Online aggression and current youth

Dr. Hana Macháčková

Aggression online

- Seemingly ubiquitous

- Everyday experience?
  Discussions: increased hostility, prejudices, intolerance, aggressivity...

- Without boundaries?

Aggression

Broad and complex term

- Aggression is…."*any form of behavior directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment*" (Baron & Richardson, 2004, p.7)

It can take many forms:

- Direct/nondirect
- Verbal/physical/sexual….
- Other-oriented/self-oriented
- Interpersonal/intergoup
- Etc.

Aggression

Broad and complex term

- Aggression is….“*any form of behavior directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment*“ (Baron & Richardson, 2004, p.7)

It can take many forms:
- Direct/nondirect
- Verbal/physical/sexual….
- Other-oriented/self-oriented
- Interpersonal/intergoup
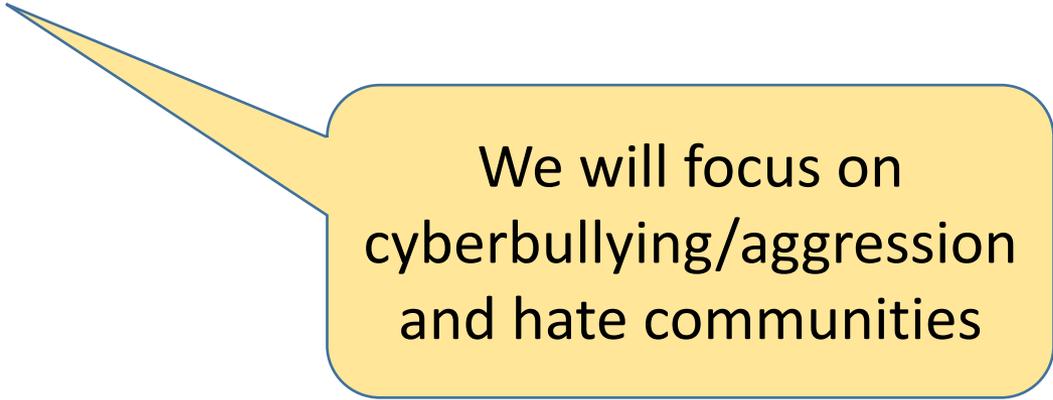- Etc.

- **Online / offline**

Need to specify type of aggression we are talking about

Aggression online

- Various types
  - Mirroring offline ones
  - Cyberbullying, online harassment, trolling, cyberhate, cybercrime, cyberterrorism…

Aggression online

- Various types
  - Mirroring offline ones
  - Cyberbullying, online harassment, trolling, cyberhate, cybercrime, cyberterrorism…

We will focus on cyberbullying/aggression and hate communities

Aggression online

- Various types
  - **Mirroring offline ones?**
  - Cyberbullying, online harassment, trolling, cyberhate, cybercrime, cyberterrorism…

- Interconnection with offline life
  - Extension, augmentation, blending…

- Cyberspace: Important aspect of everyday life
  - „virtual" but „real"

- Cyberspace: specific social environment

Differences from offline environment(s)

- Computer-mediated communication (CMC)
  - Text, visuality, hypertexts
  - A/synchronic communication
  - Absence of many cues
    - Currently, more rich (emoticons, audio-visual cues etc.)
    - „say it with gif", memes

LOL
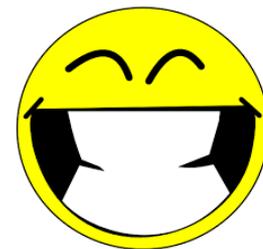
Differences from offline environment(s)

Control of self-expressions
- Asynchronous communication
- Visuals (graphs), hyperlinks
- No others clues (gestures, posture, voice, speach)
  - The lack of cues as a source of misunderstandings
  - BUT, they may pose a barrier in communication offline

- Distance, anonymity, invisibility….

- Storing, sharing, spreading
  - Materials and information

- 24/7 accessibility
  - countries with high internet penetration
  - Digital divide

Online disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004)

- Anonymity, invisibility, asynchronicity, solipstic introjection, dissociative imagination, minimization of status and authority

- Toxic and benign
  - hostillity x self-disclosure and support

- Developed before web2.0

- Anonymity???

Online disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004)

- Anonymity, invisibility, asynchronicity, solipstic introjection, dissociative imagination, minimization of status and authority

- Toxic and benign
  - hostillity x self-disclosure and support

- Developed before web2.0

- Anonymity???

Still applicable

Psychological vs. informatial

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

- Cyberbullying: do you know the term?

- Highly medialized
- Contrast with empirical evidence

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

- Cyberbullying: do you know the term?

- Highly medialized

- Contrast with empirical evidence

Kowalski et al. (2014):
10% - 40%
Also 3% - 70%

Table 18: Ways in which children have been bullied in past 12 months, by age

%	Age				All
	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	
In person face-to-face	13	13	12	15	13
On the internet	3	5	6	8	6
By mobile phone calls, texts or image/video texts	1	2	3	6	3
Has been bullied at all, online or offline	17	19	18	21	19

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Definition of school bullying (Olweus, 1991) – criteria of

1 Intentional, causing harm

2 Repetitive

3 Power imbalance

Also many forms:

- Overt/covert

- Relational/Physical/Social

- Physical/verbal attacks, degradation/humiliation, blackmailing, destroying things, social exclusion, ignoring…

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Cyberbullying: intentional and aggressive act carried out through electronic media, which may be repetitive in nature (Nocentini et al., 2010; Tokunaga, 2010)

What are the forms here?

