] can't really say anything or you don't get any messages or anything [because] you block them." However, Asha also mentioned that while blocking helped the situation, blocking was difficult for her to do. Asha found herself being curious and wanting to know what the cyberbullies were saying about her even though their comments were hurtful. Asha reported,

[I]t's kind of hard to like block them because they're still saying stuff. You just don't know about it. So it's kind of hard to just get yourself to block them. But eventually I was like...I don't want to hear it anymore so. So I blocked them.

But I guess...it's kind of hard because they're still texting messages and you can't see it.

Additionally, Mia discussed using blocking as a strategy, but the information she shared about blocking came from reason as blocking was not a strategy she tried. Mia felt that blocking indicated to the cyberbully that you are telling them to stop. She further stated that you could not really solve the issue unless you block the cyberbully. According to Mia, "If you do block them or like it's you know you tell them to please stop. You know, it's not like really solving much unless you do block them."

Subtheme 2.3: Deleting. Deleting was a strategy tried by two of the participants when talking to, confronting, avoiding, or blocking did not help to stop the cyberbullying. Following attempts to talk to, confront, avoid, not respond to, and block the cyberbullies, Asha decided to delete the Kik and Ask.fm apps from her cell phone. Asha found that blocking on Kik did not work as well as blocking on Instagram, which prompted her to delete the app. Asha commented, “It just wasn’t like working as well as like blocking people on Instagram, so I just, I deleted that [Kik] for a long time until it stopped and then I downloaded the app again.” When talking about her experiences with Ask.fm, Asha noted, “Yeah...I got stuff [hurtful messages] on that [Ask.fm] but...at the end I wouldn’t like answer the comments or the questions and I ended up just deleting it.”

Mia also elected to use deleting as a strategy to stop the cyberbullying after attempting to resolve the issue by talking to and confronting the cyberbully directly were not successful. When Mia did not receive the help she expected, she chose to try and edit or take down the embarrassing information the cyberbullies posted about her online. However, when Mia went to the website, she found the webpage was locked so she could not edit or remove any of the hurtful posts or delete it.

Subtheme 2.4: Reporting. The decision of whether to report the cyberbullies differed between teens and their personal situations. Ivy chose to report the cyberbullying to the service providers of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter because she had confidence they would investigate and resolve the issue. Ivy’s rationale for reporting the cyberbullying to service providers was, “I knew if I reported someone then Instagram or Facebook or Twitter would take that upon themselves and investigate that and I knew that I would be safer off with that so that’s what I did.”

In Skylar's case, she elected not to say anything about the cyberbullying to school administrators. Skylar's reasoning behind this decision was that she already had blocked the cyberbully, thus she felt she had handled the situation with some success. Skylar explained,

Since I had already blocked the person by the time the actual physical bullying kicked up...I didn't tell the school. I told my aunt and my cousins and my uncle, like I said, but since the cyberbullying was already done I let that slide past.

Asha also chose not to report the cyberbullying to the school principal, but her thinking was that involving the school principal could potentially make the situation worse, particularly if the cyberbullies got in trouble for their actions. As Asha explained,

I mean going to the principal from school about it, I just thought that would make it worse...if they got in trouble. Like when I let the security guard talk to that kid, like getting them in trouble. I didn't want to get them in trouble because I thought it would make it worse.

Subtheme 2.5: Seeking support. Teens sought help from others when they needed ideas for or assistance in handling the cyberbullying, as well as when they needed emotional support. Asha and Grace sought support and guidance primarily from their mothers. Both of the mothers suggested trying to get the cyberbullies to stop or just to block them. The mothers also suggested seeking help from the school. At her mom's recommendation, Asha tried counseling with her school counselor. However, Asha chose not to take advantage of any of the online resources or use the helplines the counselor suggested because she had her mom for support. In describing the suggestions she received from her counselor, Asha stated,

Yeah, well, like my counselor told me...there were...a bunch of places like you can go online, but I never really did it.... [S]he said that...there's like lines you can call just to talk to someone or something. Like I don't know. I just, it was like a bunch of resources and stuff, but I never like really used them [because] I had my mom and stuff.

As discussed earlier, Asha sought help from the school security guard in confronting the cyberbully and telling him to stop, but she chose not to involve the school principal in the matter. In addition, Asha indicated she sometimes would talk to her friends for support. When Grace approached her school principal and the school counselor for assistance in handling the situation, they did little to help her out. According to Grace, "It was mostly my mom [that helped] because it was like the school principal wasn't doing anything about it and the school counselor just told me it was part of life." Ultimately Grace sought help from an independent therapist who helped her through everything. Grace shared, "She [the therapist] just told me to ignore them. Yeah, she said that every time they say something or make me sad to get a journal and write it down." Skylar mentioned she would talk to her aunt and uncle, who she was living with at the time, for advice and support. Skylar said, "[I]f I couldn't ignore it, I'd talk to my uncle. I'm close to my uncle and he was pretty good at listening and making me feel a little bit better about it." Ivy got advice about handling the cyberbullying from friends who had been cyberbullied before. Ivy shared, "[Y]eah, just like I asked them what I should and they said to me to, you know, to block and report them. So that's what I did." For emotional support, Yori talked with a friend, who was also being cyberbullied by the same person, because the friend could relate to the situation. Although Yori chose not to seek help

from other adults during the time he was being cyberbullied, he added, “Well, if that didn’t stop it [confronting the person], then I...probably...would have gone to a teacher or something.”

Subtheme 2.6: Avoiding. For Asha, avoiding the situation by staying home from school ended up creating negative outcomes that, after time, she realized she had to rectify. Although going back to school and facing the situation was difficult, she knew it needed to be done. When discussing this issue, Asha said, “I don’t know, I just like had to really just like face it I guess and I didn’t want to.” With Mia, avoiding the issue occurred from a different perspective. To alleviate the stress and embarrassment caused by the cyberbullying Mia experienced, she isolated herself at school and tried not to be noticed. In recounting her actions, Mia shared,

I did single myself out...because I figured that you know nobody would talk to me or...at least believe me [because] they thought...why would I do that...and like that is so stupid and so silly and they would make fun of me and laugh at me call me nasty names.

Subtheme 2.7: Consciously ignoring. Consciously ignoring was a strategy all teens mentioned using to try and mitigate the negative feelings and effects associated with being cyberbullied. Making a conscious effort to ignore the cyberbullies’ comments and attacks permitted the teens to rationalize the situation in a way that helped to make cyberbullying less hurtful. To Asha this meant not ignoring the situation completely, but ignoring and not responding to the cyberbullies comments. As Asha described, “Well, not like ignoring it [the cyberbullying] completely. Like not talking to them though.” In Yori’s case, he tried not to really pay attention to the cyberbullying to keep it from being

hurtful. Ivy also stated she really just didn't pay attention to the cyberbullying. In Ivy's mind, "If they really have nothing better to do, then they're obviously going to cyberbully other people and so I just didn't let it get to me." Grace also stated she tried just to ignore what the cyberbullies were saying about her because she knew what they were saying was not true. Skylar incorporated advice she had received from others to help her ignore the situation.

Besides telling people, I would just ignore it like I'd been told to do with bullies my entire life. Or he [her uncle] just told me to ignore it. [He] told me that they were idiots for trying to do things that I didn't want. (Skylar)

For Mia, ignoring the cyberbullying was extremely difficult, but she mustered the strength to continue on as if the cyberbullying did not bother her. Mia indicated she was not going to give anyone the satisfaction of seeing that she was affected by what had happened and shared this experience:

I just, as much as I wanted to cry every day and...put myself in a locker or just hide in the bathroom...I still kinda held my head up high and...I acted like nothing was going on and I acted like it didn't bother me [because]...when something happens like this to somebody you have to act like it doesn't bother you...[because]...if they know that it bothers you that's where they get their high.

Subtheme 2.8: Remaining positive and confident. Teens indicated remaining positive and confident was a strategy they used to help them get through being cyberbullied. Often this strategy required rationalizing the cyberbullies' behaviors. In doing so, teens were able to find ways to keep from taking the cyberbullies' attacks personally, which allowed them to deal with the issue more successfully.

Asha realized the importance of sticking up for herself in a confident, non-combative manner when addressing the cyberbullies. Ivy continued to remind herself that it was the cyberbullies who had the problem, not her. Ivy decided not to let the cyberbullies' comments deter her from doing things she was passionate about and loved. Ivy commented,

And...if I was getting bullied for like one reason and that's what I liked to do then I would keep doing that. I wouldn't have let them stop me from doing that because that's what I like doing and if they have a problem with that, well they don't have to deal with it. They don't have to look at it. They don't have to pay attention to it.

When the cyberbullying began to worsen and Grace's previous attempts to resolve the issue appeared not to be working, she chose to stop fighting back and took a more positive stance. She decided to view the cyberbullies' hurtful remarks as rumors that were not true, which Grace mentioned helped her to keep the cyberbullies' comments from getting to her. Mia rationalized that it was the cyberbullies' jealousy and need to bring others down or see others suffer that was behind their actions. Mia stated, "They...get a kick out of you being upset and you being put down and...it's just their jealousy coming out and that's the only way they know how to...show it. So you...[have to] just act like [it doesn't bother you]."

In contrast, Skylar was put into a position that chipped away at her confidence and made it difficult for her to remain positive. While trying to get through the cyberbullying, Skylar received some criticism by her peers about how she was handling the situation. This added to her stress and made it more difficult for her to focus on

successfully dealing with the cyberbullying, particularly because she felt the individuals who were criticizing her did not know what it felt like to be in her situation. Skylar shared,

I've had a couple...people...since then tell me that I was doing things that I didn't need to be doing. That I was being ridiculous or blowing things out of proportion, but that was...mostly people that don't...understand how stressful it is to be bullied [because] they were *the popular ones* [emphasis added; self-conscious laugh].

Theme 3: While teens were able to figure out effective strategies for getting through the cyberbullying, in some cases their strategies did not work or ended up escalating the cyberbullying. In Theme 3 I indicated the strategies teens found successful for dealing with cyberbullying, as well as strategies teens tried that either did not work or that made the situation worse. The associated subthemes revealed for Theme 3 were (a) talking/confronting, (b) blocking, (c) deleting, (e) avoiding, (f) seeking support, (g) consciously ignoring, (h) shifting of focus, (i) remaining positive and confident, and (j) reporting. Although the majority of the teens deemed these strategies effective, perceived strategy effectiveness depended on teens' individual experiences. Thus, teens reported several coping strategies for cyberbullying as effective and/or ineffective depending on the circumstance.

Subtheme 3.1: Talking/confronting. Teens experienced varied results with talking to and confronting the cyberbully. Half of the teens reported talking to or confronting the cyberbully in person as an effective strategy for managing and overcoming cyberbullying. In contrast, the five out of the six teens who attempted to talk to or

confront the cyberbully online through direct messaging or text messages all reported this strategy as ineffective.

Mia reported confronting and talking to the source of the cyberbullying in person as an effective strategy. Additionally, Mia was the only teen that did not talk to or confront the source of the cyberbullying through direct messaging or text messages. Mia said after several attempts at asking, talking to, and pleading with the source of the cyberbullying in person, he finally was able to get his friends to delete the embarrassing and hurtful webpage they were using to cyberbully her. Mia felt her persistence in asking the source directly for assistance and not taking “No” for an answer helped her resolve the issue. According to Mia, “You know after a little bit...the guy that I did talk to finally got them to delete it and have it erased.”

Ivy, Grace, and Skylar each attempted to talk to or confront the cyberbully using direct messaging or text messaging without success. In Ivy’s case, although she immediately blocked and reported the cyberbullying that occurred on Facebook and Twitter, there was one time on Instagram that she tried direct messaging the cyberbully first to see if there was some way they could resolve the issue. Ivy mentioned,

[T]here might be like a different time where I did get harassed on Instagram and I did...message them asking like if there was a problem and how we could solve that and when there was no solution then I just automatically reported and blocked them.

Grace attempted to direct message the cyberbullies’ on Facebook and Instagram to ask them to stop harassing her, which was not effective. Grace indicated that, not only did

trying to talk to the cyberbullies online not work, it made matters worse. The following is how Grace explained one situation:

When I had asked...this one girl that was bullying me [to stop bothering me], she said she was [going to] come to my house to kick my butt but I was all like, “dude...I don’t care.” And...I was like, “[C]an you just leave me alone. I don’t want to deal with you,” so that...made it worse. So then the girl’s mom started texting me on Facebook...[and] she wouldn’t listen [either].

Skylar described trying to talk to the cyberbully online as an ineffective strategy for managing the cyberbullying. Trying to be nice online and cultivate a friendship with the cyberbully did nothing to keep the situation from escalating. The cyberbully increasingly made unwanted advances and attacks toward Skylar. Skylar shared, “[W]ell, I was trying to be nice. I...thought he was just...trying to be my friend. So I would talk to him for a little bit and he kept making advances. He did it six, seven different times.” To add, Skylar felt that telling the cyberbully she wasn’t interested in him as a person and that she was looking for something more than what he had to offer her made the situation worse. Skylar explained,

I think...telling him that I wasn’t interested in him as a person made it worse. Telling him that I was looking for something more than what he had made it worse. Because, you know, as most people try to do, at least seem to do, he tried to make it clear that he was not normal, like other guys, and that just...made it worse, a lot worse.

Asha’s experience with trying to talk to and confront the cyberbullies through direct messaging and texts was similar to Grace’s experience. At the onset of the

cyberbullying, Asha tried to resolve the situation by responding through text messaging on Kik with pleas for the cyberbullying to stop. When this didn't work, Asha became angry and tried to stick up for herself by sending mean messages back to the cyberbullies, which only made the situation worse. During the interview Asha explained,

When I kept texting back, that didn't work. Like *dynoing* [emphasis added; reactive and repeated texting back and forth]...when they would text me. Like answering them back and saying...leave me alone and stuff...I would just keep them texting back...[because] when I kept texting back they would text back then I would text back....Yeah, probably...when I got mad at them and I'd...try and stick up for myself and I was like being mean back, that made it worse....

As for talking to and confronting the person in person, Asha had the school security guard confront the source of the cyberbullying and tell him to stop, which she indicated helped stop part of the cyberbullying. Furthermore, Asha's school counselor scheduled a group meeting for Asha and her counselor to talk to the cyberbully directly, which she stated was helpful for getting the cyberbullying to stop.

Yori also discussed using direct messaging to confront the cyberbully on Facebook about the situation. In Yori's case, trying to message the cyberbully online to address the problem ended up making matters worse, so he decided to confront the cyberbully at school. Yori said,

I tried to like, kind of like talk to him...like message him on Facebook and it was just making things worse...[because] he was like calling me in the mornings and stuff so I...confronted him in school and I think that helped.

Subtheme 3.2: Blocking. Teens reported mixed results regarding their experiences with and thoughts about blocking the cyberbully. Although teens ultimately determined blocking was an effective strategy for getting the cyberbullying to stop, as well as to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful, two teens declared effectively blocking the cyberbullies required multiple attempts. For Ivy, blocking the cyberbully was successful on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Ivy stated that as soon as the cyberbullying became a problem, she blocked the cyberbullies immediately so they could not see each other's posts or comments and to prevent any further contact. This helped Ivy because she no longer had to deal with the cyberbullies' negativity. Ivy stated, "I just, you know, blocked them so that way I don't have to deal with them." Skylar explained that when the cyberbully would not listen to her requests to leave her alone she blocked him, which she felt helped to end the cyberbullying. Skylar commented, "That was pretty much when it ended, when I blocked him. At least the cyberbullying part of it."

Asha and Grace's experiences with blocking differed from Ivy and Skylar's experiences. Both Asha and Grace found blocking the cyberbully to be a strategy that worked eventually, but that was not successful on the first attempt. Although originally Asha indicated blocking the cyberbully on Instagram worked well, particularly for thwarting hurtful messages, she was not firm in her statement. Asha explained,

Well, I mean, like on Instagram...you can just block people so I blocked them and stuff. And that worked. So...Instagram was easier to deal with [because] cause you can just block them, kind of. And you can put...your Instagram user private so only...people you know can follow you. So they can't really say anything or you don't get any messages...[because] you block them.

On Kik, Asha also struggled to block the cyberbullies. She would get hurtful texts from random numbers she didn't recognize continually. Even though Asha would keep blocking the numbers, she felt blocking on Kik was not as effective as blocking on Instagram. Asha explained,

Well...I'd get like random numbers that would text me and I wouldn't know who they were so I'd just block them.... I'd just keep blocking them but I'd get more...numbers so it didn't work as well...as like blocking people on Instagram.

