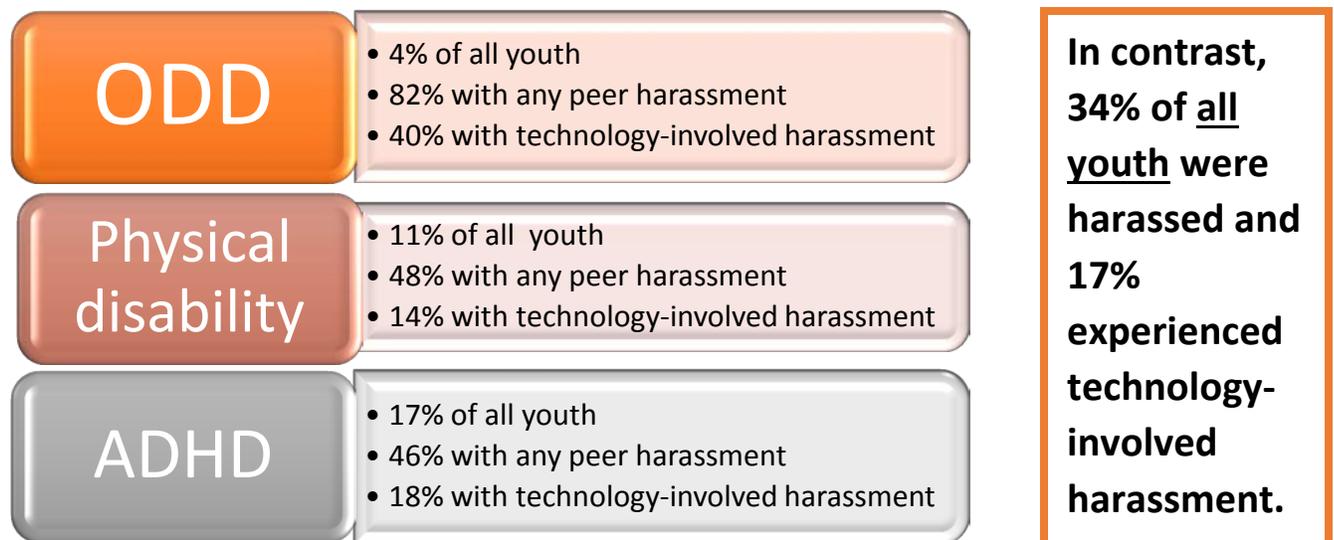


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RATES OF PEER HARASSMENT VICTIMIZATION REPORTED BY YOUTH WITH DIFFERENT DIAGNOSED DISABILITIES

Youth with disabilities are considered a highly vulnerable population. Research indicates that children with disabilities are at heightened risk of victimization compared with those without disabilities¹. But less is known about the extent of peer victimization among youth with varying types of disabilities. To help inform prevention efforts for school and mental health providers, we examine rates of peer harassment victimization among youth with the following types of disabilities: Physical disability, Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Oppositional/defiant disorder or conduct disorder (ODD), Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder or Asperger's, and Developmental delay.



Autism

- 2% of all youth
- 32% with any peer harassment
- 15% with technology-involved harassment

Developmental delay

- 2% of all youth
- 16% with any peer harassment
- 0% with technology-involved harassment

How the study was conducted?

Data were collected as part of the Technology Harassment Victimization Study in 2013-2014. A total of 791 interviews were completed with youth and young adults (ages 10-20) across the U.S.

Peer victimization included physical, verbal, exclusion, and rumor spreading in the past year.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings suggest that schools, medical and mental health professionals should pay special attention to children with a diagnosed physical disability, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or oppositional/defiant disorder/conduct disorder (ODD). These children may be particularly vulnerable to peer harassment. Schools could create safe zones where youth can disclose harassment incidents, without concerns of repercussion. It is also important to educate youth about the role of bystanders and how youth can help their peers if they see or think a peer is being victimized. Depending on the extent of the disability, some youth may not be able to articulate what’s happening or even necessarily realize what is going on.

It is important to keep in mind that the sample size for each of the subgroups was somewhat small and therefore the results are limited because we were not able to conduct more robust analyses. More research is necessary in order to fully understand the extent to which children with different types of disabilities experience victimization.

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ⁱ Sullivan, P.M. (2009). Violence exposure among children with disabilities. *Clinical Child & Family Psychology Review*, 12(2), 196-216. Van Cleave, J. & Davis, M.M. (2006). Bullying and peer victimization among children with special health needs. *Pediatrics*, 118(4): e1212-1219.