- Verbal attacks, insults, threats, gossips…
- Spreading of personal and sensitive information
  - Without consent
- Identity theft, mascarade
- Social exclusion, ostracism
- Publishing of harmful audiovisual material (changed)
- Happy slapping
- …

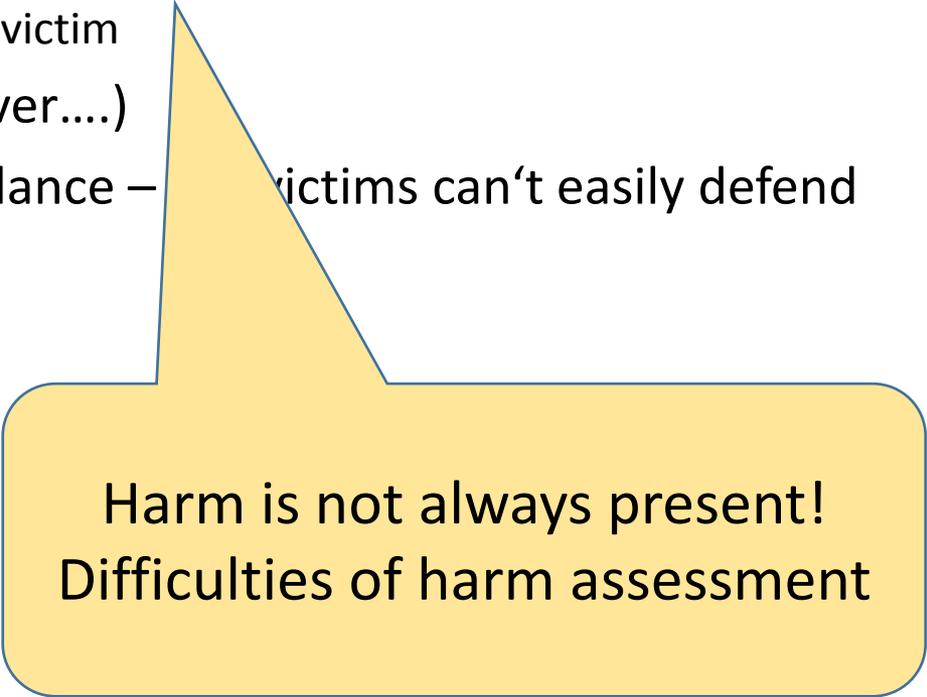# Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

We are talking about cyberbullying if the aggressive attacks :

- are conducted via internet or mobile phones
- are intentionally harmful (conducted by individual or group)
  - and are harmful for victim
- are repeated (however….)
- there is power imbalance – the victims can't easily defend themselves

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

We are talking about cyberbullying if the aggressive attacks :

- are conducted via internet or mobile phones
- are intentionally harmful (conducted by individual or group)
  - and are harmful for victim
- are repeated (however….)
- there is power imbalance – victims can't easily defend themselves

Harm is not always present!
Difficulties of harm assessment

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

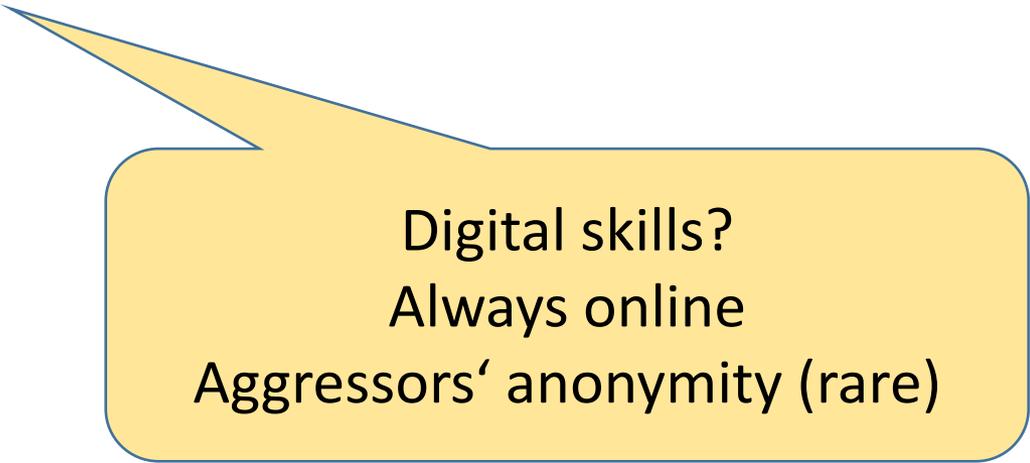We are talking about cyberbullying if the aggressive attacks :

- are conducted via internet or mobile phones

- are intentionally harmful (conducted by individual or group)
    - and are harmful for victim

- are repeated (however….)