Grace also experienced difficulty in being able to block the cyberbullies successfully. Grace would block the Facebook account the cyberbullies were using to harass and attack her, but they would create another account and continue with the cyberbullying. After some time, and continuing to block all of the accounts the cyberbullies created, Grace finally was able to get the cyberbullying to stop. Grace said, "Once I blocked [them], like the other profiles they had made, they stopped."

One finding regarding blocking was, contrary to Ivy's report of blocking being an effective strategy, Ivy also suggested blocking the cyberbully might make the situation worse. In further conversation about strategy effectiveness, Ivy revealed that she thought blocking could make the situation worse if the cyberbully became upset at being blocked and decided to retaliate and attack even more. However, when asked to expand on this thought, Ivy could not justify her thinking because the idea came from a point of speculation rather than experience. When asked to expound on the idea that blocking might make the situation worse, Ivy shared:

Maybe, blocking them. I mean when they find out that I have blocked them...they can get angry. I um, honestly I don't have an ex[planation]. I've

experienced...good things with blocking them. I didn't have any...negative experiences with that so I can't really tell you how different it would be [because] I don't have the experience with that.

Similarly, after reasoning that blocking would be an effective strategy, Mia remarked that blocking might make the cyberbullying worse. Like Ivy, Mia felt blocking could make the situation worse if the cyberbully became upset at being blocked and decided to retaliate or escalate the cyberbullying, even though blocking was not a strategy she used. Mia's thoughts on this matter were:

In my opinion, yes, I would believe that it [blocking] could make the situation worse...because they could create...a new account and...just keep creating accounts and...trying to...post different things and say, "Oh, this person blocked me and for like stupid reasons. Like, that's so wrong of them" and basically just make a new profile and talk behind their back.

Subtheme 3.3: Deleting. Only two teens tried deleting as a strategy to get the cyberbullying to stop, and with mixed results. Asha stated deleting the Kik and Ask.fm apps was effective for getting the cyberbullying to stop, as well as for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful. With the apps deleted, there was no way for the cyberbullies to harass or to send hurtful messages to Asha and she was not tempted to continue reacting to the cyberbullies hurtful remarks. Although Mia noted that in the end she was able to convince the source of the cyberbullying to get his friends to take down the webpage they were using to cyberbully her, she did not have any success in trying to delete the webpage herself. The cyberbullies had password-protected the webpage so she

did not have access either to edit or delete any of the hurtful or embarrassing information they had posted on the site.

Subtheme 3.4: Avoiding. Although, most teens found avoiding the issue to be an ineffective strategy, there were two instances where teens reported avoiding was effective for handling the cyberbullying. Grace avoided the whole situation entirely by switching schools. Grace said, “[A]nd then it stopped when I switched schools.” She felt since the cyberbullies no longer saw her they were not prompted to continue the cyberbullying—out of sight, out of mind. However, trying to avoid the cyberbullying while it was occurring and attempting to ignore the cyberbullies comments were not effective strategies. Staying off Facebook and not responding to the cyberbullies comments or threats did not work for Grace and only made the situation worse. Grace indicated not paying attention to the cyberbullies and doing what they wanted her to do or not heeding their warnings made the cyberbullying spiral out of control. Mia used avoiding in a different, yet also effective manner. Mia felt keeping to herself, thus removing herself from the situation and related drama, helped in getting the cyberbullying to stop. Mia described avoiding the situation as follows:

When that was going on, I just kept myself and I just was like the quiet girl that...nobody would really notice...or at least [I tried] not to be noticed [chuckles].... I would just act like I was a new kid and...just hopefully let it all die down after that.

Skylar felt although avoiding the cyberbully online helped the situation, avoiding him in person only fueled the issue.

Okay, so ignoring the person himself did not work because even though I blocked him and ignored him on online on the chat site, we went to the same school. So I saw him frequently. He would still make advances to me...in person, so there was that. Ignoring him online was one thing, but ignoring him in person didn't work as well. (Skylar)

Finally, Asha found avoiding the problem to be an extremely ineffective strategy. Asha started staying home from school to avoid the issue. Even though staying at home and not dealing with the cyberbullying was easier and more comfortable for Asha initially, she admitted it did not work well in the long run and that it was a bad idea. Staying home made her fall behind in school, which, in turn, created more stress. In describing this experience, Asha shared,

I would not go to school. Like I didn't want to go to school and I would like stay home from school a lot and that didn't work for me. That was a bad idea.... I felt staying at home didn't work for me [because]...then you get like really far behind and it's a lot of stuff.

Subtheme 3.5: Seeking support. Teens found seeking help from others to be effective for managing and overcoming the cyberbullying, albeit under slightly different circumstances. Some teens sought assistance to come up with ideas for strategies to manage and overcome the cyberbullying, while others sought direct backing from others to talk to or confront the cyberbully. The most instrumental form of support reported by teens was having someone to talk while they were attempting to manage the situation.

Asha and Grace employed similar help-seeking strategies. Asha and Grace each mentioned talking to their mothers, approaching school officials, and going to counseling

to help them get through being cyberbullied. Even though the support they sought was similar, the outcomes differed. Asha and Grace said seeking ideas and advice from their mothers about how to handle the cyberbullying was effective. In approaching school officials for help, Asha found having the school security guard confront the source of the cyberbullying, as well as having a meeting with herself, the school counselor, and the cyberbully to address the issue, were helpful for getting the cyberbullying to stop. On the other hand, approaching the school principal and the school counselor for help with the cyberbullying was an unsuccessful strategy for Grace. Grace shared that the school principal did nothing to help her resolve the situation. Likewise, the school counselor told Grace that cyberbullying was simply a part of life and, subsequently, offered her no assistance. Skylar also stated getting advice from her uncle and aunt, whom she was living with at the time, helped her successfully manage being cyberbullied. Ivy thought asking friends who had been cyberbullied in the past for ideas on how to handle the issue was effective.

All but two teens brought up the importance of having someone to talk to for helping to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful. Asha mentioned talking to her mom, her school counselor, and her friends as being useful for helping her process the negative emotions being cyberbullied evoked. Asha noted, “Well I had...my mom [to talk to]. And...just talking to my counselor and my friends and stuff [helped].” Yori stated talking with the friend who also was being cyberbullied by the same person was helpful for relieving some of his stress because the friend understood and could relate to his struggle. Skylar said talking to family she could trust, particularly her uncle who was a good listener, made her feel a little bit better about the whole situation. For Grace, the

most effective form of emotional support came from her independent therapist. The therapist suggested specific and tangible strategies to help her alleviate the emotional distress associated with the cyberbullying.

Lastly, Mia specified having someone to confide in that you knew you could trust was instrumental in getting past the negative effects of the cyberbullying. Mia talked to her closet friend, who was like a sister to her, to help her get through the situation. Mia stated that knowing she had someone who was on her side, and who would stand by her when others were judging her or putting her down, helped give her the strength and confidence to get through the cyberbullying and associated fallout. The following is Mia's description of the support she received from her friend:

My one friend...[who] was like a sister to me...would come up to me and say, "Mia, what's going on? I know this is not you.... [T]ell me exactly what happened." And knowing that I still had a friend that...was on my side...sticking up for me when...everybody else is putting me down...gave me...the confidence to...keep my head up high. Knowing that somebody still believes in you and still knows who you truly...are...kind of helps you keep your head up high and still keep going and not letting anybody stop you. Because...different people, even when your family somehow finds out about it...would think, "Oh my God, like why would you do that and what's going on?".... [T]here is always that one person that will stick with you no matter [what] and will always be on your side...when everybody else turns against you, even [when] your family...doesn't really understand what's going on.

Subtheme 3.6: Consciously ignoring. All teens reported consciously making an effort to ignore the cyberbullies' comments and actions as effective in some capacity. Asha made sure to specify that not ignoring the situation completely, but ignoring the cyberbullies' comments was useful for getting the cyberbullying to stop. When Asha refrained from responding to the cyberbullies' comments, the cyberbullying waned. Asha felt the cyberbullies became bored when their comments no longer appeared to affect her, to which Asha concluded made it no longer any fun to cyberbully her.

According to Asha,

I guess after...a while, and...after not talking to them, I think they just...got bored of me not answering [because] I wasn't getting any messages. And you know by me not getting affected by it anymore I think they got...bored of it.

Similar to Asha's experience, Skylar found consciously ignoring the situation helped to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful, as well as to get the cyberbullying to stop. Skylar's approach was, "If it won't go away, just ignore it. And that pretty much, that worked, very well." Yori found ignoring the cyberbully's comments effective for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful, but indicated not paying attention to the cyberbully's comments and attacks did nothing to get the cyberbullying to stop. For Ivy, deciding to ignore the cyberbullies' cruel comments intentionally and not letting the remarks get to her was effective for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful. Ivy commented, "I did get a lot of...hate comments [but] I just ignored it and it doesn't bother me now."

Grace stated doing the following: "I just didn't think about what they were saying [because] like I know they weren't true," helped make the cyberbullies' comments less

hurtful. In Mia's situation, discounting the cyberbullies' comments as rumors allowed her to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful. Mia applied her personal beliefs about rumors to her own situation to help her ignore the cyberbullies' remarks. Mia noted,

You know, rumors are rumors. To me a rumor is stuff that people make up just...for fun...to get laughs out of...other people's hurt.... [W]hen I hear a rumor I don't believe them and I think other people when they are bullied like this, they shouldn't listen to the rumors and they shouldn't listen to the people that are doing this to them.

Subtheme 3.7: Shifting of focus. Teens used activities or events to shift their focus from the cyberbullying to something else to help them successfully manage being cyberbullied. Half of the teens mentioned engaging in hobbies or activities to divert their attention from the cyberbullying were effective for alleviating the stress and negative emotions associated with being cyberbullied. One teen commented the occurrence of another event that removed the focus from her was helpful for getting the cyberbullying to stop.

Ivy shared that she had a strong interest in doing special effects makeup, which she used as a diversion to not let the cyberbullying get to her. Ivy stated, "I just kept doing what I love doing the most and it made me happy." Skylar engaged herself in hobbies, such as spending time with her cats, drawing, writing, or reading to help keep her mind off of the cyberbullying. Grace said listening to music was something she did to help her relax and relieve some stress. Additionally, Grace found journaling provided an effective method for managing any negative emotions triggered by the cyberbullying.

Grace noted writing down her feelings in a journal when she was saddened by something the cyberbullies said really helped to make her feel better.

Mia's experience regarding shifting of focus to help with the cyberbullying differed from Ivy, Skylar, and Grace's situations. For Mia, shifting of focus took place literally, when something happened to another student at school that removed the attention from Mia and the cyberbullying she was experiencing. In short, Mia's situation became *old news* [emphasis added]. Mia shared, "There was like another rumor. Something else happened to somebody else and the rumor around me kind of blew over."

Subtheme 3.8: Remaining positive and confident. Of the teens that discussed strategies related to remaining positive and confident, all four teens felt these types of strategies were effective for managing and overcoming cyberbullying. Asha and Grace felt not letting the cyberbullies see their hurtful remarks affected them helped to get the cyberbullying to stop. Ivy stated not paying credence to the cyberbullies hateful comments and threats and not letting their negative energy interfere in her life was important for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful. To add, Ivy shared,

And all that made me a stronger person and made me who I am. I can just, I thank them for giving me the...what's the word, like the power to just ignore them and create something better because they're giving me their attention, if that makes sense.

Mia also commented on the usefulness of remaining positive and confident to effectively deal with cyberbullying. Mia stressed the importance of remaining confident and self-assured no matter how bad the situation is. Mia explained,

No matter how bad the bullying can be...or how bad...the situation is, it's always good to stick up for yourself and to just show people that you have so much confidence and just be like, "Listen, I'm too old for this and I don't need it," and just walk away.

Additionally Mia asserted standing your ground and not letting people see that the cyberbullying is affecting you would show the cyberbullies that you can't be messed with. She commented, "When you show them that you're not...upset and...you don't think it's right and you stick up for yourself, you're showing them that you know, 'Wow, they're not messing around!'"

Subtheme 3.9: Reporting. Teens' views regarding reporting the cyberbullying as a strategy differed in terms of effectiveness. Asha and Grace each indicated reporting was ineffective handling the cyberbullying. Although Asha mentioned earlier that having the school security guard confront the cyberbully and tell him to stop was an effective strategy, she also felt that reporting the cyberbullying to the security guard might have made the situation worse. Asha thought the reason people were cyberbullying her, or maybe the reason the cyberbullying continued as long as it did, was because she reported the issue to the school security guard and asked for his help in resolving the situation. Asha explained, "I guess the reason people thought what they did and would like text me...was that my mom went to the security guard...at my school." Grace stated reporting the cyberbullying to the school principal and the school counselor was not effective at all. She commented that neither of these school officials offered her any type of help or support in handling the issue. According to Grace, the school principal took no

action to help her with the cyberbullying and the school counselor implied, simply, that she needed to deal with it.

During the interview, Ivy gave no indication of whether she felt reporting was an effective strategy to use overall. While Ivy stated early on in the interview that she reported the cyberbullies in each instance of cyberbullying she experienced (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, at school), she only mentioned reporting the cyberbullying that occurred at school as being an effective strategy for resolving the problem. She did not reveal whether she deemed reporting to service providers as an effective strategy. The only thing Ivy said when discussing strategy effectiveness for handling cyberbullying was, “Every strategy that I have tried...worked.”

Mia thought reporting might be a useful strategy, but this information emerged while talking about strategy effectiveness and not from her personal experience. In thinking about the strategies that worked and did not work to handle the cyberbullying, Mia came to the conclusion that reporting the cyberbully might be a good idea. Mia felt reporting the cyberbully would prompt the service provider to reprimand the person or to delete their account. During the interview, Mia expressed, “[T]hat way...the people of Facebook or Twitter [...] know that, ‘Ok, they’re bullying, so let’s delete their account.’ Or you know show them that [...] it’s not right to do this.”

Table 11 represents an overall summary of the efficacy of the coping strategies teens in the study reported using to manage and overcome being cyberbullied.

Table 11

Summary of Coping Strategy Effectiveness as Reported by Teens

Strategy	Effective	Effective/ineffective
Talking/confronting		X
Blocking		X
Deleting		X
Avoiding		X
Seeking support	X	
Consciously ignoring	X	
Shifting of focus	X	
Remaining positive and confident	X	
Reporting		X

Note. Effective = coping strategies that were successful for managing and overcoming being cyberbullied. Effective/Ineffective = coping strategies that either worked or did not work to manage and overcome being cyberbullied, depending on the context of the situation.

Theme 4: Advice to others for managing and overcoming cyberbullying

successfully came from teens' personal experience. All teens shared suggestions and advice for others attempting to deal with being cyberbullied. Their recommendations came from what teens felt worked best for them to manage and overcome cyberbullying successfully. The subthemes identified for the suggestions and advice teens shared were (a) talking/confronting, (b) blocking, (c) avoiding, (d) reporting, (e) seeking support, (f) consciously ignoring, and (g) remaining positive and confident. However, for this section the results are reported by participant rather than by subtheme to create a more cohesive summary of what teens recommended.

Asha. The advice Asha would give to others is to not take the cyberbullying personally and to continue on with your life. She recommended believing in yourself and not allowing the cyberbullies' cruel remarks or actions affect you. Asha said,

I would tell them not to take it...personally, which I know is...hard, but...you can...get through it if you like just...go on with your life and [...] don't let it affect you. Just believe [in] your talent or whatever and just [do] not let people...being mean and saying stupid stuff affect you.

Asha also stated it was important not to give the cyberbullies the satisfaction of seeing that their remarks are affecting you. She recommended, “[J]ust don't let them...see it's affecting you, even if it is.” Additionally, Asha suggested talking to others, such as family members or friends, for support. She suggested, “Just...talk to people about it. Like talk to your mom or your dad about it, or someone about it.” Finally, Asha advised against staying at home and not going to school to avoid the situation, saying it was not a good strategy for dealing with cyberbullying. She expressed, “I would not want someone not going to school.”

Yori. Yori's suggestions for someone else dealing with cyberbullying were as follows. First he suggested trying to talk calmly to the cyberbully in person to try to resolve the issue. If talking with the cyberbully does not produce any results, Yori recommended going to someone else for help. Finally he cautioned against doing anything that might make the situation worse. Yori shared,

First of all I would like to suggest that...they...go and talk in person, like calmly and not...fight [them] or anything. Just...try and...sit [them] down and just...talk with them and see...how could they work it out. If that doesn't work, go to someone else...for help and not like make things worse.

Ivy. Ivy's overall suggestions and advice for others who are being cyberbullied were to ignore it, to remain positive and optimistic, and to not let anyone discourage you

from doing things you like—from following your passions. Ivy recommended, “Just to keep a positive mind and...keep your hopes up. Don’t let anyone...discourage you in doing stuff. If you’re getting cyberbullied then just ignore it. That’s the best thing you can do.”

