



CONNECTIONS

The Counselling Newsletter

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#CYBERWATCH

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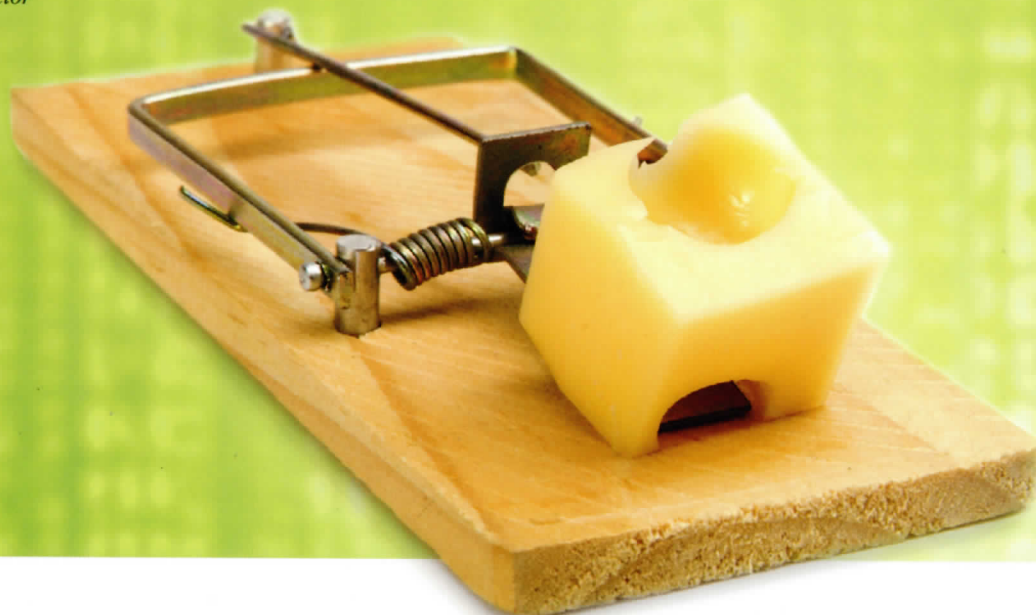
Dear Reader,

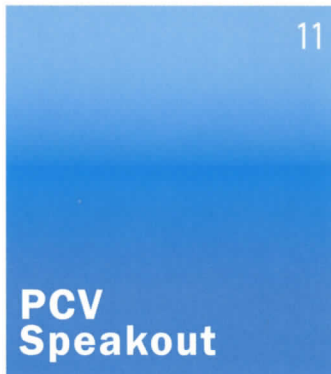
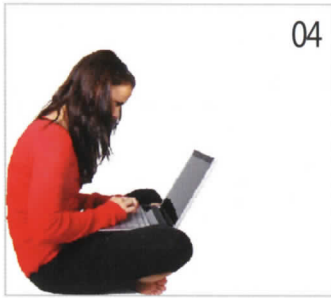
This issue of Connection entitled: “#Cyberwatch” is addressing the modern day bullying that burrows well within the lives of the victims with the very accessible social media on our computers, tablets or phones. Bullying is no longer confined to the four walls of a particular place. It is important for us to understand the challenge that these victims are going through and lend a helping hand. It is after all what we choose to do. Social media is but a vehicle to convey our message, it is us who type and click the words. Our words are not silent to others without saying it out. The effects of our words do not weigh less without a pen. It does not cut off the responsibility and the weight that our words bring. The same vehicle that brings havoc is the same vehicle that is able to bring the gift of support and encouragement. I like how the authors in this issue bring that beautiful perspective. It is a matter of choosing the right thing to do. Make a positive impact. Let people remember you by something meaningful.

I’m glad that this issue is finally out. Despite saying these same words from issue to issue, I do find the need to repeat these words. I’m truly thankful to those that have put in their effort to make it possible, this wouldn’t happen without them. I would like to thank the authors who took time to write these article despite being in their busiest season during the semester with assignments. I would like to thank our designer who took the time to work through the artwork. Lastly, I would like to thank the proof readers who took on the tedious work of running through every line making sure that each article is in its best form. I really appreciate their effort.

Hope you enjoy!