- there is power imbalance – the victims can't easily defend themselves

Repetition: problematic online
„once published, always online"
Important in messaging (email, phones…)

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

We are talking about cyberbullying if the aggressive attacks :

- are conducted via internet or mobile phones
- are intentionally harmful (conducted by individual or group)
  - and are harmful for victim
- are repeated (however….)
- there is power imbalance – the victims can't easily defend themselves

Digital skills?
Always online
Aggressors' anonymity (rare)

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

We are talking about cyberbullying if the aggressive attacks :

- are conducted via internet or mobile phones

- are intentionally harmful (conducted by individual or group)
  - and are harmful for victim

- are repeated (however….)

- there is power imbalance – the victims can't easily defend themselves

If these criteria are not fullfilled:
online aggression/harassment

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

„New bottle, old wine"?

What is „new"?

No time/space limits – no escape

Distance – the victim does not have to be present (adding comments, likes, spreading of information….)

Wide audience - potential

Spreading and sharing – easy and fast, unlimited

- No control over the content

Can be „hidden" – out of control of adults

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

„New bottle, old wine"?

What is „new"?

Victims – offline often vulnerable

In cyberbullying: potential for new vulnerability

       Remember „diminishing of authority", anonymity?

More often: frequent internet users, users of webcams and IM

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Cyberbullying: detrimental effect on victims

• Similar to offline bullying

Including:

• Internalization and externalizing behaviors

• Emotional problems (depression, anxiety, suicidal thougths)

• Social problems

• Lower self-esteem

• Helplessness

• Academic problems

• Etc.

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

The impact depends on the severity of the attacks

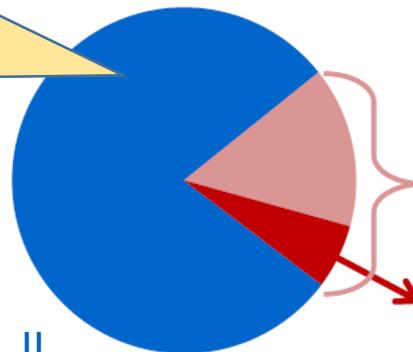**- importance to distinguish cyberbullying and harassment!**

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

The impact depends on the severity of the attacks

- importance to distinguish cyberbullying and harassment!

Differences in prevalences and impact
Cyberbullying: less common, but more severe

Czech project: 79% no victimization

21% harassment

6% CB victims

See: http://irtis.fss.muni.cz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/COST_CZ_report_II_CJ.pdf

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

The impact depends on the severity of the attacks

- importance to distinguish cyberbullying and harassment!

Could be more harmful then offline

- Especially cases of public forms, and especially including audiovisual materials (Sticca & Perren, 2013)

Depends on the interconnection with offline bullying

- usually connected („double whammies")

Also depends on coping with cyberbullying

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Coping with cyberbullying

Many different strategies

        Emotion/problem focused

        Mal/adaptive?

Similar to offline responses

        new – „technological coping"

Question of effectiveneess in coping with online attacks

	Victims of online harassment		
	%	**n**	**Chi**
Technological coping			
I deleted the person from my contacts.	66%	173	2.71
I changed my settings so that the person could not contact me anymore (e.g. blocking the person, filtering).	59%	161	0.88
I changed my phone no./email/profile/nickname.	**18%**	**49**	**12.62****
I searched for advice on the internet.	**7%**	**20**	**20.85****
I deleted my profile on the web pages where this happened.	14%	34	2.20
I reported this to the administrator.	21%	55	2.07
Reframing			
I thought to myself that the person was pitiful and stupid.	91%	263	1.14
I thought to myself that whoever is doing this to me is not worth my time.	78%	218	0.83
I thought to myself that something like that could not hurt me.	**46%**	**126**	**13.16****
I thought to myself that it was actually nothing serious.	**41%**	**111**	**37.58****
Ignoring			
I decided to ignore it.	65%	189	1.14
I didn't pay attention to it.	**44%**	**108**	**17.28****
Dissociation			
I thought to myself that if something similar were to happen in real life, it would be much worse.	56%	144	0.02
I thought to myself that such things simply happen on the internet.	**65%**	**172**	**10.76****
I thought to myself that he or she wouldn't do something similar to me in real life.	41%	99	0.89
I thought to myself that it was only happening online, and that it wasn't actually real.	**25%**	**62**	**6.71***
Cognitive avoidance			
I tried to focus on something else to avoid thinking about what happened.	**68%**	**180**	**12.36****
I simply took it lightly.	**58%**	**160**	**26.72****
Behavioral avoidance			
I started avoiding the person in real life.	**39%**	**87**	**25.45****
I deleted the messages, which troubled me.	62%	163	0.28
I stopped visiting the web pages where this happened.	**10%**	**26**	**26.65****
Seeking support			
I told someone about it.	70%	199	2.32
Confrontation			
I tried talking to the person on the internet or via cellphone to persuade him or her to stop.	**38%**	**102**	**5.96***
I tried face-to-face talking about this behavior with the person or somehow persuade her or him to stop.	42%	106	0.94
Retaliation			
I did something similar to the person, face-to-face (in real life).	23%	58	3.49
I did the same thing or something similar to the person online or via mobiles.	12%	31	0.31

Note: * P < .05, ** p < .01. The percentages are computed from valid values.