Grace. Based on Grace’s experience, she recommended that anyone experiencing cyberbullying should block the cyberbully and ignore them. She advised not listening to what the cyberbullies say because what they are saying is not true. Grace suggested, “Just to block [them] and ignore them [because] what they’re saying is not true. It’s just rumors.” She also suggested asking a parent or a friend for help if you cannot handle the cyberbullying on your own. Lastly Grace encouraged going to see a therapist, which she noted helped her get through the cyberbullying successfully. She recommended, “They should see a counselor [because] that’s what I did.”

Skylar. Skylar’s advice for others experiencing cyberbullying was to block the cyberbullies, ignore them, and don’t think about them because what they are saying about you is not true. She suggested, “Ignore them. They’re wrong. Whatever they’re saying about you it’s not true. [J]ust block [them] and don’t think about them anymore.” Additionally, Skylar felt it was important to talk to people you can trust about the situation. She recommended, “Talk to people you can trust. Talk to people you trust wholeheartedly. Tell people about it. Don’t keep it silent [because] that’s only [going to] make it worse.”

Mia. Mia’s advice for others being cyberbullied was to confront the cyberbully in person in a confident, yet assertive, manner. According to Mia, “The best thing you could do is...stick up for yourself and be like, ‘Listen...there’s no need for this.

You're...bothering me but I'm not bothering you. Just let me be.” If talking to the person did not work, Mia suggested blocking them. She stated, “And if they keep bothering you I would just...block them from social media. And then, just...block their number as well because that's really all you can do...so that way things stop.” Along with blocking, Mia advised reporting the cyberbully to service providers. She added, “Another good one is to block and report [because] then that way...the people of Facebook or Twitter...know that, ‘Ok, they're bullying so let's delete their account.’ Or you know show them that...it's not right to do this.”

Theme 5: Teens' current views regarding cyberbullying reflected what they discovered through the course of coping with cyberbullying. Teens came away from their experiences of managing and overcoming cyberbullying with certain realizations. The perceptions and final thoughts teens shared about coping with cyberbullying revealed what teens learned during this process. The subthemes identified from the insights teens discussed were (a) remaining positive and confident, (b) learning acceptance, and (c) developing awareness.

Subtheme 5.1: Remaining positive and confident. Some of the teens realized the importance of remaining positive and confident to successfully coping with cyberbullying. Asha learned that as long as you feel good about yourself, and you are happy with yourself, it does not matter what other people think or say. Asha stated, “As long as...you feel good about yourself...it doesn't really matter like what other people [do] or say...if you're happy with yourself.” Similarly, Ivy learned from her experience not to care so much about what other people think of her. She noted, “[I]t doesn't bother me now. It made me a stronger person and made me who I am.” To add, Skylar learned

that it's best to disregard others' shallowness and stupidity. She declared, "Some people...can be incredibly stupid and shallow and it's best if you don't pay attention to [them]."

Subtheme 5.2: Learning acceptance. In retrospect, teens indicated certain levels of acceptance as being part of the process of managing and overcoming cyberbullying successfully. Ivy stated that after effectively blocking the cyberbullies so she no longer had to put up with their hateful comments and threats, it was no big deal. Likewise, Skylar's final words about coping with cyberbullying were, "Just that it's best to block it, ignore it, and move on." Mia revealed that, because of the type of cyberbullying she experienced, there was one aspect related to the cyberbullying that could not be reversed and that, regretfully, she had to accept. She explained, "[F]or the picture, I mean everybody already [sigh], they already kinda had it...so I couldn't really do anything much about the picture." In Asha's view, cyberbullying happens—and to a lot of people—so if it happens to you, you are not alone or being singled out. She commented, "It happens here, like it happens to a lot of people, and you're not alone and by yourself."

Subtheme 5.3: Developing awareness. Several teens shared specific realizations and insights regarding managing and overcoming cyberbullying that resulted from their experience. Asha communicated that asking for help from others to deal with being cyberbullied does not make you any less of a person or mean that you cannot handle things on your own. She remarked, "Asking for help like doesn't mean that you're...not able to...deal with it." Ivy realized that it is not safe to assume others will not see

exchanges that occur on social media. She cautioned, “Just know that other people are always watching.”

One lesson Grace learned from this experience was that you have to know who your true friends are. Grace stated, “Not everybody’s [going to] be there for you like they say they will.” Similarly, Mia learned not to trust anyone she did not know very well. She felt sharing personal information and photos with someone that she was not in a serious and committed relationship with was a mistake. Mia expressed, “From my personal experience [chuckles]...I would say don’t trust the person until you really get to know them...or until you’re really in a serious relationship with them.”

Finally, Skylar indicated that being cyberbullied was more frustrating and annoying than it was hurtful. According to Skylar, “Actually the physical...in person bullying has been more harmful than the cyberbullying was.” Skylar also reiterated that anyone who has not experienced cyberbullying cannot understand how stressful it is and should not be critical of how someone who is experiencing cyberbullying handles the situation.

Step 6: Answering RQ1 – What strategies did victims of cyberbullying use to cope with, counteract, and prevent cyberbullying? The strategies teens used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied depended on whether they were trying to get the cyberbullying to stop or attempting to handle the negative effects of the cyberbullying emotionally. The teens’ methods of coping and coping strategies chosen depended on their levels of experience, knowledge, maturity, and autonomy. Older teens preferred to deal with the issue on their own, while younger teens tended to seek support from others for coming up with ideas for strategies to cope with the cyberbullying, as well as for

actively helping them to get the cyberbullying to stop. Teens who preferred to handle the cyberbullying themselves stated they either instinctively knew what to do or they drew from previous knowledge, common sense, and experience to develop the coping strategies they employed.

Strategies used to cope with cyberbullying emotionally. The coping strategies teens tried to help to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful included strategies that helped them distance themselves from the cyberbullying and its associated negative effects, that helped them to keep their mind off of the situation, and that provided them with a sense of emotional support. These strategies included (a) seeking advice from or confiding in others, such as family members, friends, school counselors, or therapists; (b) trying to avoid the situation online, as well as trying to avoid the cyberbullies or related drama at school; (c) shifting their focus from the cyberbullying to activities or hobbies that helped teens keep their minds off of the cyberbullying such as listening to music, reading, drawing, journaling, or doing special effects makeup; (d) blocking the cyberbullies so teens would no longer see the cyberbullies' hurtful comments; (e) deleting apps or websites where the cyberbullying took place so teens would no longer see or react to the cyberbullies' hurtful comments; (f) consciously ignoring the situation; (g) striving to remain positive and confident; and (h) accepting that cyberbullying happens, it is not personal, and the teens were not to blame for the cyberbullying they were experiencing.

Strategy effectiveness of strategies used cope with cyberbullying emotionally.

The coping strategies teens deemed effective for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful were (a) seeking emotional support from others, (b) consciously ignoring the

situation, (c) avoiding associated drama and not doing anything to make the situation worse, (d) engaging in activities or hobbies that helped keep teens' minds off of the cyberbullying, (e) deleting apps where the cyberbullying took place, (f) remaining positive and confident given the situation, and (g) realizing that cyberbullying happens and it was not the teens' fault. The strategy that proved to be either effective or ineffective depending on the context of the situation was blocking the cyberbullies so they could no longer see their hurtful comments. One teen found this strategy to be successful, while another teen stated blocking the cyberbullies did not help her keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful because she found herself wanting to know what the cyberbullies were saying about her online. The coping strategy teens felt was not effective for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful was avoiding the cyberbullies, whether it was online or in person.

Strategies used to get the cyberbullying to stop. Initial strategies teens used to get the cyberbullying to stop were (a) blocking the cyberbullies to deter further contact; (b) trying to avoiding the issue altogether either by ignoring the cyberbullying, by staying offline, or by staying home from school; (c) talking to or confronting the cyberbullies online or in person; and (d) reporting the cyberbullies to adults, service providers, or authorities. When the initial strategies teens tried did not prove useful, they modified their approach, using reasoning to develop additional strategies and seeking assistance from others for help in getting the cyberbullying to stop. The individuals teens sought help or advice from were family members, peers, school personnel, and therapists. The resulting strategies teens developed through these processes included (a) talking or confronting the cyberbullies in person in a calm, yet firm, manner and telling them to

stop; (b) reporting the cyberbullying to adults; (c) having adults talk to or confront the cyberbullies in person and tell them to stop; (d) repeatedly blocking the cyberbullies until the hurtful messages and attacks finally stopped; (e) deleting apps or attempting to delete websites where the cyberbullying occurred; (f) attempting to delete the hurtful comments or posts from the websites the cyberbullies were using to cyberbully; (g) consciously ignoring and no longer reacting to the cyberbullies' attacks or comments; and (g) switching schools to remove any chance of involvement with the cyberbully entirely.

Strategy effectiveness of coping strategies used to get the cyberbullying to stop.

The coping strategies teens deemed effective for getting the cyberbullying to stop were (a) seeking support or ideas from friends and family, (b) talking to or confronting the cyberbullies in person and telling them to stop, (c) deleting the apps where the cyberbullying occurred, (d) consciously ignoring and no longer reacting to the cyberbullying, and (e) switching schools. Several strategies teens used proved to be either effective or ineffective depending on the context of the situation. Some teens felt blocking the cyberbully was effective, while other teens had to repeatedly block the cyberbullies—sometimes on multiple accounts or profiles the cyberbullies had created—to deter further contact and stop the attacks. The effectiveness of reporting the cyberbullying to adults depended on the individual adult to whom the teen reported and their willingness to help out. Although teens who stated having adults talk to or confront the cyberbully in person and tell them to stop was effective, some also felt it made the situation worse if the cyberbully became upset. Finally, deleting the websites where the cyberbullying occurred was effective only if the website could be deleted by the teen being cyberbullied, which was not the case in this study, or when the cyberbullies agreed

to delete the website, which finally was the case. The coping strategies teens felt were not effective for getting the cyberbullying to stop or that ended up escalating the cyberbullying were (a) talking to or confronting the cyberbullies online or through instant messaging; (b) avoiding the cyberbullying either by staying offline, by avoiding the cyberbullies in person, or by staying home from school; and (c) attempting to delete the cyberbullies' hurtful comments or posts from the websites the cyberbullying occurred. This last strategy did not work because the teen did not have access to edit or remove comments or posts from the website.

Strategies used to prevent cyberbullying. Although teens indicated cyberbullying happens, and that there was no real way to stop cyberbullying completely, they did feel there were ways to lessen one's chances of being cyberbullied. Strategies teens felt would help prevent cyberbullying were (a) realizing that others always are watching what you do online, (b) being cautious about who you trust, particularly if the person is someone you do not know very well; (c) not sharing personal information or photos with people you do not know well; and (d) knowing who your true friends are. As these strategies were preventative measures suggested by teens based on what they learned through their experiences of managing and overcoming being cyberbullied, teens did not discuss the strategies in terms of effectiveness for preventing cyberbullying.

Research Question 2

To conduct the pattern matching analysis for RQ2, I developed a table that illustrated the findings from research on coping with cyberbullying and the findings from this study. By using this procedure, I was able to determine whether there were any differences in the findings when using a qualitative approach that gathered information

directly from former victims of cyberbullying—specifically whether there were any new methods for coping with cyberbullying that teens from my study found to be particularly effective or whether teens found any strategies suggested in the research and literature to be ineffective. Additionally, by comparing predicted patterns from research with the observed patterns in my data I was able to learn whether the findings from previous studies on coping with cyberbullying actually represented the experiences of the participants in my study.

Table 12 shows the comparisons between predicted and reported patterns for coping with cyberbullying from the analysis of data in research articles and the associated findings from this study. Column 1 presents findings from the literature and previous research on coping with cyberbullying. Column 2 reports the findings from my study.

Table 12

Predicted and Reported Patterns of Coping Strategies for Managing and Overcoming Cyberbullying

Coping strategies for cyberbullying identified in research	Coping strategies for cyberbullying reported in Neaville study
Strategies used to cope with cyberbullying to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful	
Not mentioned	Teens differed in their experiences of the effectiveness of blocking with some saying it was effective and others saying it was not effective.
Avoiding the situation (e.g., trying or pretending to ignore the situation, not going to school, avoiding sites where the cyberbullying took place, creating a new account or profile)	Teens differed in their experiences of the effectiveness of avoiding the situation with some saying it was effective and some saying it was not effective.
(Dehue et al., 2008; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Völlink et al., 2013)	
Purposefully ignoring the cyberbullying (e.g.,	Teens agreed about their experiences of the

<p>taking the situation lightly, consciously ignoring, focusing attention elsewhere)</p> <p>(Dehue et al., 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)</p>	<p>effectiveness of consciously ignoring the cyberbullying saying it was effective.</p>
<p>Seeking social support (e.g., confiding in and receiving positive support from friends, family, adults, sharing feelings, venting)</p> <p>(Aricak et al., 2008; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dagleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)</p>	<p>Teens agreed about their experiences with seeking social support saying it was effective.</p>
<p>Seeking psychological support (e.g., counseling, therapy)</p> <p>(Šleglova & Cerna, 2011)</p>	<p>Teens differed in their experiences of the effectiveness of seeking psychological support with some saying it was effective and others saying it was not effective.</p>
<p>Seeking outlets (e.g., hobbies, diversions, sports, exercise)</p> <p>(Craig et al., 2007; Machackova et al., 2013; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011)</p>	<p>Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of seeking outlets saying it was effective.</p>
<p>Depreciating the cyberbully (e.g., discrediting or making fun of the cyberbully)</p> <p>Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011</p>	<p>Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of depreciating the cyberbully saying it was effective.</p>
<p>Using humor (e.g., making fun of the situation, laughing off the situation)</p> <p>(Craig et al., 2007; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011)</p>	<p>Not mentioned</p>
<p>Searching for advice online (e.g., support groups, information for dealing with cyberbullying, helplines)</p> <p>(Machackova et al., 2013)</p>	<p>Not mentioned</p>
<p>Accepting that cyberbullying is a part of life and is going to happen</p>	<p>Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of accepting that cyberbullying</p>

(Parris et al., 2012, Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013)	occurs and adapting to the situation saying it was effective.
Focusing on the positive (e.g., moving on with one's life, not dwelling on the situation, remaining optimistic and confident)	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of remaining positive and confident saying it was effective.
(Parris et al., 2012)	
Reframing the situation (e.g., justifying or trivializing the situation)	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of reframing the situation saying it was effective.
(Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013)	
<u>Strategies used to counteract cyberbullying to get the cyberbullying to stop</u>	
Victims prefer to deal with the issue themselves	Teens differed in their experiences of preferring to deal with the issue themselves with some saying they preferred to deal with the cyberbullying on their own and others saying they chose to seek help.
((Li, 2010; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009)	
Confronting the cyberbully (e.g., in person or online)	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of confronting the cyberbully saying confronting the cyberbully in person was effective and confronting the cyberbully online was not effective.
(Aricak et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dagleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013, Willard, 2007)	
Talking in person	Teens agreed about their experiences of talking calmly and firmly to the cyberbully saying it was effective.
(Parris et al., 2012)	
Blocking the cyberbully	Teens differed in their experiences of the effectiveness of blocking the cyberbullying with some saying it was effective, although often it took multiple attempts to block the cyberbully successfully, and others saying it was not effective.
(Agatston et al., 2007; Aricak et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dagleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009)	
Deleting threatening messages or social media	Teens differed in their experiences of the

<p>profiles</p> <p>(Dehue et al., 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009)</p>	<p>effectiveness of deleting with some saying deleting apps was effective and others saying attempting to delete hurtful messages or webpages and social media profiles used to cyberbully was not effective.</p>
<p>Retaliating against the cyberbully (e.g., cyberbullying back, physical retaliation)</p> <p>(Agatston et al., 2007; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)</p>	<p>Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of retaliating against the cyberbully saying it was not effective.</p>
<p>Reporting to adults (e.g., parents, teachers, school personnel or administrators)</p> <p>(Agatston et al., 2007; Aricak et al., 2008; Craig et al., 2007; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Mishna et al., 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)</p>	<p>Teens differed in their experiences of the effectiveness of reporting to adults with some saying it was effective and others saying it was not effective.</p>
<p>Reporting to authorities (e.g. service providers, police)</p> <p>(Cassidy et al., 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Willard, 2007)</p>	<p>Teens agreed about their experiences of effectiveness of reporting to authorities saying it was effective, although in one case the effectiveness of reporting to authorities is unknown.</p>
<p>Punishing the cyberbully (e.g., identifying the cyberbully and enforcing punishment by some form of behavior code, restricting access to technologies, not allowing cyberbully to participate in school activities or sports, school suspension or alternative schooling)</p> <p>(Cassidy et al., 2009; Kraft & Wang, 2009; Stacey, 2009)</p>	<p>Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of punishing the cyberbully saying it was not effective.</p>
<p>Avoiding the situation</p>	<p>Teens agreed about their experiences of the</p>

(Dehue et al., 2008; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Völlink et al., 2013)	effectiveness of avoiding the cyberbullying saying it was not effective.
Staying offline (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Smith et al. 2008)	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of staying offline saying it was not effective.
Doing nothing at all (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2010; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Völlink et al., 2013)	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of doing nothing saying it was not effective.
Not mentioned	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of sticking up for oneself saying it was effective.
Changing account, username, or number (Aricak et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008)	Not mentioned
Ignoring the cyberbullying (Agatston et al., 2007; Craig et al., 2007; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Smith et al., 2008; Willard, 2007)	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of ignoring the cyberbullying saying it was not effective.
Seeking social support (Aricak et al., 2008; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of seeking social support saying it was effective.
Seeking advice online (Machackova et al., 2013)	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of seeking resources online saying it was not effective.