Jun Teh
Editorial Director





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WORDS THROUGH THE TIP OF MY FINGER

Words that come from me are boundless nowadays. They are no longer bound to the words I say, nor are they bound to the pages I write. With just a click, the same words can travel to people I know, people that I have yet to meet or never meet at all. These words that come from me take many forms- they are words that comfort and also words that hurt. I feel disconnected from these words- words I've written with intention but yet meaningless to me.

I no longer feel the words that come from me.

I once felt the words that came from me. I understood whether it was warm, hot, cold or icy but I can no longer feel it through the screen of my computer, tablet nor my phone. I only understand the need to be connected- the need to get a "like", get a comment, or get a review. It is all a number game. I understand my intention but I'm blind to the meaning it has to others. I get the most engineered answer which gives me no clue what it truly means to others. The screen in front of me has left me blind.

The need to connect in a disconnected world has left me blind.

I miss the natural response that gives me a clue into the inner world of others. I miss that fleeting

curve of the lips to a joke I say; the occasional frown of annoyance or the knowing look when we both had the same thought. I miss the spontaneity of how the word flows. I miss the meaning I give to the words I say.

I miss being me.

The person behind the screen seems so obnoxious right now. Whatever that person says either riles people up or calls for a sympathy vote. Nothing seems real anymore.

Sometimes I wonder if tasting the words in my mouth would give me an idea on what kind of temperature it gives off to others before typing it on my cold keyboard or swiping the words out so fast that I can't remember the words that came from me.

I think it is time to bring the warmth back to my words. No longer the hot white anger, no longer the black cold walls that I'm slowly building against the world. Just words that are true to myself.

Just words that truly connect me to others.

Avery Tee (FST)



Does the name “Kiki” ring a bell? Netizens are familiar with her being the road bully who hit the victim’s car with her steering lock. This infamous incident achieved instant fame, simply type #CDM125 and you can see the negative backlash she received from cyber citizens. Her case was trialled by negative thoughts and public opinions even before the government officials pressed charges on her behaviour.

Well, I did not know that one day I would be the victim of cyber bullying.

I worked in a retail outlet after completing my Pre-U studies. I was assigned to be trained as a cashier. Upon working full time in the company for three months, it was time for evaluation period for promotion. One day, there was a huge discrepancy in a cashier counter. All the cashiers counted the cash both in the store’s counters and cash safe and we could not figure the source of discrepancy. On the same day before I slept, I checked my Facebook wall and saw one of my colleagues posted in her wall claiming that I was the one who caused the loss! Reading the comments, she mentioned my name and other colleagues commented on it. The words were harsh, I felt that I did not deserve this unjust treatment for something I did not do. They were criticising, spreading lies and rumours relentlessly.

Upon calming myself down, I decided not to respond to that post because looking from her point of view, it was promotion period and she did not want to lose that

opportunity. Furthermore, the cyberbully is the person with the problem, not me. Responding to the post only fuels anger between both parties. I did not read the comments section repeatedly and focus on resting to be prepared for the next working day. Just when I thought the dramatic online discussion was over, there was a pandemonium happening in the sales floor and staff room. People were discussing about it. Some of my colleagues smirked in an annoying manner when they saw me while some offered support and encouragement. Every cloud has a silver lining. After a day, the manager told the staffs that a supervisor mistakenly recorded some figures.

Although I was the black sheep in this incident, it made me realize that support is essential. I appreciated my colleagues’ offering their own critical learning experience in the workplace. I was exposed to other worse possibilities which helped me consider other ways of thinking about what was happening. This type of peer support is beneficial when each of us have our own vulnerabilities and strengths and finding value in each other’s help.

In my opinion, it is very reassuring to receive support from a peer who has similar experience and is able to empathise with the problems I might face. I listen to Michael Jackson all the time, his lyrics of “heal the world, make it a better place...” is particularly true if all of us could provide mutual help to curb the sky-rocketing cyber bullying statistics.

Oom Yin (VU)



CYBER BULLYING CHECKLIST

are you a victim?