Strategies applied

CB victims more active

Cognitive strategies:
- reframing to depreciate the bully and avoided or purposefully ignored them
- cognitive distancing
- not much disociation

Tech. Coping – not so often

Machackova, H., Cerna, A., Sevcikova, A., Dedkova, L., & Daneback, K. (2013). Effectiveness of coping strategies for victims of cyberbullying. Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 7(3), article 5. doi: 10.5817/CP2013-3-5

	Victims of online harassment		
	%	**n**	**Chi**
Technological coping			
I deleted my profile on the web pages where this happened.	79%	23	0.72
I changed my settings so that the person could not contact me anymore (e.g. blocking the person, filtering).	89%	126	3.74
I deleted the person from my contacts.	**87%**	**139**	**7.14****
I changed my phone no./email/profile/nickname.	**89%**	**41**	**8.84****
I searched for advice on the internet.	78%	14	1.91
I reported this to the administrator.	80%	40	3.73
Reframing			
I thought to myself that whoever is doing this to me is not worth my time.	92%	187	2.91
I thought to myself that the person was pitiful and stupid.	**94%**	**235**	**22.75****
I thought to myself that something like that could not hurt me.	**89%**	**110**	**5.91***
I thought to myself that it was actually nothing serious.	93%	95	4.08
Ignoring			
I decided to ignore it.	**84%**	**151**	**4.79***
I didn't pay attention to it.	**85%**	**87**	**5.17***
Dissociation			
I thought to myself that it was only happening online, and that it wasn't actually real.	89%	48	3.77
I thought to myself that he or she wouldn't do something similar to me in real life.	**80%**	**74**	**4.67***
I thought to myself that if something similar were to happen in real life, it would be much worse.	67%	90	0.56
I thought to myself that such things simply happen on the internet.	**66%**	**108**	**15.42****
Cognitive avoidance			
I tried to focus on something else to avoid thinking about what happened.	**91%**	**159**	**6.08***
I simply took it lightly.	**94%**	**140**	**30.55****
Behavioral avoidance			
I stopped visiting the web pages where this happened.	83%	20	0.53
I deleted the messages which troubled me.	85%	134	0.82
I started avoiding the person in real life.	**83%**	**68**	**7.79****
Seeking support			
I told someone about it.	92%	169	0.06
Confrontation			
I tried talking to the person on the internet or via mobiles to persuade him or her to stop.	71%	66	1.94
I tried face-to-face talking about this behavior with the person or somehow persuade her or him to stop.	74%	74	3.13
Retaliation			
I did something similar to the person, face-to-face (in real life).	85%	45	0.49
I did the same thing or something similar to the person online or via mobiles.	79%	19	0.25

Note: * $P < .05$, ** $p < .01$. The percentages are computed from valid values of those who used the strategy.

Strategies helping emotionally

- generally, less often effective among CB victims

- effective cognitive strategies

- not all – „taking it lightly" it „happens online"

	Victims of online harassment		
	%	n	*Chi*
Technological coping			
I deleted my profile on the web pages where this happened.	97%	29	7.58**
I changed my settings so that the person could not contact me anymore (e.g. blocking the person, filtering).	88%	130	15.70**
I changed my phone no./email/profile/nickname.	91%	38	12.19**
I reported this to the administrator.	78%	38	4.92*
I deleted the person from my contacts.	80%	116	25.39**
I searched for advice on the internet.	67%	10	9.19**
Ignoring			
I decided to ignore it.	68%	100	4.96*
Behavioral avoidance			
I stopped visiting the web pages where this happened.	81%	17	2.59
I started avoiding the person in real life.	74%	54	15.75**
Seeking support			
I told someone about it.	58%	76	0.05
Confrontation			
I tried face-to-face talking about this behavior with the person or somehow persuade her or him to stop.	66%	59	17.39**
I tried talking to the person on the internet or via mobiles to persuade him or her to stop.	62%	53	17.13**
Retaliation			
I did the same thing or something similar to the person online or via mobiles.	72%	18	3.17
I did something similar to the person, face-to-face (in real life).	88%	44	16.52**

Note: * $P < .05$, ** $p < .01$. The percentages are computed from valid values of those who used the strategy.

Strategies helping stop the attacks:

- technological coping
- but not all (and often not applied)

Ignoring

Confrontation or retaliation not much effective

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Outcome also depends on the context