Blocking the cyberbully	Not mentioned
(Agatston et al., 2007; Aricak et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009)	
Education about proper Internet use	Not mentioned
(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Mishna et al., 2009)	
Education about Internet privacy	Not mentioned
(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Parris et al., 2012; Willard, 2007)	
Cyberbullying and online risk prevention education	Not mentioned
(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Price & Dalgleish, 2010)	
Using proper online etiquette and communicating in a kind manner	Not mentioned
(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Li, 2010; Willard, 2007)	
There is no way to prevent or to stop cyberbullying from happening	Teens agreed about the belief that the cyberbullying happens and, although there is no way to stop it completely, there are ways to lessen your chances of being cyberbullied.
(Li, 2010; Mishna et al., 2009; Parris et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2008)	
Safeguarding passwords, personal information, and account information from others	Not mentioned
(Ariack et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patching, 2012a; 2012b; Mishna et al., 2009)	
Monitoring personal information or images that others have access to online	Teens agreed about their experiences of monitoring what others have access to online saying being aware that other people always are watching what you do on social media was effective.
(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Parris et al., 2012; Willard, 2007)	

Not trusting others you do not know (Dehue et al., 2008; Mishna et al., 2009)	Teens agreed about their experiences of the effectiveness of not trusting others you do not know well saying not sharing personal information or photos you do not know well, not trusting others you do not really know, and knowing who your true friends are was effective.
Talking in person before the issue escalates to a cyberbullying situation (Parris et al., 2012)	Not mentioned

The pattern matching analysis revealed the following similarities and differences in coping patterns for cyberbullying from previous research and coping patterns from this study.

Strategies used to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful. Coping strategies I identified in my study that were effective for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful and that were consistent with the findings from previous research included (a) accepting that cyberbullying happens and, subsequently, finding ways to handle it; (b) seeking social support; (c) consciously ignoring the cyberbullying; (d) seeking outlets or diversions; (e) depreciating the cyberbully; (e) reframing the situation; and (f) focusing on the positive. Strategies for coping with cyberbullying emotionally that I found to present mixed results of effectiveness, depending on the context of the situation, included avoiding the issue and seeking psychological support. One strategy suggested in the findings from previous research for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful that teens in this study felt was ineffective was searching for advice online. The only coping strategy suggested in the findings from previous research that teens did not mention in this study was using humor to handle the cyberbullying emotionally. Contrastingly, the

only coping strategy for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful mentioned by teens in this study that was not presented in the findings from previous research was blocking the cyberbullies to no longer see the hurtful comments or posts.

Strategies used to get the cyberbullying to stop. The consistencies I found in coping patterns for strategies that effectively helped teens get the cyberbullying to stop included (a) talking to or confronting the cyberbullies in person, (b) reporting to authorities, and (c) seeking social support. Strategies I identified in this study for getting the cyberbullying to stop that were not consistent with suggestions from the research were (a) retaliating against the cyberbullies, (b) talking to or confronting the cyberbullies online, (c) punishing the cyberbullies, (d) avoiding the issue, (e) staying offline, (f) doing nothing at all, (g) ignoring the cyberbullying, and (h) seeking advice online. Although strategy effectiveness of the aforementioned strategies differed in the findings from previous research, my findings showed each of these strategies were ineffective. Strategies for getting the cyberbullying to stop that I found presented mixed results of effectiveness depending on the context of the situation were (a) blocking the cyberbullies, (b) deleting threatening messages or profiles, and (c) reporting to adults. Strategies suggested in the research for getting the cyberbullying to stop that teens in my study did not mention were changing one's account or username information and changing one's phone number. The only strategy I identified in the findings of this study that was not found in the findings from previous research for getting the cyberbullying to stop was sticking up for oneself against the cyberbullies. Finally, I identified similarities in coping patterns that showed victims, particularly older teens, prefer to deal with the issue themselves.

Strategies used to prevent cyberbullying. I revealed coping patterns for strategies used to prevent cyberbullying that showed consistencies in the belief that really there is no way to prevent cyberbullying from occurring, but that monitoring what a person does online, what others have access to online, and not trusting others a person does not know well can serve as preventative measures and lessen the risk of being cyberbullied. Strategies suggested in the findings from previous research that I did not identify in my study consisted of (a) using proper online etiquette; (b) receiving education about proper Internet use, Internet privacy, or cyberbullying and online risk prevention; (c) safeguarding passwords, personal information, and account information from others; (d) blocking the cyberbullies; and (e) talking in person before the issue escalates into a cyberbullying situation.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To establish the trustworthiness of my study I employed the following techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Member checking. I conducted member checks during the interviews by soliciting feedback from participants to determine if what I heard in the interview resonated with what the participants shared about the strategies used to manage and overcome cyberbullying. I quickly summarized participants' responses after every few interview questions and fed it back to the participants to verify that what I was hearing and was understanding was accurate. At the end of each interview, I again summarized what I learned from participants during the interview to verify what I learned was

consistent with what participants said. At each point, participants either confirmed what I understood was accurate or added detail to clarify their answers to the question.

Transferability

Thick description. To establish transferability of the findings to other settings or situations, I collected rich data and focused on providing descriptive statements to create a strong case for the findings to transfer to similar contexts. I included detailed accounts using direct quotes from participants to assist in providing meaningful findings that would allow other researchers, educators, or policy makers to assess whether the findings were appropriate or fitting to their own contexts, as well as to add to the knowledge base of effective strategies for coping with cyberbullying.

Confirmability

Triangulation. Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) identify different types of triangulation. I used pattern matching as a method for assessing the consistency of findings from previous studies on coping with cyberbullying with the findings from my study. I compared empirically based, predicted patterns to the themes and patterns that emerged from my study data. The extent that the theoretical and research-based propositions aligned with the observed patterns in my data determined the degree that I could conclude the findings of the study were consistent.

Audit trail. To maintain transparency throughout the study, I created an audit trail to demonstrate the research path. The audit trail consisted of maintaining a log of the research steps, processes, decisions, and any insights or inconsistencies that arose while conducting the study. The audit trail comprised

- specifics regarding methodological decisions and rationales;

- specifics regarding steps and procedures for participant selection and recruitment, to include noting difficulties experienced with recruitment and how these issues were addressed;
- specifics regarding data collection, to include steps and processes taken and decisions made prior to and during conducting the interviews;
- maintaining raw data, to include audio recordings of interviews, interview transcriptions, and other related documents developed during the data collection and transcription processes;
- specifics regarding data analysis and reporting, to include rationales and decision trails for the development of patterns and themes, as well as any insights, intuitions, discrepancies, and contradictions that emerged during the analysis and reporting of the findings; and
- specifics regarding interpretation of the findings and conclusions, to include connections to extant literature and research that guided my inquiry.

I also created the audit trail to add to the dependability of the study (e.g., the stability and consistency of the design, data collection, analysis, and reporting processes) in the event a dependability audit should occur.

Reflexivity. Before engaging in any data collection and analysis procedures, I bracketed any presuppositions of which I was aware and that I felt might influence the study. This process included creating reflective memos of any prior experiences, thoughts, assumptions, biases, or expectations I held pertaining to coping with cyberbullying in a reflexive journal. As an added step, I included information regarding

any reactions, thoughts, or assumptions that emerged during the research study. To practice reflexivity, I referred to the list in my reflexive journal throughout each stage of the study to ensure I remained as objective and neutral as possible.

Summary and Transition to Chapter 5

In the findings for RQ1 and its associated subquestions I revealed information about the strategies previous adolescent victims of cyberbullying used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied. Teens shared how they came up with the strategies they tried, as well as provided insights into the effectiveness of the strategies they used. Teens also provided general advice and recommendations for others who might be dealing with cyberbullying and discussed the lessons they learned as a result of their experience.

I found that teens used multiple strategies, and often multiple resources, to cope with being cyberbullied. Some of the strategies teens employed came from their own ideas about how to handle the situation, while certain strategies they tried were at the suggestions of others. While teens found coping strategies that were successful for helping them handle being cyberbullied, they also determined strategy effectiveness by whether a strategy did not work or by whether the situation got worse. The advice and recommendations teens gave for others on coping with cyberbullying was based on their personal experiences and the lessons they learned through the course of coping with cyberbullying.

With my analysis for RQ2 I paved the way for comparisons between predicted patterns of coping with cyberbullying found in the literature and previous research on cyberbullying with patterns of coping with cyberbullying that emerged in the study data. I identified a total of 37 predicted patterns for coping with cyberbullying from previous

research that I compared with a total of 29 coping patterns for managing and overcoming cyberbullying I identified in my study. I included examining comparisons of predicted and reported coping patterns for strategies used to cope with the cyberbullying emotionally, for strategies used to get the cyberbullying to stop, and for strategies used to prevent cyberbullying. As a result of these comparisons I revealed confirming, as well as differing, information regarding strategy effectiveness for coping with cyberbullying.

In Chapter 5, I present the interpretation of the findings, to include a description of any confirming, disconfirming, and added knowledge I learned from the study. Additionally, the interpretation involves analyzing the results in terms of the conceptual framework I used to guide the inquiry. I also discuss the limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, the implications of the findings, to include the potential for positive social change, recommendations for practice, and a plan for the dissemination of the findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to learn about the coping strategies that teens developed and found to be effective for managing and overcoming the cyberbullying they experienced. Data were collected using semistructured, private individual interviews. I set out to fill a gap that researchers stated needed to be addressed. Prior to this study, researchers had focused on examining coping strategies for cyberbullying using quantitative methods or had explored potential coping strategies youths might use should they be cyberbullied. As a result, little was known about the strategies that actual victims of cyberbullying used to cope with being cyberbullied or about the effectiveness of the strategies they used. In this study I provide information about the efficacy of the strategies that former victims of cyberbullying used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied that has implications for understanding not only the firsthand experiences of how teens approached managing their cyberbullying experiences, but also identifies strategies that could be used by other individuals experiencing cyberbullying.

The research questions and subquestions that guided this inquiry were

1. RQ1: What strategies did victims of cyberbullying use to cope with, counteract, and prevent cyberbullying?
 - SQ1: How did cyberbullying victims develop the strategies they used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied?
 - SQ2: How did victims of cyberbullying determine which strategies were effective and ineffective for managing and overcoming incidents of cyberbullying?

- SQ3: What did victims of cyberbullying learn in the process of determining effective strategies for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?
2. RQ2: How did the strategies cyberbullying victims reported as being successful for coping with, counteracting, and preventing cyberbullying compare to the strategies research and theory predicted were effective for managing and overcoming cyberbullying?

Summary of Key Findings

The key findings I present in this section are organized by the subquestions from RQ1. I discuss the key findings from RQ2 in the Interpretation of the Findings section because they pertain to a comparison of previous findings from research on coping with cyberbullying and the findings from this study. The following are the key findings associated with RQ1: What strategies did victims of cyberbullying use to cope with, counteract, and prevent cyberbullying?

Key Findings for SQ1

- Teens developed coping strategies for handling cyberbullying in two stages—developing initial strategies and developing additional strategies (i.e., new or modified strategies to replace or supplement initial strategies). Initial strategies were the coping strategies that teens developed at the onset of the cyberbullying. Typically, initial coping strategies consisted of strategies that teens came up with on their own and that were intended to get the cyberbullying to stop. When initial strategies did not prove successful, teens developed additional strategies to handle the cyberbullying. In developing additional strategies, older teens continued

to come up with strategy ideas and approaches on their own while younger teens sought help or involvement from others for ideas and for support. Additional strategies that teens developed consisted of (a) coping strategies designed to use in conjunction with initial coping strategies teens developed, (b) modified coping strategies based on unsuccessful initial strategies teens developed, and (c) new coping strategies that teens had not yet tried. Often, the intended use of the additional coping strategies that teens developed was to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful. The teens focused on developing strategies for getting the cyberbullying to stop before developing strategies to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful.

- Teens developed strategies for coping with cyberbullying using a variety of methods, to include trial and error. Older teens approached the cyberbullying from a more assertive, self-reliant perspective. Older teens were more calculated in their approach for developing initial strategies, relying on their present knowledge of cyberbullying, as well as drawing from prior experiences and their instincts about methods for handling peer-related issues. When older teens found the initial strategies they developed were not useful to handle the cyberbullying, they persisted in their efforts to cope with the situation independently. To do so older teens evaluated previously used strategies and applied reasoning skills to develop additional strategies, often aimed at approaching the issue from a different angle. If older teens sought support from others, it was mainly

from peers and either to confirm the usefulness of the coping strategies they developed or to help them deal with the negative emotions associated with the cyberbullying.

- Younger teens approached the cyberbullying from a more reactive standpoint, often retaliating against the cyberbullies or avoiding the situation altogether. In such cases, younger teens acted on impulse and without strategically planning their approach or strategies to cope with the cyberbullying first. When initial strategies younger teens employed did not help them manage the cyberbullying, they sought support from parents or family members, school personnel, or other trusted adults either to help them come up with additional ideas for handling the cyberbullying or to actively handle the situation for them. Additionally, younger teens sought support from peers and from trusted adults to help them deal with the cyberbullying emotionally.
- All teens adapted their approaches to coping with the cyberbullying through trial and error and continued developing and employing new or modified strategies until they successfully managed and overcame the cyberbullying. The coping strategies that teens developed did not differ by the type of cyberbullying they experienced. Although teens experienced several types of cyberbullying (e.g., personal attacks and threats, sharing of embarrassing photos, public humiliation) through a variety of technologies (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Ask.fm, text messaging, websites), the strategies they developed to handle the situation

essentially were the same.

- Teens' beliefs about the potential helpfulness of a coping strategy influenced their coping strategy selection and use. Not all coping strategies that teens contemplated for coping with the cyberbullying or strategies suggested by others developed into strategies teens employed. If teens experienced a previous unsuccessful outcome with a certain type of strategy or if they were uncomfortable with a certain type of approach, they opted not to use it. This was the case in instances where teens felt the use of a certain strategy might result in getting the cyberbully in trouble or if the approach involved receiving help or information from a source they did not trust or know well. The only exception I detected to the finding that teens' beliefs about the potential helpfulness of coping strategies influenced their actions occurred during teens' initial attempts to deal with the cyberbullying. Often the initial strategies that teens used to cope with the cyberbullying included the use of tactics that appeared to be based on instinctive reactions, in which case teens took action to handle the cyberbullying without first planning their approach or without considering the usefulness of a coping strategy before putting it to use.

Key Findings for SQ2

- Teens determined the effectiveness of strategies they used for coping with cyberbullying on whether or not the strategy helped them achieve the result they intended, which was either to get the cyberbullying to stop or to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful. Although teens' intentions for

most of the strategies they used were to get the cyberbullying to stop (e.g., reporting to service providers or adults) or to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful (e.g., confiding in and talking to peers or trusted adults), some strategies served multiple functions, such as blocking the cyberbullies to deter further contact. One approach that all teens stated was effective for getting through the cyberbullying successfully was having a person whom they trusted to confide in and talk to for support. However, not all strategies that teens tried were effective in the way teens intended (e.g., reporting to adults). Sometimes the strategies that teens tried made the situation worse (e.g., talking to or confronting the cyberbullies online), while some strategies were effective or ineffective in ways that teens did not expect (e.g., blocking). For example, I discovered teens' perceptions of the effectiveness of blocking the cyberbullies were unique in that blocking varied in effectiveness for getting the cyberbullying to stop, as well as for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful. Sometimes blocking worked initially to put an end to the cyberbullying, and sometimes teens had to block the cyberbullies numerous times before the attacks stopped. For some teens, blocking was effective for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful because they no longer had to see the cyberbullies' negative comments, while for another teen blocking was ineffective for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful because she could not stop thinking about what the cyberbullies might be saying about her. Accordingly, the most important finding here

was that teens based their valuation of a strategy's effectiveness on the context of the situation.