7 warning signs of cyber bullying:

- I have received threatening messages online via e-mail or social media (such as Facebook/Twitter)
- Someone has created an offensive blog/post about me to spread rumors and say bad things about me
- Someone has taken pictures of me without my permission and posted them on the internet
- Someone has used my pictures in a hateful and derogatory manner and has posted these pictures online for others to see
- Someone has excluded me from an online group (such as a group for your college/university assignments)
- Someone has stolen my password and is posting and sharing things online by using my identity and pretending to be me
- Someone has posted my e-mail or text messages to another person without my permission

If you have experienced any of these 7 warning signs, please do talk to your parents/counselor immediately. You may be a victim of cyberbullying.

DO'S AND DON'T'S TO AVOID CYBER BULLYING

DO

DO

- ✓ Report the abuse – Please report any offensive posts about you by clicking the 'Report post' link on Facebook, for example.
- ✓ Block the cyber bully - You should limit communication with the bully and one way of doing this is by unfriending or blocking the bully from being able to send you Facebook messages or post on your Facebook timeline, for example.
- ✓ Save the evidence – Please do capture and save the harassing messages of the bully as copies of these messages (which ideally should include the relevant dates of the abuse) can be used as evidence for legal action if the bullying persists. It is also a good idea to print out copies of these messages in case the bully tries to delete evidence of the bullying.
- ✓ Inform a trusted adult regarding the bullying – Please do talk to your parents or counselor regarding the bullying as you deserve all the emotional support you need so as to assist you from getting depressed due to the bullying, for example.

DON'T

- ⊗ Don't reply – Please do remember that you should not reply to the bully's harassing messages as if you ignore the messages, the bully will most likely get bored eventually and stop the bullying. Your reaction to the harassing messages is exactly what the bully wants and hence responding to these messages would only escalate the bullying.
- ⊗ Don't forward and/or read offensive messages – Forwarding offensive messages to others in your contact list and/or the public would only reinforce the bully's behavior as your act of forwarding these messages implies that you support the bully's actions. On top of that, forwarding such messages would only further hurt the victims mentioned in the messages.



A (not too) long time ago, in a kingdom by the River Thames (London!) lived a man called Sean. Sean was your average-oversized Joe who loved a good night out. He loved going to concerts and exhibiting his dance moves. The whole kingdom rejoiced in his talent.....NOT.

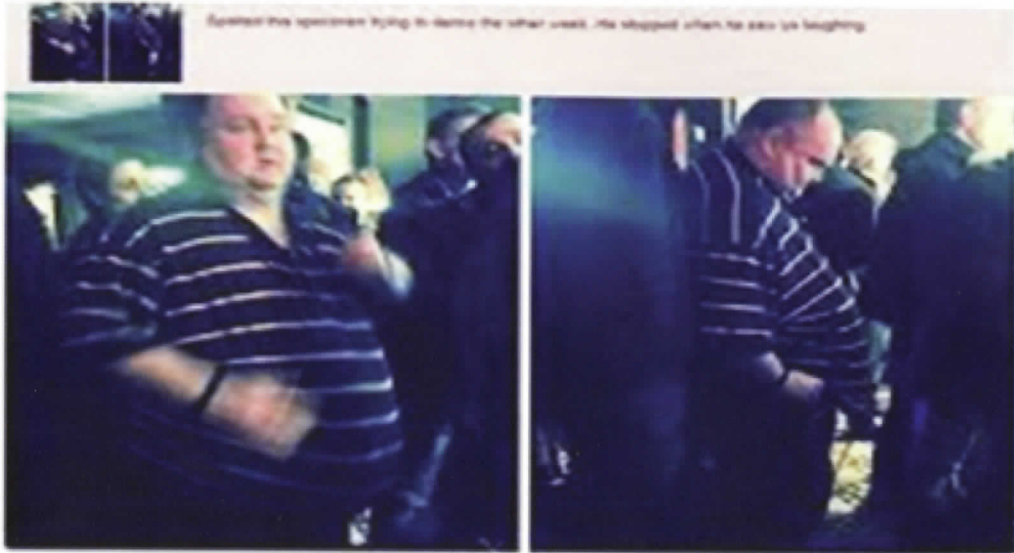
This is where the story gets a twist.

Media has revolutionized the way we keep in touch with each other regardless of geographic locations and time zones. Gone are the days of telegrams or snail mail/ post cards and endless waiting. It has made communication just a swipe away, photos just an Insta away and relationships just a status change away. Everything is instant and goes viral in just a click. This by itself is progressive and enhances our lives in terms of ease and convenience.