Including responses of others – the audience

Bystanders in cyberbullying

     much more common than victimization
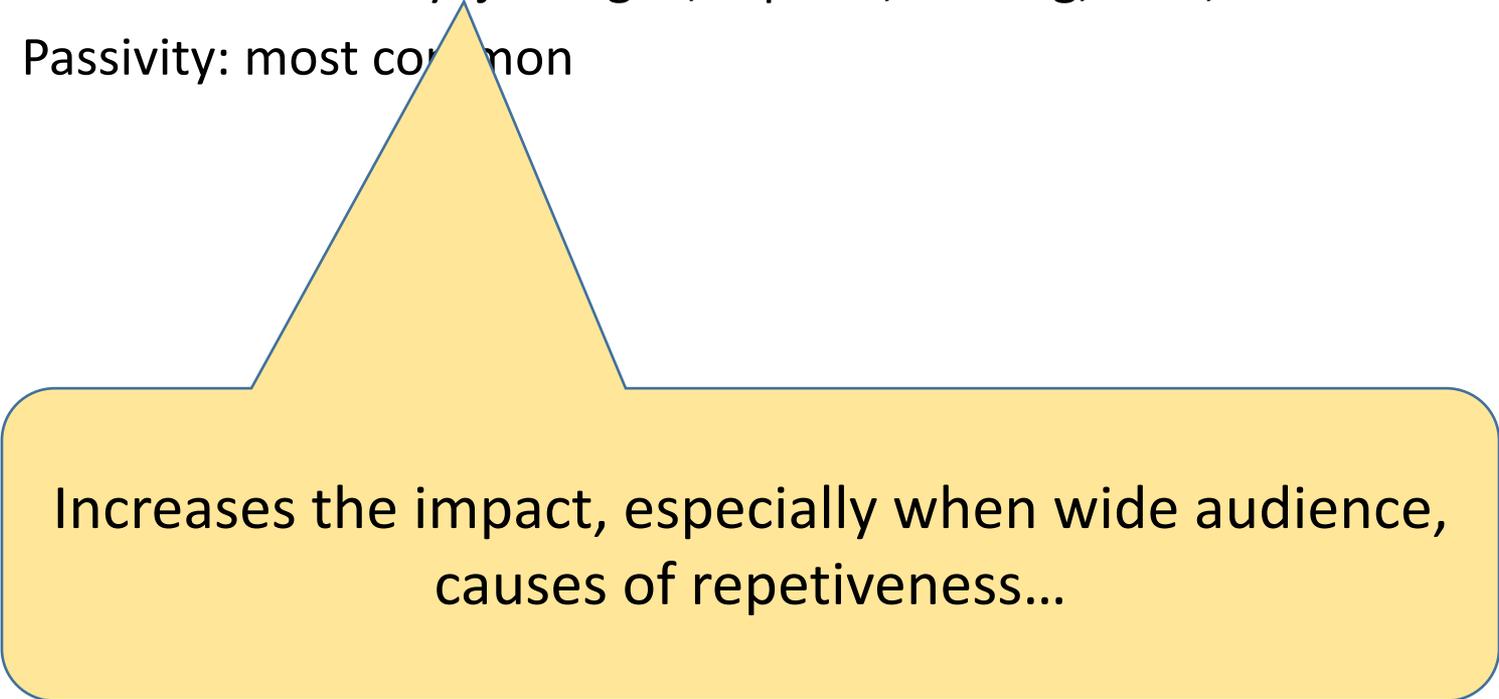
     Czech project: 53%

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

What can they do? (online and offline)

Support the victim: emotionaly, advice provision, confrontation of aggressor…

Reinforce the bul… ining in, reposts, sharing, likes, comments…

Passivity: most … n

Helpful:
decreases impact, can stop the attacks, help to cope

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

What can they do? (online and offline)

Support the victim: emotionaly, advice provision, confrontation of aggressor…

Reinforce the bully: joining in, reposts, sharing, likes, comments…

Passivity: most common

Increases the impact, especially when wide audience, causes of repetiveness…

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

What can they do? (online and offline)

Support the victim: emotionaly, advice provision, confrontation of aggressor…

Reinforce the bully: joining in, reposts, sharing, likes, comments…

Passivity: most common
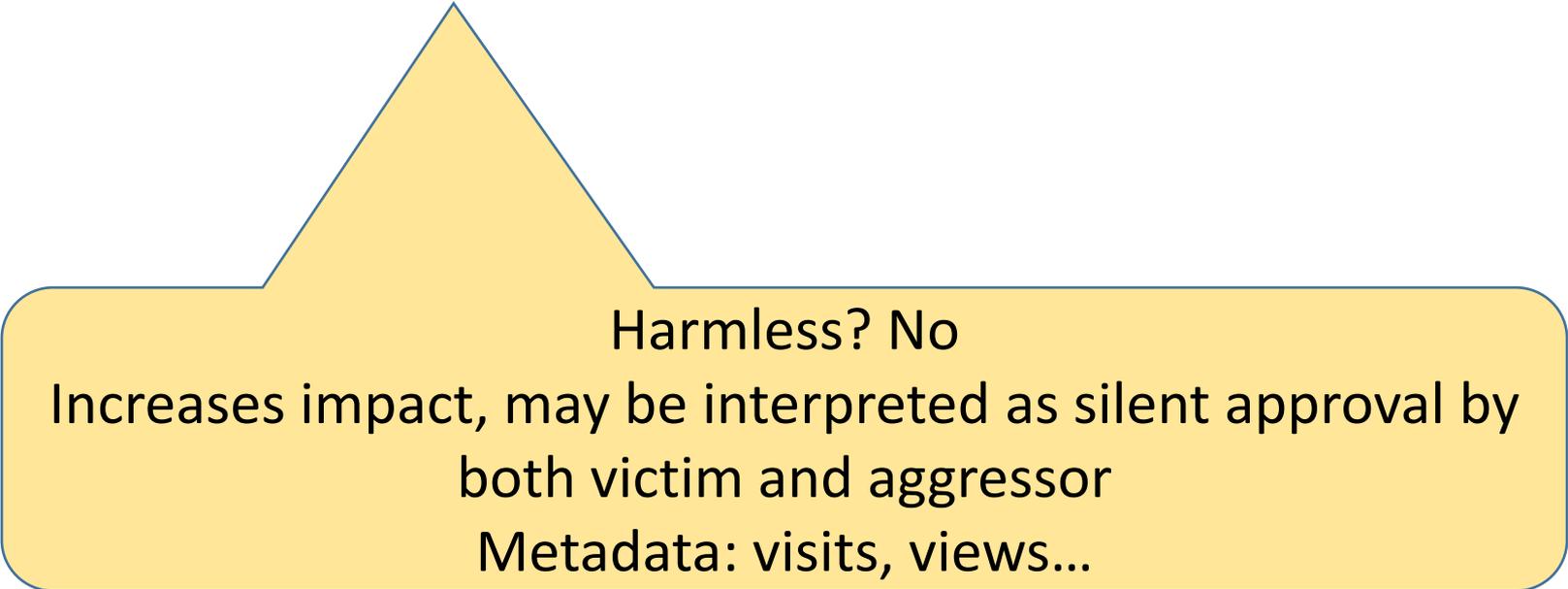
Harmless? No
Increases impact, may be interpreted as silent approval by both victim and aggressor
Metadata: visits, views…