Key Findings for SQ3

- Despite the difficulties and stress that teens endured in the process of managing and overcoming cyberbullying, they remained positive and developed valuable insights. The general consensus among teens was that cyberbullying happens, so it is best not to take it personally and to just work through it. Unexpectedly, several teens communicated that cyberbullying was not really that big of a deal after all—that is was more frustrating than hurtful—and none of the teens reported experiencing any long-lasting negative effects related to being cyberbullied. Instead, the experience appeared to foster positive growth. Some teens felt they became more self-aware and stronger as a result of having successfully handled the issue. Teens learned the importance of remaining self-assured and collected when dealing with being cyberbullied. However, teens added that seeking help and support from others to handle the cyberbullying was important and did not indicate a lack of ability to handle problems on your own. Additionally, teens believed they learned valuable lessons about trusting others, whether or not the individual was someone they knew. Based on the lessons teens learned, all teens felt confident in their abilities to provide useful advice and suggestions to others who might be experiencing cyberbullying.

- After having coped with cyberbullying successfully, teens' offered similar recommendations and advice for handling being cyberbullied, regardless of their individual experiences, age, or developmental levels. Teens' overall recommendations and advice for others dealing with cyberbullying were to block the cyberbullies, ignore them, and move on with your life. Although teens suggested talking calmly to the cyberbullies in person to see if the issue could be resolved, they strongly advised against engaging in any type of retaliatory or confrontational behaviors that might exacerbate the situation (e.g., talking to, confronting, or antagonizing the cyberbullies online). Remaining positive and confident, not letting the cyberbullies' attacks or negative remarks get to you, being careful about what you do and share online, and not trusting others you do not know well were other suggestions teens gave based on their experiences. Additionally, teens stressed the importance of talking to others for help and support as keeping silent about the situation or avoiding the issue only makes matters worse. To my surprise, some of the strategies teens recommended for coping with cyberbullying were not tactics they found most useful in their own experiences of coping with cyberbullying (i.e., blocking, reporting). To add, some of the advice teens offered for successfully managing and overcoming cyberbullying consisted of using coping strategies they did not try themselves (i.e., blocking, reporting), which also was unexpected. It is likely that these suggestions came from reflecting on their experiences of coping with cyberbullying and thinking

about what they should have or could have done to handle the cyberbullying. It is also plausible that teens became more sophisticated in their thinking as they reflected on their experiences of managing and overcoming cyberbullying, which resulted in their beliefs about what would be effective for handling future incidents of cyberbullying.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section I present the key findings, along with my interpretation of the findings, for RQ2: How did the strategies cyberbullying victims reported as being successful for coping with, counteracting, and preventing cyberbullying compare to the strategies research and theory predicted were effective for managing and overcoming cyberbullying? To address RQ2, I compared findings from previous research on coping with cyberbullying with the findings from my study using a method identified by Yin (2009) called pattern matching. The most significant discovery I found while comparing my findings to previous findings on coping with cyberbullying was that context played a crucial role in teens' valuation of the effectiveness of the coping strategies they used. Situational context played a role in teens' determination of whether a strategy was effective for getting the cyberbullying to stop, for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful, and for preventing cyberbullying. The influence of situational context was an important discovery because this information was not considered in reports of the research I reviewed for this study, but it played a definite role in the assessments teens in this study made about whether a strategy was effective. However, although context was important, it was not often made explicit by teens as central to determining the effectiveness of the strategies they used. Information regarding situational context was

embedded in teens' descriptions of the coping strategies they used and found effective. Identifying the role of context required unraveling this information through discussion with teens during the interview conversations and, in particular, during the analysis of the data. The knowledge I learned about the role situational context played in coping strategy effectiveness appears in the column labeled Extends Knowledge in Table 13.

I unfolded a second key finding regarding the issue of coping strategy effectiveness. In previous studies on coping with cyberbullying, researchers did not focus on strategy effectiveness in their descriptions of the strategies participants suggested or used. Therefore it was difficult to assess whether or not what researchers reported in previous findings on coping with cyberbullying included strategy effectiveness. However, given the fact that researchers and experts either reported or suggested these strategies, I concluded that the strategies should be considered effective. In contrast, I focused on strategy effectiveness for coping with cyberbullying in my study so I was able to learn how teens determined the effectiveness of the strategies they used, as well as specifics regarding the circumstances in which teens' felt the strategies were or were not effective.

Table 13 presents the key findings from comparisons between the coping strategies identified in the findings from the research and literature I reviewed for this study. I compared the strategies from extant research and literature (Column 1) with the findings of my study using three dimensions: Confirm (Column 2), Disconfirm (Column 3), and Extends Knowledge (Column 4). Confirm signifies the findings from my study confirmed what researchers reported in previous research findings. Disconfirm means that my findings contradicted what researchers reported in previous studies. Extends

Knowledge denotes new information I found in this study. Sometimes my findings confirmed, disconfirmed, and contributed to an extension of knowledge when compared to what researchers reported in previous findings, owing to multiple findings that researchers in some of the studies. Table 13 illustrates where these instances occurred.

Despite the careful analysis that resulted in my producing Table 13, several caveats are needed for the reader to better understand the complexity of the topic and for me to maintain transparency. First, none of the studies were identical. Some of the existing studies I used for comparisons were quantitative, some were mixed methods studies, and some were qualitative studies and research designs have bearing on how a topic is studied. Second, although the researchers' focus in these studies was on coping with cyberbullying—the same topic as my study—how the topic was conceived, how coping categories were operationalized, and who participated in the study varied. Finally, the research questions varied to some extent. Although these features affect the findings in a study, comparisons were made. The comparisons are important for extending knowledge about successfully coping with cyberbullying.

Table 13

Comparisons Between Coping Strategies Identified in Findings from Previous Research on Coping With Cyberbullying and Findings from the Neville Study

Strategies identified in research	Strategies reported in Neville study		
	Confirm	Disconfirm	Extends knowledge
Strategies to get the cyberbullying to stop			
Victims prefer to deal with the issue themselves	Four teens preferred to handle the issue themselves.	Two teens sought help from others to deal with the issue.	Older teens chose to approach the cyberbullying themselves.
(Li, 2010; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey,			Younger teens sought help from adults,

2009)			particularly when their initial attempts did not prove successful.
Confronting the cyberbully (e.g., in person or online)	Four teens confronted the cyberbully.		Confronting the cyberbully in person was effective for three of the four teens who used this strategy.
(Aricak et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013, Willard, 2007)			One of the younger teens had the school security guard and school counselor confront the cyberbully for her.
			Confronting the cyberbully online made the situation worse for the three teens who used this strategy.
Talking in person (Parris et al., 2012)	Two teens talked to the cyberbully in person.	Two teens talked to the cyberbully online.	Teens stressed the importance of remaining calm and non-confrontational, yet firm when talking to the cyberbully in person.
			Trying to talk to the cyberbully online only exacerbated the situation for the two teens who tried this strategy.
Blocking the cyberbully	Five teens blocked the cyberbully.		Blocking was most effective on Instagram and Twitter.
(Agatston et al., 2007; Aricak et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et			Text messages on Kik and comments on Facebook were more difficult to block and often took multiple

al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009)

Deleting threatening messages or social media profiles

(Dehue et al., 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009)

Retaliating against the cyberbully (e.g., cyberbullying back, physical retaliation)

(Agatston et al., 2007; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)

Reporting to adults (e.g., parents,

Two teens deleted messages or social media profiles.

Three teens retaliated against the cyberbully.

Three teens reported to adults.

attempts before being successful.

One teen deleted the app Ask.fm for a time.

One teen attempted to delete a webpage created by the cyberbullies and hurtful posts on Facebook.

Deleting was only effective if the app or profile used to cyberbully was accessible to the victim.

Physically threatening the cyberbully in person (by a male) was effective but verbally threatening the cyberbully in person (by two females) was not effective.

Retaliating against the cyberbully online made the situation worse for all three teens who used this strategy.

Three teens did not report to adults.

Older teens chose not to report to adults

teachers, school personnel or administrators)

(Agatston et al., 2007; Aricak et al., 2008; Craig et al., 2007; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Mishna et al., 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dagleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)

Reporting to authorities (e.g. service providers, police)

(Cassidy et al., 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Willard, 2007)

One teen reported to service providers and to the police.

while younger teens reported to adults.

Younger teens reported to parents, school personnel, and administrators.

Reporting to parents was effective for two teens.

Reporting to a teacher for cyberbullying that occurred on a school owned tablet was effective for one teen.

Reporting to the school security guard was effective for one teen.

Reporting to the school counselor was effective for one teen, but not another.

Reporting to the principal was not effective.

Although the teen was confident in this strategy, there was no indication of its actual effectiveness for getting the cyberbullying to stop.

Punishing the cyberbully (e.g., identifying the cyberbully and enforcing punishment by some form of behavior code, restricting the cyberbully's access to technologies, not allowing cyberbully to participate in school activities or sports, school suspension or alternative schooling)

(Cassidy et al., 2009; Kraft & Wang, 2009; Stacey, 2009)

Avoiding the situation

(Dehue et al., 2008; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Völlink et al., 2013)

Staying offline

(Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Parris et al., 2012; Smith et al. 2008)

No teens had the cyberbully punished.

Four teens avoided the situation.

One teen stayed offline.

One teen specifically chose not to report to the principal for fear it would get the cyberbully in trouble and make the situation worse.

Staying home from school to avoid the situation made matters worse for one teen.

Trying to avoid the cyberbully in person was not effective.

Avoiding the situation by switching schools was effective.

Avoiding the drama associated with the cyberbullying was effective.

The hurtful messages and attacks continued even though the teen stayed offline.

The teen expressed being overwhelmed by the amount of hurtful messages that were waiting for her when she logged back

		onto her Facebook account.
Doing nothing at all (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li; 2010; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Völlink et al., 2013) Changing account, username, or number (Arıcak et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008)	All teens chose to do something to cope with being cyberbullied. No teens changed their account, username, or phone number.	
Ignoring the cyberbullying (Agatston et al., 2007; Craig et al., 2007; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Smith et al., 2008; Willard, 2007)	Three teens tried ignoring the cyberbullying.	Trying to ignore the cyberbullying completely was not effective.
Seeking social support (Arıcak et al., 2008; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)	Three teens sought social support.	Only younger teens sought social support for getting the cyberbullying to stop. Seeking social support from their mothers was effective for two teens. Seeking social support from a teacher and the school principal was effective for one teen. Seeking social support

		from the school security guard and the school counselor was effective for one teen.
		Seeking social support from the school counselor and school principal was not effective for one teen.
Not mentioned		Three teens stuck up for themselves against the cyberbully, which they viewed as effective for helping to get the cyberbullying to stop.

Strategies to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful

Avoiding the situation (e.g., trying or pretending to ignore the situation, not going to school, avoiding sites where the cyberbullying took place, creating a new account or profile)	Five teens avoided the situation.	Staying home from school was not effective and added the stress of falling behind in school.
(Dehue et al., 2008; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Völlink et al., 2013)		Avoiding the cyberbully in person was not effective.
Purposefully ignoring the cyberbullying (e.g., taking the situation lightly, consciously ignoring, focusing attention elsewhere)	All teens consciously ignored the cyberbullies hurtful comments and attacks.	Avoiding sites where the cyberbullying took place was not effective.

(Dehue et al., 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)

Seeking social support (e.g., confiding in and receiving positive support from friends, family, adults, sharing feelings, venting)

(Aricak et al., 2008; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)

Seeking psychological support (e.g., counseling, therapy)

(Šleglova & Cerna, 2011)

Seeking outlets (e.g., hobbies, diversions, sports, exercise)

(Craig et al., 2007; Machackova et al., 2013; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011)

Depreciating the cyberbully (e.g., discrediting or making fun of the cyberbully)

All teens sought social support.

One teen sought support from an independent therapist.

Three teens sought outlets.

Five teens depreciated the cyberbullies.

Older teens sought social support from and confided in peers.

Younger teens sought social support from and confided in parents (mothers), close relatives, and peers.

The school counselor did not respond to the teen's requests for help so she sought help from an independent therapist.

Machackova et al.,
2013; Parris et al.,
2012; Šleglova &
Cerna, 2011

Using humor (e.g.,
making fun of the
situation, laughing off
the situation)

No teens incorporated
humor.

(Craig et al., 2007;
Hinduja & Patchin,
2012a, 2012b; Parris
et al., 2012; Šleglova
& Cerna, 2011)

Searching for advice
online (e.g., support
groups, information
for dealing with
cyberbullying,
helplines)

No teens searched for
advice online.

One teen received a
suggestion from her
counselor to go online
for help but she did
not do so because she
had her mother.

(Machackova et al.,
2013)

Accepting that
cyberbullying is a part
of life and is going to
happen

Three teens accepted
cyberbullying was
going to happen.

Two teens added that
handling being
cyberbullied was not
really that big of a
deal.

(Parris et al., 2012,
Smith et al., 2008;
Stacey, 2009; Völlink
et al., 2013)

Focusing on the
positive (e.g., moving
on with one's life, not
dwelling on the
situation, remaining
optimistic and
confident)

Five teens focused on
the positive.

(Parris et al., 2012)

Reframing the
situation (e.g.,
justifying or

Three teens reframed
the situation.

trivializing the situation)

(Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013)

Not mentioned

Five teens used blocking.

Four teens felt blocking was effective for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful because they no longer had to see the cyberbullies' hurtful comments.

One teen stated blocking was not effective because she could not stop thinking about what the cyberbullies were saying about her.

Strategies used to prevent cyberbullying

Blocking the cyberbully

No teens suggested blocking.

Three teens recommended blocking as a strategy to handle being cyberbullied, but not as a prevention strategy.

(Agatston et al., 2007; Aricak et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009)
Education about proper Internet use

No teens mentioned education about proper Internet use.

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Mishna et al., 2009)

Education about Internet privacy

No teens mentioned education about Internet privacy.

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Parris et al., 2012; Willard, 2007)

Cyberbullying and online risk prevention education

No teens mentioned cyberbullying and online risk prevention.

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Price & Dalgleish, 2010)

Using proper online etiquette and communicating in a kind manner

No teens mentioned using proper online etiquette and communicating in a kind manner.

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Li, 2010; Willard, 2007)

There is no way to prevent or to stop cyberbullying from happening

One teen agreed that cyberbullying is a part of life that happens.

The teen added cyberbullying happens to a lot of people, so if it happens you are not alone or being singled out and should not take it personally.

(Li, 2010; Mishna et al., 2009; Parris et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2008)

Safeguarding passwords, personal information, and account information from others

No teens mentioned safeguarding passwords, personal information, and account information from others.

(Ariack et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a; 2012b; Mishna et al., 2009)

Monitoring personal information or images that others have access to online (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Parris et al., 2012; Willard, 2007)	Two teens suggested monitoring information or images others have access to online ^a .	One teen added to monitor your actions and behaviors online because others always are watching what you do.
Not trusting others you do not know (Dehue et al., 2008; Mishna et al., 2009)	Three teens suggested not trusting others you do not know ^a .	One teen added you might not always be able to trust others you do know or who claim to be your friends.
Talking in person before the issue escalates to a cyberbullying situation (Parris et al., 2012)	No teens mentioned talking in person as a way to prevent cyberbullying.	One teen recommended talking to the cyberbully in person to get the cyberbullying to stop, but not as a prevention strategy.

Note. $N = 6$.

^aStrategies taken from teens' overall recommendations for coping with cyberbullying, but interpreted as being effective strategies to prevent cyberbullying.

Interpretation of the Findings From Comparisons of Coping Strategy Effectiveness

In comparing the coping strategies identified in previous research on coping with cyberbullying to the findings from my study I found consistencies and discrepancies concerning coping strategy use, as well as for coping strategy effectiveness.

Interestingly, some of the coping strategies that researchers and scholars suggested for coping with cyberbullying were not necessarily helpful for teens in my study (e.g., punishing the cyberbully, avoiding the situation, education about Internet use, privacy, and online risk prevention). Although there were strategies teens used to get the cyberbullying to stop that they also employed to keep the cyberbullying from being

hurtful, I learned that not all strategies served a dual purpose well (e.g., blocking, seeking social support). The context of the situation influenced teens' coping strategy selection, coping strategy use, and the perceived efficacy of the strategies they used. Moreover, teens in the study communicated that some coping strategies typically not considered as being useful (e.g., avoidance-oriented coping strategies) were helpful for coping with the cyberbullying. Again I discovered that these differences were due to situational context and that they also tended to be associated with teens' age and levels of maturity.