Research shows that the ease at which materials can be reproduced (copy-paste function), the lack of emotional reactions, perceived uncontrollability, the

permanence of items posted and the round the clock accessibility (Anderson & Porath, 2005) makes it more appealing for individuals to use this platform.

Face-to-face communication often includes non-verbal cues that act as a benchmark for both the speaker and others to assess the situation and decide when and how the conversation should (or not) be continued. This is however lacking in online communication. Materials can be easily copy-pasted on various forums, message boards, emailed to an entire address book and/or a variety of social media which is perceived to be unmonitored and gives full rein to the individual to say anything and everything that comes to mind without fearing the repercussions. This may not happen so extensively in face-to-face contact where there is a possibility of intervention from bystanders. The internet never sleeps AND never forgets which renders the post immortality and lets individuals post at their leisure, any day-any time. On the flip side, this availability means that people can send and receive messages at all times being unable to escape it.



Sean is a person-not unlike you and me who was caught dancing and fell prey to the new kind of evil in town named Cyberbullying (using online communication to bully others). The message was posted on 4chan, an online message board with the message;

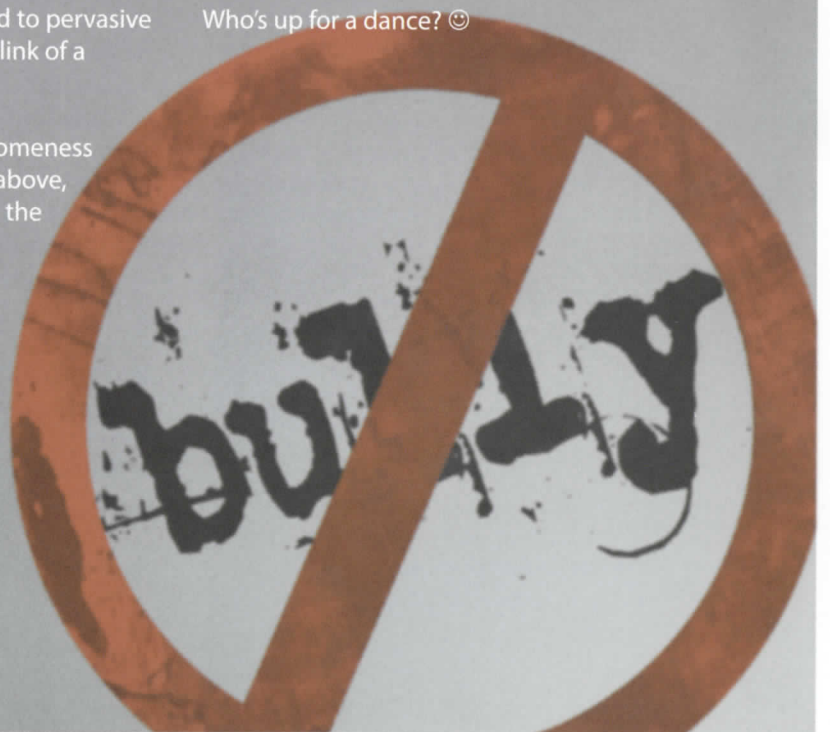
"Spotted this specimen trying to dance the other week," the user posted, along with a photo of a man happily dancing. He stopped when he saw us laughing." Photos of Sean was also posted up accompanying the post for the world to put a face to the "specimen". After Sean spotted these individuals taking his picture and laughing at him, he immediately stopped dancing and a second photo of him looking embarrassed was posted. This demonstrates how the immense power of social media coupled with malicious intent can lead to pervasive bullying. Sean went from happy to sad in a blink of a moment.

The story doesn't end there. Using the awesomeness of the internet and the same reasons stated above, a group of women jumped onto Twitter with the

#Findingdancingman which was tweeted more than 11 000 times within 24 hours. The post went viral and Sean was found. Cassandra Fairbanks, an US-based writer who started the initiative along with her group of friends are throwing Sean a party in Los Angeles where he can dance freely without being bullied for his weight. News has it that several big names such as Pharrel Williams, Moby and more are lending their support to the party.