Although the type of cyberbullying teens experienced did not have a significant influence on their determination of coping strategy effectiveness, the medium and technology used to cyberbully did affect the usefulness of the strategies they tried for getting the cyberbullying to stop. Additionally, teens' coping approaches and valuations of coping strategy effectiveness differed by whether teens were attempting to thwart the cyberbullying or to mitigate the negative emotions associated with being cyberbullied. These findings support the concerns expressed by Lazarus and Folkman (1987) and Šleglova and Cerna (2011) about definitively grouping coping strategies and about making generalizations about the effectiveness of coping strategies without examining the conditions under which the coping occurred. In all situations experienced by teens in my study, context was key.

While I had little data for comparisons between the strategies for preventing cyberbullying identified in previous research, I attribute the inconsistencies in recommendations for strategies to prevent cyberbullying—or the lack of teens' recommendations period—to the time that has passed since the studies were conducted. The majority of the research and literature from which I identified strategies for coping

with cyberbullying were published between 2007 and 2012. Since that time, not only have experts and researchers provided more information about cyberbullying, but also schools, parents, students of all ages, and society appear to have become more aware of and educated about issues related to Internet use and its associated risks. Therefore, I concluded that it is likely teens did not suggest prevention strategies for cyberbullying that they regarded as practical or common knowledge.

Additionally, as suggested by researchers and scholars in previous research and coping literature (Compas et al., 2001; Frydenberg, 2008; Frydenberg & Lewis, 2009; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987; Li, 2010; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009), I found that individual differences (e.g., age, experience, developmental level, confidence, self-esteem) played a role in teens' approaches to handling the cyberbullying and in their valuation of strategy effectiveness. Although I did not consider gender differences in my study, it was interesting to see that the one male participant in my study used physical retaliation and verbal threats and considered these strategies effective, while the five female participants did not discuss physical retaliation. Yet, all five of the female participants who used verbal retaliation considered this strategy to be ineffective. Skrzypiec et al. (2011) and Snyder and Dinoff (1999) stated perceived coping strategy effectiveness depended on the perspective from which it was viewed, which is consistent with what I found in that teens determined coping strategy effectiveness for coping with cyberbullying based on their personal perspectives and experiences of having coped with being cyberbullied.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Findings in the Context of Theory

For the conceptual framework I used to guide this inquiry, I incorporated aspects of the transactional model of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987), approach-avoidance coping (Roth & Cohen, 1986), and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977). I included problem-focused versus emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987), approach-oriented versus avoidance oriented coping (Roth & Cohen, 1986), and the concept of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977). My intent was to determine whether the selected theories, particularly the two coping theories (i.e., transactional model of coping, approach-avoidance coping) sufficiently explained coping efficacy for cyberbullying. Parris et al. (2012) and Šleglova & Cerna (2011), who used these coping models as a framework for previous studies on coping with cyberbullying, questioned whether these traditional models of coping were sufficient for explaining coping with cyberbullying or whether a new model needed to be developed.

Transactional model of coping. According to the Lazarus and Folkman (1987), coping begins with a series of cognitive appraisals that are prompted by a stressful event. Individuals then use these appraisals to assess the level of threat or challenge associated with the event and to determine coping activities to manage the stressful event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Lazarus and Folkman asserted that coping strategies typically fall into two broad categories: problem-focused coping, which consists of using behavioral strategies to alter or change the stressor, and emotion-focused coping, which involves finding ways to nurture one's emotional welfare during the stressful event. Individuals tend to use problem-focused coping strategies when they believe they have the ability to change or alter the stressor with their actions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). When

individuals believe they do not have the capability or resources to change the stressor, they rely on emotion-focused coping strategies to help them adapt to the stressor emotionally (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Approach-avoidance coping. Roth and Cohen (1986) explained that approach-avoidance coping consists of using cognitive coping strategies to actively attempt to control a stressor to reduce the negative outcomes associated with a stressful event. When using approach-oriented coping strategies, individuals directly address the stressor (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Such individuals typically are considered “approachers” (Roth & Cohen, 1986, p. 815). In contrast, individuals considered “avoiders” (Roth & Cohen, 1986, p. 815) use avoidance-oriented coping strategies to direct their attention away from the stressor in order to cope. Individuals who employ approach-oriented coping strategies tend to believe they can control or manage the stressor, whereas individuals who use avoidance-coping strategies often feel they cannot change or adapt to the stressful event so they attempt to escape, avoid, or accept the stressor (Roth & Cohen, 1986). However, Roth and Cohen noted that rather than being exclusively approachers or avoiders, individuals tend to use a combination of approach and avoidance coping strategies as needed.

Efficacy Beliefs. The concept of efficacy beliefs comes from Bandura’s (1989) self-efficacy theory. According to Bandura, efficacious beliefs influence individuals’ capabilities to deal with a stressful situation or event, as well as the manner they approach the stressful event. Efficacy beliefs create cognitive patterns that either can promote or impede individuals’ behavioral, motivational, and affective processes related to coping (Bandura, 1987). Therefore, a person’s belief in his or her ability to produce desired

outcomes for a particular situation as a result of his or her behavior or actions comes into play. Individuals who have a stronger sense of perceived self-efficacy tend to view stressful events as challenges and look for ways to manage stressors, whereas individuals who doubt their ability to cope with a stressor tend to avoid the stressor and be less motivated to overcome the stressful event (Bandura, 1989).

One theoretical aspect that I did not include in the original conceptual model that surfaced unexpectedly as an important factor in explaining how teens coped with cyberbullying was theory related to adolescent development. Although I discussed the possible influence of individual differences such as age, personality traits, learned behaviors, self-confidence, self-esteem, and sense of control (Compas et al., 2001; Frydenberg, 2008; Frydenberg & Lewis, 2009; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) in Chapter 1 and I included a discussion of Erickson's (1968) psychosocial theory of development in Chapter 2, I discovered that teens' age and developmental levels emerged as having a significant influence on their approaches to coping with cyberbullying. Accordingly, I added Erickson's psychosocial theory of development to the conceptual framework for the study and I included these factors as part of my theoretical interpretation in this section.

Psychosocial theory of development. According to Erikson (1968), individuals navigate a series of eight developmental stages that predominately include resolving social crises at each stage. Throughout this process, individuals work to cultivate the skills and abilities necessary to develop into healthy and autonomous human beings (Erickson, 1968). Erickson stated that during the adolescent stage of development, which typically occurs between 12 to 18 years, teens strive to become more independent, form

their identity, and transition into adulthood. Often this transition presents a challenge for teens struggling to develop their own identity while simultaneously coping with the social demands associated with adolescence (Erikson, 1968). Consequently, adolescents at this stage who are less developed, or who lack the skills and personal resources needed to successfully negotiate the issues they encounter and to achieve wellbeing, may need more help and support from others.

Table 14 presents the key findings grouped in terms of the conceptual framework I used to guide this inquiry.

Table 14

Interpretation of Key Findings in the Context of the Conceptual Framework Used in Neville Study

Theory	Key findings
<p>Transactional model of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987)</p> <p>(Cognitive appraisals prompted by a stressful event, which individuals use to assess the level of threat or challenge associated with the event and to determine coping activities to manage the stressful event.)</p> <p>Problem-focused coping</p> <p>(Using behavioral strategies to alter or</p>	<p>Coping strategy development occurred in two stages—initial strategies at the onset of the cyberbullying to get the cyberbullying to stop and additional strategies when initial strategies did not prove successful and for finding ways to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful.</p> <p>Coping approaches of teens did not differ by the type of cyberbullying experienced or the medium used to cyberbully.</p> <p>Coping strategies teens developed to manage and overcome being cyberbullied did not fit neatly into any one category.</p> <p>Situational context influenced teens' determination of coping strategy effectiveness for coping with cyberbullying.</p> <p>Teens developed strategies to thwart the cyberbullying before developing strategies to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful.</p> <p>Teens used prior knowledge, experience, and instincts about how to handle the situation to develop initial strategies for getting the</p>

change the stressor when individuals believe they have the ability to change or alter the stressor.)

cyberbullying to stop.

Teens incorporated reasoning skills, sought help from others, and used what they learned through trial and error to develop additional strategies for getting the cyberbullying to stop.

Teens continued developing, using, and adapting strategies using a variety of methods until they successfully managed and overcame the cyberbullying.

Not all strategies teens used to get the cyberbullying to stop could be categorized as problem-focused coping.

Teens developed coping strategies for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful after working to get the cyberbullying to stop.

Emotion-focused coping

(Finding ways to nurture one's emotional welfare when one believes he or she does not have the capability or resources to change the stressor, thus must adapt to the stressor emotionally.)

All teens sought support from others for dealing with the negative emotional effects of being cyberbullied.

All but one strategy (i.e., blocking) teens used to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful could be categorized as emotion-focused coping.

Despite the difficulties and stress teens endured in the process of managing and overcoming cyberbullying, they remained positive and developed valuable insights.

Approach-avoidance coping (Roth & Cohen, 1986)

(Using cognitive coping strategies to actively attempt to control a stressor and reduce the negative outcomes associated with the stressful event.)

Approach-oriented coping

(Strategies aimed directly at the stressor when one believes he or she can control or manage the stressor.)

Teens used a combination of approach and avoidance strategies to successfully manage and overcome being cyberbullied.

Situational context influenced teens' determination of strategy effectiveness.

Teens used more approach than avoidance strategies for getting the cyberbullying to stop, as well as for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful.

All teens sought help from others to handle the negative emotional effects associated with the

cyberbullying.

Accepting that cyberbullying happens, learning not to take it personally, and realizing that it really was not that big of a deal enhanced teens' abilities to deal with the situation emotionally.

Avoidance-oriented coping

(Strategies to direct attention away from the stressor in an attempt to escape, avoid, or accept the stressor.)

The only avoidance-oriented strategy teens used to get the cyberbullying to stop was trying to avoid or escape the situation entirely, which was not always effective.

The only avoidance-oriented strategies teens used for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful were consciously ignoring or avoiding the situation and seeking outlets, which were effective.

Efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1989)

(Beliefs that create cognitive patterns that either promote or impede individuals' behavioral, motivational, and affective processes related to coping.)

Teens who were more confident in their abilities to handle being cyberbullied worked to get the cyberbullying to stop on their own.

Initial strategies developed and used by teens at the onset of the cyberbullying typically were not evaluated before use. Teens expected them to work.

Teens likely would not have used strategies they believed would not work.

Not all strategies suggested by others were used, particularly when teens did not see a need to use the strategy, felt uncomfortable using the strategy, or thought the approach might make the situation worse.

Psychosocial theory of development (Erikson, 1968)

(Stage where adolescents, aged 12 to 18 years, strive to become more independent, to form their identity, and to transition into adulthood.)

Coping patterns differed by teens' age and developmental level.

Older teens preferred to handle the issue themselves while younger teens sought more help from others.

Older teens were more self-reliant, calculated, and assertive in approaching the cyberbullying, particularly when attempting to get the cyberbullying to stop.

Younger teens were more reactive and impulsive in their initial attempts to cope with the cyberbullying.

Older teens sought help mainly from peers for dealing with the negative emotions associated with being cyberbullied, whereas younger teens sought support from adults and from peers.

Teens either confirmed (older teens) or realized (younger teens) the importance of remaining positive and confident to coping with cyberbullying successfully.

After going through the experience of being cyberbullied, all teens' views of cyberbullying and their recommendations for managing and overcoming cyberbullying were similar regardless of teens' age or developmental level.

Transactional model of coping. I found the transactional model of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) useful for explaining how teens developed the coping strategies they used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied. The stages of strategy development through which teens progressed paralleled the series of cognitive appraisals (i.e., primary appraisal, secondary appraisal, reappraisal) posited by Lazarus and Folkman. Initial strategies teens developed and used reflected the processes of primary and secondary appraisal described by Lazarus and Folkman. First teens assessed the personal relevance and perceived control of the situation, to include the level of challenge, threat, or harm (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) associated with the cyberbullying to decide whether to respond and, if so, what action(s) to take (i.e., primary appraisal), followed by assessing the coping options and resources they had available (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) to handle the situation (i.e., secondary appraisal). The outcome of this

appraisal process influenced the extent that teens relied on their own devices to handle the cyberbullying. Teens' continued strategy valuation, adaptation, development, and use until they felt the cyberbullying was handled successfully demonstrated the use of reappraisal, which Lazarus's (1991) explained consists of reappraisals of subsequent appraisals based on the outcome of earlier coping attempts.

Although problem-focused and emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) could be used to describe the coping strategies teens used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied, this model was not adequate for explaining coping with cyberbullying exclusively. The reason for this is that teens' coping strategy use and perceived effectiveness differed due to situational context, so the distinct coping categories that comprise the transactional model of coping did not serve well to clarify when and how problem-focused or emotion-focused coping strategies for cyberbullying were effective. Not only did teens' coping strategy development and use traverse coping categories depending on the intent of the strategy (i.e., getting the cyberbullying to stop versus keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful) and on teens' age and developmental levels, they also varied in effectiveness due to these aspects. Although Compas (1988) noted there is a tendency to question the efficacy of distinct coping approaches, neither problem-focused coping nor emotion-focused coping was inherently effective or ineffective for teens in the study. Instead, I found, as asserted by Lazarus and Folkman, that understanding teens' coping processes and perceived coping strategy effectiveness for cyberbullying required examining both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies that teens used in terms of the functionality of their intended purpose, as well as by their effect.

Approach-avoidance coping. In analyzing the findings within the context of the approach-avoidance coping model (Roth & Cohen, 1986), I found that approach-avoidance coping was more useful in terms of describing coping strategy use and development than for expounding an understanding of coping strategy effectiveness. As noted by Roth and Cohen, approach-avoidance coping incorporates individual differences and preferences when explaining coping styles (i.e., approachers versus avoiders); yet, individuals likely will approach certain aspects of a problem while avoiding others. This especially was the case for teens in the study during their initial attempts to deal with the cyberbullying; when developing additional strategies for managing and overcoming cyberbullying; and when teens' emotional resources were limited or they needed time to develop the strategies necessary cope with the negative emotions associated with being cyberbullied.

Although teens in the study used a combination of approach and avoidance strategies to manage and overcome being cyberbullied, they used more approach-oriented strategies than avoidance-oriented strategies for getting the cyberbullying to stop, as well as for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful. Even though the coping strategies teens used could be categorized as either approach-oriented coping or avoidance-oriented coping, the coping categories of the approach-avoidance coping model (Roth & Cohen, 1986) were too broad to provide clarification of the specific coping strategies teens' developed and used to manage and overcome cyberbullying. In addition, the approach-avoidance model did not adequately explaining coping strategy effectiveness. For example, according to Roth and Cohen's approach-avoidance coping model, the only coping categories that overtly describe strategies teens used like switching schools,

actively avoiding the cyberbullies, or consciously ignoring the cyberbullying are the avoidance-oriented strategies of escapism or efforts to avoid or escape the situation. Usually, these types of coping strategies are not considered effective. Although teens tended to use these strategies when the situation was uncontrollable—which would be classified by Roth and Cohen as avoidance-oriented strategies—teens communicated using these strategies as a way to take charge of the situation to get the cyberbullying to stop and for keeping the cyberbullying from being hurtful. In this case I would explain teens' use of these strategies as what Roth and Cohen described as actively confronting to manage and overcome the cyberbullying, which is indicative of approach-oriented coping. Yet, staying offline or staying home from school clearly fit into Roth and Cohen's avoidance-oriented categories of escapism or efforts to avoid or escape the situation without the intention of actively confronting or attempting to control the situation. Not only were these approaches ineffective, they made the situation worse. Due to these intricacies in strategy use and effectiveness related to situational context revealed in my findings, I found the coping strategy categories in Roth and Cohen's approach-avoidance model not comprehensive enough for accurately explaining coping with cyberbullying and, even less so for understanding coping strategy effectiveness for coping with cyberbullying.

Efficacy beliefs. Efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1989) influenced the coping styles and strategies teens used to handle being cyberbullied. Although Frydenberg et al. (2008) noted attempts to cope occur without consideration of whether the a strategy will work, without teens believing in their ability to handle the cyberbullying—either real or perceived—and the capability to recover from ineffective attempts at managing the

cyberbullying, teens likely would not have been able to get through the situation successfully. Likewise, if teens experienced failed attempts consistently when attempting to handle the cyberbullying, their efficacy beliefs and sense of self-efficacy would diminish, making it more difficult to manage and overcome the cyberbullying successfully. Per Bandura, I found that any proactive and constructive guidance that teens received from others for coping with cyberbullying aided in the development of their ability to alleviate feelings of self-doubt and to adjust and adapt to the situation effectively. By attaining some success in their efforts to handle being cyberbullied and by receiving the support in the face of unsuccessful attempts that Bandura asserted is necessary to develop and maintain sustained efforts, teens were able to manage the cyberbullying, as well as to overcome the negative emotional effects associated with being cyberbullied. These findings align with the findings of Frydenberg and Lewis (2009) who discovered levels of self-perceived efficacy influenced adolescents' use of productive and adaptive coping strategies, as opposed to nonproductive and maladaptive coping strategies, that can contribute to increased levels of resilience and wellbeing.

Psychosocial theory of development. As I noted earlier, coping patterns related to teens' age and developmental levels emerged from the study data as well. Older teens preferred to handle the cyberbullying on their own; used more calculated coping approaches; and were more self-reliant in their attempts. Older teens also used the existing knowledge, skills, and abilities they developed through experience to approach the cyberbullying. In contrast, younger teens displayed more reactive coping approaches, particularly during their initial attempts to handle being cyberbullied. Additionally, younger teens who lacked the experience and personal resources necessary to manage

and overcome the cyberbullying required more help from others for ideas about effective coping strategies and for support to manage being cyberbullied. These variances demonstrated differences in teens' levels of independence, as well as in their capabilities to resolve the cyberbullying incidents, that Erickson (1968) theorized are related to teen's age and developmental levels. The only exception to my observed relationship between teens' age and levels of maturity for coping with cyberbullying was that all teens sought help from others to deal with the negative emotions associated with being cyberbullied. However, teens' age and developmental levels still influenced from whom they sought support. Older teens sought support mainly from peers, which helped preserve their feelings of autonomy, as well as their levels of confidence and perceived control of the situation, while younger teens received the majority of their emotional support from trusted adults.

Teens developed some interesting insights regarding cyberbullying through the process of coping with being cyberbullied. Teens realized that feeling good about yourself, believing in yourself, and not caring so much about what others think were instrumental to handling cyberbullying. Not only were these faculties conducive to helping teens develop and maintain the confidence they needed to get through the cyberbullying with success, they fostered the personal growth and levels of maturity helpful for teens to manage the reactive responses that can escalate cyberbullying and handle the negative emotions that can make cyberbullying distressing. Older teens stressed that remaining positive and confident throughout the situation was important to managing and overcoming the cyberbullying successfully, which was a skill that older teens appeared to possess going into the experience. Younger teens communicated they

learned the importance of remaining positive and of being confident in yourself as a result of their experiences.

After having gone through the experience of coping with cyberbullying, teens comfortably and confidently shared their recommendations and advice for others. The interesting finding here was that, although teens' actual coping patterns while handling the cyberbullying during the incident varied depending on age and levels of experience and maturity, what teens recommended to others for coping with cyberbullying was similar. After having coped with cyberbullying successfully, all teens, regardless of age or developmental level, offered recommendations and advice that demonstrated higher order cognitive and evaluative skills, reasoning skills, and higher levels of what Bandura (1989) termed self-agency and self-regulation. These changes in behaviors, particularly as demonstrated by younger teens, signified what Erickson (1968) described as learning, growth, and movement toward independence that I attribute to the experience teens' gained from successfully managing and overcoming the cyberbullying.

Summary of Interpretation of the Findings in the Context of Theory

In analyzing the specific strategies teens reported using to cope with cyberbullying within the context of theory, I noticed several patterns. First, I realized coping approaches used by teens to handle being cyberbullied consisted of various coping style and coping strategy combinations, thus the approaches did not fit neatly into any one theoretical category of coping. Second, I discovered teens' selection of coping strategies for cyberbullying and their assessment of the strategies they used depended on the context of the situation. I learned that teens' selection of coping strategies and determination of coping strategy effectiveness were influenced by whether teens were

trying to get the cyberbullying to stop; whether they were attempting to keep the cyberbullying from being hurtful; and whether they believed the strategy would help them handle the cyberbullying or would possibly make the situation worse. Third, I found that teens' approaches to managing and overcoming being cyberbullied differed based on their age, levels of maturity, and experience. The influence of age and developmental levels on coping has been reported in previous findings from coping research and literature (e.g., Compas [2001], Donaldson et al. [2000], Seiffge-Krenke et al., [2009], Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, [2007]), but I did not uncover any similar findings pertaining to age and developmental for coping with cyberbullying.

Potential new theory for coping with cyberbullying. Although this study was not a grounded theory study, it is clear from the analyses of data that the theories I used in this study need refinement to be suitable for understanding and explaining coping mechanisms used by teens to manage and overcome cyberbullying. While I found elements of the theories to be useful, the individual theories I used to guide the study were not adequate for explaining teens' experiences of coping with cyberbullying. Accordingly, I hypothesized that the data from this study could be used to develop a new theoretical model for coping with cyberbullying that can be tested in future quantitative studies and applied in future qualitative studies on coping with cyberbullying. I discuss this idea further in the Recommendations for Future Study section.

Limitations of the Study

This study was a straight qualitative study I designed to investigate the efficacy of the coping strategies adolescent victims of cyberbullying used to manage and overcome being cyberbullied. Although a small sample size, inherently, is not a limitation to a

qualitative study, I did not have a large enough sample to ensure both data and thematic saturation. A specific limitation that arose related to the sample was that originally I intended to seek an equal number of female and male participants to explore whether there were differences in the ways males and females approached coping with cyberbullying, to include the nature of these differences. Because participants for the study included five females and one male, I did not have sufficient data to assess the differences or similarities between females' and males' approaches to coping with cyberbullying.

Some of the anticipated limitations of the study that I presented in Chapter 1 did not arise. As I ensured teens' privacy and confidentiality and provided parents with a list of resources available to teens in the event they became distressed as a result of sharing their experiences with cyberbullying, I did not experience difficulty in gaining parental consent. Also, because all teens had disclosed the cyberbullying to their parents, it appeared there was less hesitation by teens to ask for their parents' permission to participate in the study. Self-reports of past experiences by participants did not pose a limitation. Teens clearly recalled their experiences of coping with cyberbullying. Also, using a semistructured interview format helped teens communicate their experiences of managing and overcoming cyberbullying in greater detail rather than impose any limitations. Finally, although identification of and access to cyberbullying victims was difficult and took much longer than I anticipated, the use of snowball sampling where former interview participants assisted with recruitment allowed me to gain access to teens I would not have otherwise identified.

The actions I took to address the methodological limitations to trustworthiness

inherent to a qualitative study were (a) conducting member checking during the interviews, (b) collecting rich data, (c) assessing the consistency of the findings through the use of pattern matching, (d) maintaining an audit trail, (e) bracketing any personal presuppositions that might have influenced the study, and (f) reporting the findings using thick description. By implementing each of these procedures, I was able to enhance the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of the study. As a result, I am confident the findings from this study provide a basis for further research and for the reader to make informed decisions about how the information provided may be useful in other settings.

Unanticipated Challenges During Data Collection and Possible Solutions

While conducting the study, I experienced several unexpected challenges that are important to discuss because of the intersection of the age of the participants and the topic I studied. One unexpected challenge I faced during data collection was the difficulty of scheduling and completing interviews with participants who expressed the desire to share their stories. Making contact with teens, scheduling an interview time, and getting them to commit to and follow through with the scheduled interviews typically required multiple attempts and often took me several weeks to accomplish. I found that interested teens often were ready to talk upon initial contact, but in the time it took to complete the informed consent process—which averaged two to three weeks per participant—the teens already had moved on to other things making it difficult to schedule an interview. In retrospect, I realized this problem likely was indicative of the age and culture of the group. As teens tend to live in the moment, I found that their interest, focus, and priorities changed quickly depending on what was going on in their

world. A possible solution to this problem may be to conduct e-mail interviews where the interview is conducted asynchronously. However, this method would require a level of commitment that may not be doable for teens as multiple exchanges between the participant and researcher would be needed.

A second unexpected challenge I faced pertained to the awkwardness some teens appeared to feel about talking on the phone or about conducting an interview via Skype or FaceTime. Additionally, most of the teens preferred to communicate using text messaging or e-mails rather than talking on the phone, especially to someone they didn't know. This may have contributed to the challenges I experienced of getting teens to commit to an interview time, as well as to what occurred with the two teens who agreed to an interview and then disappeared. Being able to conduct face-to-face interviews might have alleviated some of these issues because often it is easier to break the ice and to build rapport with teens in person than by phone. However, given teens' geographical locations, face-to-face interviews were not an option.

A third unanticipated challenge occurred when I reminded prospective participants that I would be recording the interview. Even though I assured each teen that all information would remain private and confidential, and would be used strictly to ensure the accuracy of the information he or she shared, one teen decided not to participate in the study because the interview was going to be recorded. In an attempt to rectify this issue, I offered to interview the teen without the conversation being recorded, but the teen was no longer interested.

Recommendations for Further Research

Considering the strengths and limitations of this study, as well as the literature I

reviewed for this inquiry, my recommendations for further research are as follows:

- Future research should explore coping strategy use and coping strategy effectiveness for cyberbullying by replicating this study with a larger, more diverse sample. A more expanded sample could be used to confirm or disconfirm the findings from the current study.
- Future research with equal numbers of males and females could be used to investigate whether teens' approaches to handling being cyberbullied were influenced by their gender. Given the results of my study, I predict there may be differences in the ways males and females approach coping with cyberbullying but I do not have enough data to support this hypothesis. Gender differences should extend beyond traditional male-female differences to include consideration of gender identity. Learning whether teens' biological sex versus how teens identify influences their coping approaches could provide valuable information to help LGBTQ youth better cope with being cyberbullied. This is important as this population is typically at high risk of attack, yet often lacks the needed resources and support from others to handle the situation successfully (GLSEN, CiPHR, & CCRC, 2013).
- Future research on cyberbullying would benefit from an investigation of the role that culture plays on cyberbullying and coping strategies. There is little known about multicultural or multinational differences for coping with cyberbullying and for determining coping strategy effectiveness, or if such differences actually exist. Multicultural education addresses the

rapidly changing demographics of students and learning if there are cultural differences in approaches to coping with being cyberbullied can be used to help learn more about effective coping strategies for cyberbullying.

- Future research needs to explore coping with cyberbullying from a developmental paradigm. In my study I identified differences related to the developmental stages of participants, which needs further investigation. Older students differed from younger students in their responses to cyberbullying and the approaches they selected to cope with being cyberbullied. If further research confirmed this finding, it would strengthen our understanding of what types of support were most beneficial for teens experiencing cyberbullying based on their age and levels of experience or maturity. In turn, this information could facilitate better practices for others attempting to support teens needing help or guidance for coping with being cyberbullied. Additionally, the long-term effectiveness of the choices teens at different developmental levels make for coping with cyberbullying need to be documented as it is possible that the capacity to recover more easily or more successfully from cyberbullying occurs as teens mature.
- Future research regarding the efficacy of the support cyberbullying victims receive is needed. My study revealed that teens sought and received support from adults as well as their peers. Learning what forms of support were most effective and how to access proper support can be

helpful for teens as they determine what to do when experiencing cyberbullying.

- Future research should include developing a practical coping model for cyberbullying. My findings confirmed the suggestions of Parris et al. (2012) and Šleglova and Cerna (2011) that a model for coping with cyberbullying that clarifies coping strategy use and coping strategy effectiveness by situational context is needed. Accordingly, I recommend using a grounded theory method to develop (or to begin developing) a coping model specifically for cyberbullying. This would provide an evidence-based, concrete resource of coping strategies that have been shown to be effective for coping with cyberbullying.
- Future qualitative research on strategies for coping with cyberbullying should seek samples of at least 12 individuals to ensure both data and thematic saturation. A larger sample may be needed if the sample is diverse (e.g., using maximum variation sampling) to be able to identify important themes and patterns that emerge from the varied experiences of a heterogeneous group (Patton, 2002).

To address these issues, researchers could conduct qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods studies.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The findings of this study contribute to positive social change on multiple levels.

At the individual level, knowing there are teens who found ways to handle being

cyberbullied successfully and continue on with their lives sends a positive message to teens who otherwise may feel defeated and overwhelmed by cyberbullying incidents. Providing firsthand advice for cyberbullying—given by peers—offers teens recommendations from a more relatable source that may be better accepted and used accordingly. Additionally, raising awareness about best practices for supporting teens who are experiencing cyberbullying can enhance parents' and family members' ability to help teens should a cyberbullying incident occur.

At the community level, the findings from this study provide information that can inform intervention and prevention programs for schools and community social services that teens may approach for help with cyberbullying. If teens are not able to handle the situation on their own, or if they cannot confide in or count on parents or family members for support, it is likely they will seek help from school officials or through community support organizations. Therefore, it is important that these individuals are equipped to help teens deal with being cyberbullied effectively.

From a national and global standpoint, the findings of this study contribute to positive social change by providing information for researchers to assess (a) the effectiveness of the strategies currently used or considered effective for coping with cyberbullying, and (b) current models for coping with cyberbullying. Furthermore, the knowledge gained from this study can foster new research on effective coping with cyberbullying, as well as provide data for scholars and policy makers to use in countries where cyberbullying research may be in its preliminary stages.

Methodological, Theoretical, and Empirical Implications

Using a qualitative design and approach afforded me the opportunity to delve deeper into the gap in the literature than a quantitative design would have allowed. As the voice of teens was critical to the study, a true strength to this research design was that the data came from teens' lived experiences rather than being based on hypothetical situations. Teens themselves were the experts and authors of their lived experiences. As a result, I was able to collect comprehensive data that revealed fresh and original information and that provided insights into coping with cyberbullying from a new perspective—from teens who had experienced it firsthand.

The Colaizzi (1978) method provided an extremely valuable tool for data analysis. Through the themes and patterns that emerged from teens' statements about coping with cyberbullying I learned (a) how teens developed the coping strategies they used, (b) what strategies teens tried for getting the cyberbullying to stop and for mitigating the negative effects of the cyberbullying, (c) the perceived effectiveness of the coping strategies teens used, (d) teens' suggestions for handling and preventing cyberbullying, (e) how self-efficacy played a part in teens' coping strategy development and use, and (f) that age and developmental levels influenced teens' coping approaches. Further, by using the pattern matching technique described by Yin (2009), I was able to confirm and disconfirm findings from previous research on coping with cyberbullying, as well as to expand upon past research by identifying new information about managing and overcoming cyberbullying, particularly with regard to situational context. Accordingly, the study's design was the right choice for this investigation into the coping strategies teens found effective for managing and overcoming being cyberbullied.

Based on my findings, I concluded that traditional coping models are sufficient for explaining coping strategy development and use. However, I agree with Parris et al. (2012) and Šleglova and Cerna (2011) that a different model is needed to explain coping with cyberbullying, but in a way that clarifies the effectiveness of coping strategies for cyberbullying by context. With this type of model, strategies may be placed in multiple coping style categories that expound on the specifics of when and how a strategy can be effective (or ineffective) for coping with cyberbullying, regardless of the theoretical coping category or type of strategy it otherwise might be deemed. Doing so would remove the focus from trying to dissect aspects of traditional coping theory to explain coping with cyberbullying to producing a toolbox of empirically based coping strategies that have been shown to be effective for successfully managing and overcoming being cyberbullied.

Recommendations for Practice

In consideration of what I learned from this study, I recommend the following practices. For teens who are experiencing cyberbullying

- teens should be proactive about the ways they approach cyberbullying;
- teens should utilize trusted individuals for support; and
- teens should be aware of behaviors, interactions, and situations that can serve to inhibit or promote the cyberbullying and its negative effects.

For adults (e.g., parents, teachers, school officials, counselors, authorities, etc.) who are called upon to support teens who are experiencing cyberbullying

- adults should be open to teens' requests for help with the cyberbullying;
- adults should take positive action to provide support when requested; and

- adults should educate themselves on effective coping strategies for cyberbullying. This knowledge should include highlighting the roles played by situational context, teens' age, experience, and maturity levels, and how these factors relate to the ways teens approach coping with cyberbullying.

Dissemination of the Findings

The overarching intent of this study was to make a difference in the lives of youths who experience cyberbullying by providing data to inform further research, policy, and intervention and educational efforts to deal with and prevent cyberbullying victimization. To that end, I anticipate disseminating the results through several avenues. I plan to publish a report of the findings in an academic or research journal, as a book chapter, or to share the findings in a conference paper to facilitate my reaching a larger audience of researchers and interest groups. Further plans are that the findings will evolve into informational or educational pamphlets, presentations, or poster sessions so I can present the findings in a more practical manner through professional conferences, educational seminars, and online user forums or websites. By presenting my findings in this manner, I can offer useable information for coping with cyberbullying to teens, as well as to peers, parents, school officials, and community social services needing to support teens who are experiencing cyberbullying. At the suggestions of Holloway and Todres (2007) and Schober, Farrington, and Lacey (2009), I plan to seek guidance and assistance from a qualified mentor or project team to ensure the data remains intact in all of the shortened forms I create to disseminate my findings.