In a matter of moments, Sean-Who? Became Sean-"The Specimen" to Sean-Partying-up with the Stars! All with the power of the single tool called the Internet. The decision is up to you, Friend or Foe.

Who's up for a dance? 😊





Social Media: How It Became Something Beautiful

One of my closest friends, Ben, about 3 years back when he was admitted hospital due to kidney failure. He was only 22 years old and he was diagnosed with kidney problems when he was 20, due to genetic inheritance from a family with kidney problems.

Doctor said he would need RM70k as soon as possible for him to get a kidney transplant before it is too late. Ben is from a single parent family with 2 younger sisters. All that the mom had was for the sisters' education fund. With no doubt, we had to help Ben to raise the RM70k with other revenues.

I'd been struggling a lot in helping him raise the medical fund, until I realized people make standing payments or subscriptions to charity funds to help save animals and other causes. I also found out that there are actually sites for us to sign up and ask for donations through the internet.

I created an account and asked for donation. The speed of spreading the word was too slow through word-of-mouth and I then used the help of social media. Creating posts, sharing them with friends, tweeting it, creating events and asking the public to join so that they would be aware of the cause. And thankfully, just within 20 days' time, we managed to raise RM50k to get his transplant going. The remaining RM20k was for his post-operation treatments and was not needed immediately.

Today, Ben is a social worker with a fiancée and getting married at the end of this year. With a few clicks through social media, people around the world would be aware about something, a movement would start, a change would occur. This is not the only real-life story, look at the #ALSicebucketchallenge (creating awareness about the ALS disease and raise funds for the research of getting a cure), #dancingman (creating awareness to stop cyberbully and stereotyping fat people), #earthhour (creating awareness about the importance to save electricity and preserving the earth's resources), just to name a few. They were all accomplished through social media that made the world aware of these important issues.

Conversely, if the social media is not used properly for a good cause, misusing it to become a medium to harass, threaten or intimidate someone else, it can become cyberbullying. The power of the social media is immeasurable.

Social media is a creation meant to bring benefit to the people, so let's retain this to be a beautiful thing in our life, benefitting people. Be a responsible user of social media and use it to do something meaningful to impact lives!

Au Kar Fei (FIA)

PCV Speakout



Cyberbullying is imminent in the modern society. I too, have once stood as a victim of cyberbullying. It is actually pretty common in recent years, especially if you're a gaming enthusiast like me. Through the years of my online gaming experi-

ence, I have been pretty much desensitized when these insults came to us via team chats as these people are those whom we do not know. However, there is cyberbullying present in other places such as Facebook. In Facebook however, it is no longer anonymous to us about who's the one on the other side of the computer screen. Victims go through excessive amounts of shaming, hate, as well as other forms of verbal attacks. Due to the high accessibility to social media using widespread smartphones or tablets, the victims are constantly being bombarded with cyberbullying. This is crucial as the victims are more prone to depression, anxiety as well as being more likely to commit acts of self-harm. In order to break this vicious cycle, we should play a role to stop the act of cyberbullying whilst spreading awareness about cyberbullying. This would trickle down to more people and this would snowball. Let's all end the vicious cycle of cyberbullying and leave this as a culture of the past.

Joey Tan (FST)



Social media has now become a form of attachment to us. I recall of a challenge I used to do in response of my friend, which was titled "Bet You Couldn't Last A week without Facebook". True enough, I didn't. Day in day out, we've been updating ourselves with

our friends' activities and memories though we don't meet each other every day. Not just their sweet memories, even their sad moments too, that relationship status change, that image of self-harm and that image of your best friend's dog's funeral, has it struck you that they are calling out for help? There are times when I notice comments that are quick witted and entertaining to others but inappropriate and unsettling to the person involved. I would make it an obligation to personally ask the person if everything's alright, because I believe that as a PCV, we need a certain someone to be there for us when we're at our lowest point. By providing support, not only do they get to relieve their thoughts about what's bothering them, they can feel that emotional support being conveyed to them, that someone actually cares for them. Providing a warm message could essentially go a long way, this one support that you give, will go a long way. Give it a try. Be a supporter.

Su Ann (FST)

**WE ARE
HERE
FOR
YOU.**



Peer Counselling Volunteers
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