Conclusion

I conducted this study to investigate the efficacy of the coping strategies adolescent victims of cyberbullying use to manage and overcome being cyberbullied. By examining how teens coped with cyberbullying, I learned what coping strategies teens found to be effective, as well as those they determined were ineffective, for dealing with incidents of cyberbullying. As teens shared their journey of coping with cyberbullying, I was able to follow the thoughts, decisions, actions, and adjustments they made to deal effectively with having been cyberbullied. The variation in teens' approaches to managing and overcoming cyberbullying were influenced more by their age, experience, and levels of maturity than by the type of cyberbullying that occurred. Importantly, I found that the efficacy of the strategies teens used to manage and overcome cyberbullying depended on the context of the situation.

As teens in my study demonstrated, it is possible to handle cyberbullying successfully. Yet, teens attributed part of their success to receiving proper support from others. Consequently, it is essential that individuals who work with teens who are experiencing cyberbullying consider the situational context of the cyberbullying, as well as the age, experience, and maturity level of the teens, and adjust their guidance accordingly. Doing so would provide teens with a useful source of support, particularly when coping efforts required to handle the situation extend beyond what teens are capable of on their own.

With teens' reliance on technology and regular use of social media, susceptibility to cyberbullying will continue to exist. To bolster the individual, social, and emotional skills necessary for teens to handle cyberbullying, and to mitigate the harmful effects

being cyberbullied can create, it will be important that efforts to combat cyberbullying are evidence based and constructive. Accordingly, I offer the knowledge I gained about how teens approached being cyberbullied, about effective coping strategies for cyberbullying, and about what constitutes proper support for teens experiencing cyberbullying as a collective of evidence-based information from which teens and others can draw for effective ways of handling incidents of cyberbullying. Furthermore, I present findings that researchers who might be conducting future studies consisting of larger, more demographically diverse samples can build on.

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Appendix A: Announcement of Study

HAVE YOU (OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW) BEEN CYBERBULLIED?

CYBERBULLYING

Walden University Doctoral Research Study

(Projected Dates of Study: Feb. 20, 2015 – July 1, 2015)

RESEARCH IS ALWAYS VOLUNTARY!

LOOKING FOR TEENS (6 FEMALES & 6 MALES)

**WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY DEALT WITH BEING CYBERBULLIED
TO LEARN HOW YOU MANAGED TO GET THROUGH THE PROBLEM**

YOU COULD HELP WITH THIS STUDY IF:

- You were a victim of cyberbullying in the past
- You are in Grades 10 to 12
- You successfully managed and overcame being cyberbullied
- You are willing to share your experiences about what worked
- Your parent or guardian will give you permission to participate in the study (If you are 18 yrs. you do not need parent permission to be in the study)

IF YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY, YOU WOULD:

- Share about how you handled the cyberbullying during a 60 to 90 minute, private and confidential interview conversation with the researcher
- Provide information that may help other teens deal with cyberbullying
- Receive a movie ticket voucher to thank you for your time

**REMEMBER, IT IS YOUR CHOICE TO PARTICIPATE
YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR MIND OR STOP AT ANY TIME**

TEENS
HELPING
TEENS

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT:

<RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix B: Snowball Sampling Script

Dear [Name],

I appreciate your interest in my study on coping with cyberbullying. I am looking for teens in Grades 10 to 12 who are willing to share their experiences about how they successfully dealt with being cyberbullied and I would appreciate if you would share this flyer with anyone else you know who fits the description in the flyer and who you believe may be interested in learning about or participating in this study. Please have them contact me if they are interested so they will not feel any pressure to participate. I do not need to know you referred them, so your privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

You do not have to share the information if you do not want to. You are under no obligation to do so. Whether or not you share this information will not affect your relationship with me.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

<Name of Researcher>

Appendix C: Initial Contact and Screening Protocol

Thank you for contacting me and for your interest in taking part in my research study on coping with cyberbullying. Before we continue, I need to ask you a few questions to make sure you fit the criteria to help with this study. Is that okay with you?

- Will you please confirm for me that you were cyberbullied in the past on some form of electronic or digital technology such as the internet, cell phone, gaming device, or website?
- What grade are you in?
- Will you please confirm for me that you figured out ways to successfully help you handle being cyberbullied?
- Will you also please confirm for me that you are willing to share your experiences about how you dealt with being cyberbullied?
- How old are you?
- Please tell me if you are male or female.
- What county and state do you live in? (If the youth does not know the county offhand, I will ask what city they live in.)

To qualify for inclusion into the study, youths currently must be either in Grades 10, 11, or 12 (question #2) and have answered “yes” to questions #1, #3, and #4 of the screening protocol listed above. As long as the grade criterion is met, the youths were cyberbullied in the past, the youths successfully managed and overcame the cyberbullying, and the youths are willing to share their experiences about how they handled being cyberbullied, they qualify to participate in the study. Question #5, regarding age, is to ensure proper cover letters and consent forms (i.e., youth assent and parental consent or informed consent) are sent to each potential participant. Question # 6 (gender) will be used as demographic information for the study and for analysis. Question #7 only will be used for mandated reporting purposes and to locate additional local no to low-cost mental health services participants can contact in the event of distress.

If the youth does not meet the criteria to participate in the study, the researcher will respond with the following:

I sincerely appreciate your interest in helping out with this research project, but you do not meet the criteria for this study so I will not be able to include you as a participant. Please have a wonderful day and thank you for your time.

If the youth meets the criteria for the study, the researcher will respond with the following:

Again, I would like to thank you for your interest and for your willingness to help out with this research project. Before we can talk about your experiences in dealing with cyberbullying, I will need you and your parent or guardian (if youth is under 18 years of age) to sign a form that allows you to participate in the study. The purpose of this

paperwork is to make sure that you (and your parent or guardian) clearly understand what you will be doing and that you agree (and have permission) to participate in the research. During this time, I will make sure you (and your parent or guardian) understand everything about the study and that you (and your parent or guardian) have the chance to ask any questions you may have.

I need to send a letter explaining the study to your parent or guardian so I will need your parent or guardian's name and home address to send the materials. The letter explains the study and asks for their permission for you to participate. There will also be a form for you to complete that asks for your permission to participate. (Note: if student is over the age of 18, as identified in #5 of the screening questions, this step will be modified so only a consent form is sent via e-mail or U.S. mail.)

After all of the proper paperwork is signed, we can schedule an interview meeting to talk about your experiences in dealing with cyberbullying. The meeting will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. I will ask you about how you handled the cyberbullying, how you came up with the strategies you used, and how you feel about the strategies you tried. I also plan to audiotape our conversation to make sure I get all of the information you share with me correct. Does all of this sound okay to you?

If the youth states that everything is okay, the researcher will then take care of the assent/consent process—described above and in the Consent Process section of this chapter—in order to be able to schedule the interview.

Appendix D: Expert Panel Invitation Letter

<Date>

Dear <Title> <Last Name of Individual>:

I am a doctoral student in the General Psychology program at Walden University and I am working to complete my dissertation. I have written my proposal and I am writing to ask that you be part of an expert panel to review my interview questions.

The purpose of my qualitative study is to explore the efficacy of the coping strategies adolescent victims of cyberbullying used to deal with and prevent further incidents of cyberbullying. The voice of former victims of cyberbullying has not been studied comprehensively. I am interested in learning directly from teens' lived experiences what they did to effectively manage and overcome being cyberbullied.

The study will utilize a 60 to 90 minute interview that will take place either in person, by Skype or FaceTime, or by telephone, depending on the geographic location of the participant. I will be interviewing 12 to 15 participants. As part of my recruitment, interested participants will be screened to determine if they meet the following criteria:

- Former victim of cyberbullying who successfully coped with the issue
- Currently in Grades 10 to 12
- Willing to share their experiences (i.e., stories) about how they dealt with being cyberbullied and the coping strategies they found to be effective

I would greatly appreciate if you would be on my expert panel and evaluate the interview questions vis-à-vis the research question and subquestions. I am asking both content experts and qualitative methodology experts for their feedback. I take your role seriously and modifications to the interview will be made using your recommendations for changes (e.g., additions, subtractions, changes in wording). This important activity will validate my interview instrument.

I am including the specific research question, subquestions, and interview questions in the attached matrix that I would like for you to review. If you would be so kind as to provide your comments directly in the space under Feedback and return the matrix to me by <Date> I would be greatly appreciative.

If you have any questions, or if you prefer not to participate, please do not hesitate to send me an email to let me know. You may also contact my chair, <Name>, at <email> with any questions you may have.

As a token of my deep appreciation I would like to give you a gift card to Starbucks. Please provide a mailing address along with your response.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

<Name of Researcher>

In your review, I would appreciate your comments on the following:

- Fit of the research question and subquestions with focus of study;
- Appropriate language and wording of the research question and subquestions;
- Appropriate language and tone of interview questions, including probes;
- Suggestions for changes in wording, tone, or language on the research question and subquestions; and
- Suggestions for changes in interview questions.

*Note – The interview questions were developed to address all of the subquestions as opposed to using specific interview questions to answer specific subquestions.

Interview*

Research Question (RQ)/ Subquestion (SQ)	Interview Questions	Feedback
RQ1: What strategies did victims of cyberbullying use to cope with, counteract, and prevent cyberbullying? SQ1: How did cyberbullying victims develop the strategies they chose to use to deal with and prevent further incidents of cyberbullying? SQ2: How did victims of cyberbullying determine what strategies were	The first interview question is based on the screening information. 1. You mentioned that you were cyberbullied in the past. What type of cyberbullying did you experience? (Probe: kind [Internet, smart phone, social media, specific website, chat room, email, texts, video, etc.]) 2. How long did the cyberbullying go on? 3. How many people were involved in the	

<p>effective and ineffective for coping with and preventing further cyberbullying incidents? SQ3: What did victims of cyberbullying learn in the process of determining effective strategies for coping with and preventing further incidents of cyberbullying?</p>	<p>cyberbullying? Did you know any of the people who were cyberbullying you? 4. Can you recall what the cyberbullying consisted of— what types of things were said to you or why it was being done to you? (Probe: topic, reasons) 5. What kinds of strategies did you come up with to try to stop the cyberbullying? (Probe: origin of strategies - participant’s own ideas and/or recommendations from others; if cyberbullying experiences varied what strategies were used to stop the different types cyberbullying) 6. Of the strategies that you tried to deal with the cyberbullying, which ones helped you to prevent the cyberbullying from happening to you again? (Probe: how participant determined what worked— specific strategies considered, tried, used including verbal and non-verbal) 7. Of the strategies [identified from what participant just shared] that you tried or used to help prevent the cyberbullying from happening to you again, what do you feel was the <u>most effective</u> for getting the cyberbullying to stop? (Probe: if cyberbullying experiences and methods for coping were different depending on type of</p>	
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	<p>cyberbullying, what was most effective for each type)</p> <p>8. Can you tell me about anything that did not work very well for you to deal with being cyberbullied? (Probe: what was tried and result; things participant might now do differently; for which specific types of cyberbullying)</p> <p>9. After having gone through this experience, what would you say to someone else who is being cyberbullied? (Probe: advice, suggestions, recommendations to teens who are being cyberbullied; lessons learned)</p> <p>10. Okay, thank you for your thoughtful responses. Is there anything else you would like to add that I might have overlooked or that you feel is important to say about dealing with or preventing cyberbullying from happening to someone?</p>	
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Appendix E: Pattern Matching Template

Coping Strategies for Cyberbullying Identified in Research	Coping Strategies for Cyberbullying Reported in Neaville Study
Strategies Used to Cope with Cyberbullying to Keep the Cyberbullying from Being Hurtful	
Avoiding the situation (e.g., trying or pretending to ignore the situation, not going to school, avoiding sites where the cyberbullying took place, creating a new account or profile)	
(Dehue et al., 2008; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Völlink et al., 2013)	
Purposefully ignoring the cyberbullying (e.g., taking the situation lightly, consciously ignoring, focusing attention elsewhere)	
(Dehue et al., 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)	
Seeking social support (e.g., confiding in and receiving positive support from friends, family, adults, sharing feelings, venting)	
(Aricak et al., 2008; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)	
Seeking psychological support (e.g., counseling, therapy)	
(Šleglova & Cerna, 2011)	

Seeking outlets (e.g., hobbies, diversions, sports, exercise)

(Craig et al., 2007; Machackova et al., 2013; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011)

Depreciating the cyberbully (e.g., discrediting or making fun of the cyberbully)

Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011

Using humor (e.g., making fun of the situation, laughing off the situation)

(Craig et al., 2007; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011)

Searching for advice online (e.g., support groups, information for dealing with cyberbullying, helplines)

(Machackova et al., 2013)

Accepting that cyberbullying is a part of life and is going to happen

(Parris et al., 2012, Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013)

Focusing on the positive (e.g., moving on with one's life, not dwelling on the situation, remaining optimistic and confident)

(Parris et al., 2012)

Reframing the situation (e.g., justifying or trivializing the situation)

(Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey,

2009; Völlink et al., 2013)

Strategies Used to Counteract Cyberbullying to Get the Cyberbullying to Stop
Victims prefer to deal with the issue themselves

((Li, 2010; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009)

Confronting the cyberbully (e.g., in person or online)

(Arıcak et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013, Willard, 2007)

Talking in person

(Parris et al., 2012)

Blocking the cyberbully

(Agatston et al., 2007; Arıcak et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009)

Deleting threatening messages or social media profiles

(Dehue et al., 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009)

Retaliating against the cyberbully (e.g., cyberbullying back, physical retaliation)

(Agatston et al., 2007; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dagleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)

Reporting to adults (e.g., parents, teachers, school personnel or administrators)

(Agatston et al., 2007; Aricak et al., 2008; Craig et al., 2007; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Mishna et al., 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dagleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)

Reporting to authorities (e.g. service providers, police)

(Cassidy et al., 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Willard, 2007)

Punishing the cyberbully (e.g., identifying the cyberbully and enforcing punishment by some form of behavior code, restricting access to technologies, not allowing cyberbully to participate in school activities or sports, school suspension or alternative schooling)

(Cassidy et al., 2009; Kraft & Wang, 2009; Stacey, 2009)

Avoiding the situation

(Dehue et al., 2008; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Völlink et al., 2013)

Staying offline

(Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Smith et al. 2008)

Doing nothing at all

(Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2010; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Völlink et al., 2013)

Changing account, username, or number

(Aricak et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008)

Ignoring the cyberbullying

(Agatston et al., 2007; Craig et al., 2007; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Smith et al., 2008; Willard, 2007)

Seeking social support

(Aricak et al., 2008; Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009; Völlink et al., 2013; Willard, 2007)

Seeking advice online

(Machackova et al., 2013)

Strategies Used to Prevent Cyberbullying
Blocking the cyberbully

(Agatston et al., 2007; Aricak et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Machackova et al., 2013; Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Šleglova & Cerna, 2011; Smith et al., 2008; Stacey, 2009; Staksrud & Livingstone, 2009)

Education about proper Internet use

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Mishna et al., 2009)

Education about Internet privacy

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Parris et al., 2012; Willard, 2007)

Cyberbullying and online risk prevention
education

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Price & Dalgleish, 2010)

Using proper online etiquette and
communicating in a kind manner

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Li, 2010; Willard, 2007)

There is no way to prevent or to stop
cyberbullying from happening

(Li, 2010; Mishna et al., 2009; Parris et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2008)

Safeguarding passwords, personal information, and account information from others

(Ariack et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patching, 2012a; 2012b; Mishna et al., 2009)

Monitoring personal information or images that others have access to online

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Parris et al., 2012; Willard, 2007)

Not trusting others you do not know

(Dehue et al., 2008; Mishna et al., 2009)

Talking in person before the issue escalates to a cyberbullying situation

(Parris et al., 2012)

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Appendix F: Resources for Distressed Participants

STOMP Out Bullying HelpChat Line –

<http://www.stompoutbullying.org/index.php/information-and-resources/helpchat-line/helpchat/>

National Suicide Hotline –

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) OR Chat online <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

GLBT National Youth Talkline – <http://www.glnh.org/talkline/>

Call 1-800-246-7743 OR Email help@GLBThotline.org

OKtoTALK – <http://ok2talk.org/gethelp>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) –

Mental Health Services Locator <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

1. In the locator box type your zip code or city and click “Go”
2. In the Find Facility box to the right side of the map select the Distance you are willing to travel
3. Select Mental Health
4. Then select the Public/government organization option toward the bottom of the Mental Health Services box

This will give you free to low cost places you can contact for help in case you feel stressed or upset.