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Who helps victim?

   Empathy, prosocial behavior, norms, relationship with the victim…

Who reinforces bully?

   Low empathy, aggressive beliefs, relationship with aggressor…

Who stay passive???

   Usually – antibullying norms

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

What is „new"? – Context

Specific communication and environment

Distance

Lack of cues

Wide audience

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Latané & Darley (1970)

Emergency → Notice the event → Interpret the event as an emergency → Assume responsibility → Know appropriate form of assistance → Intervene

No intervention/no help is given

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Attention and distractions
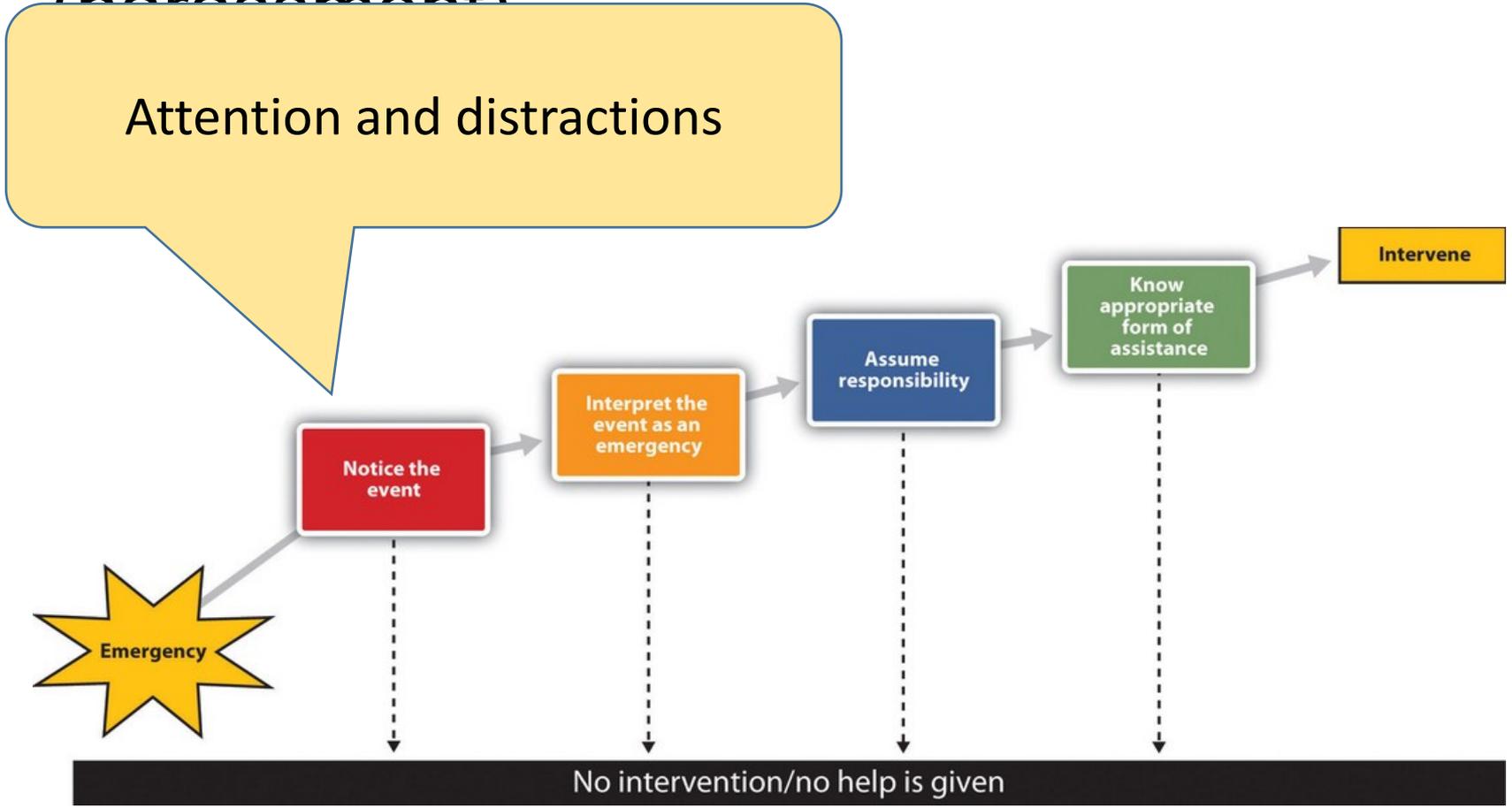
Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Complicated assessment, „just a joke", not serious
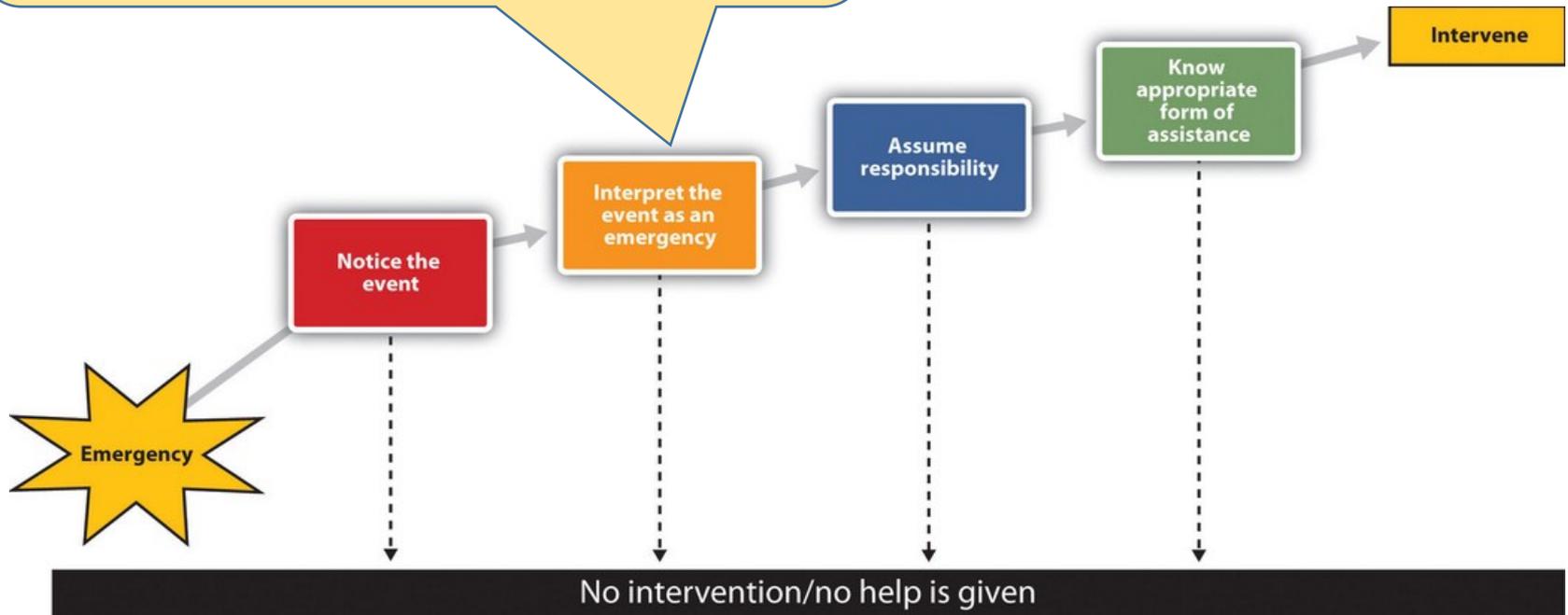
Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Wide audience, who (where) is victim, ongoing event?
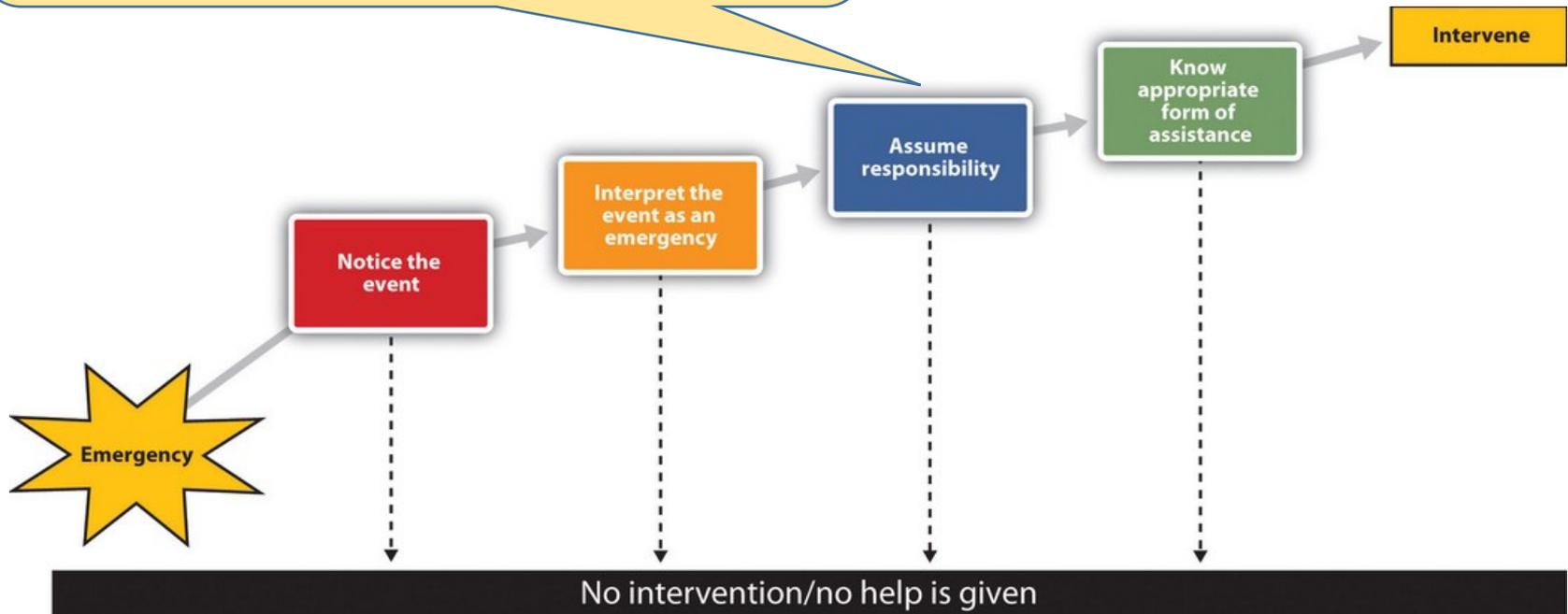
Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Assessment, self-efficacy, own victimization, aggravation of problem?
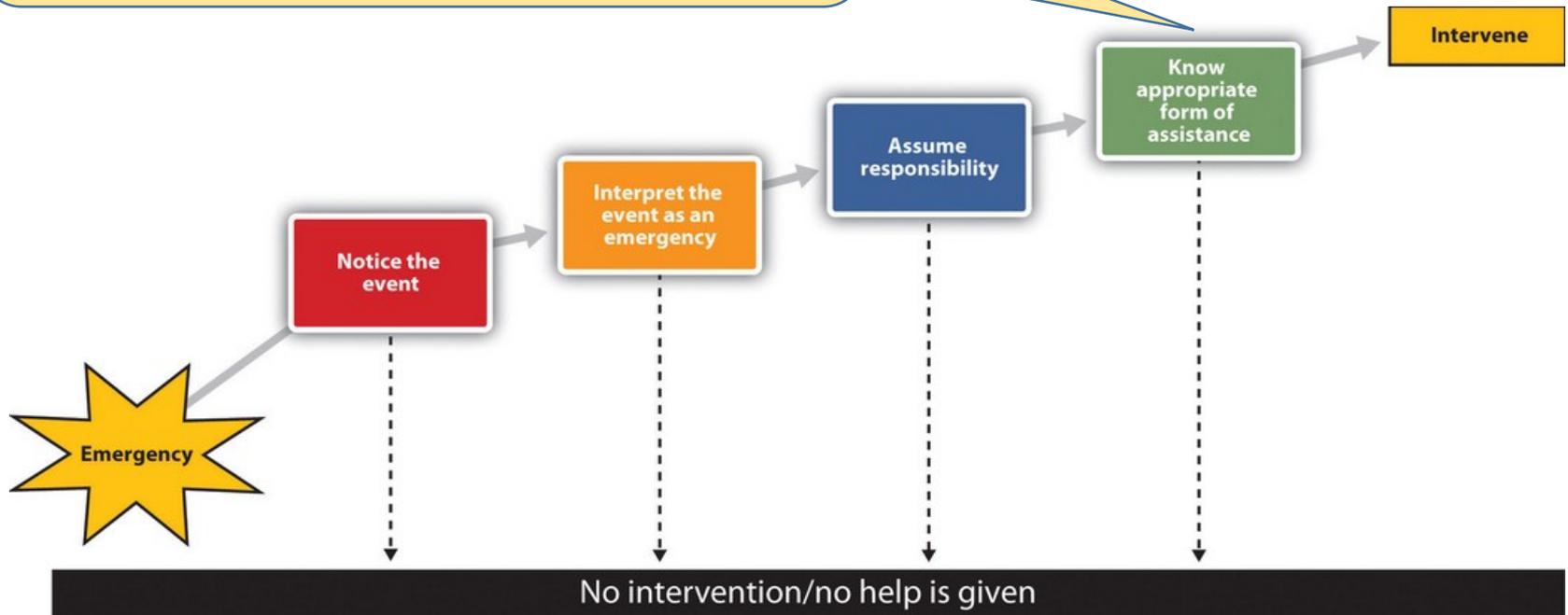
Audience in aggressive events

- These aspects concern also responses to other aggressive events

- What is your experience with such online aggression?

Hate communities online

- Another type of aggression encountered on the internet

- Intergroup aggression

- Intolerant online communities
  - Attacks **on** and **from** specific (online) communities/groups

Hate communities online

- Online communities

- Specific online places in which and through which people interact
- Shared interests, goals, identity (sense of belonging)

- Opportunity for self-expression
  - Individual and group level
- Opportunity for sense of belonging
  - And in-group behavior
- Discourse, materials

Hate communities online

- Positive and negative outcomes
  - Sometimes very hard to untangle
  - For whom?

- Clash of different (offline) communities online

- Example: extreme right communities, extremist communities…

Online hate & intolerance

Roots in offline world

- Attitides, opinions
- Social norms
- Group identity
- In-groups and out-groups
- Prejudices

Online hate & intolerance

Online

Increasing? (increasing internet use)

Dispersing?

- many new platforms
- prominently SNS

In the past 12 months, have you seen websites where people discuss hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals ? (EUKO, 2010; NCGM, 2013)
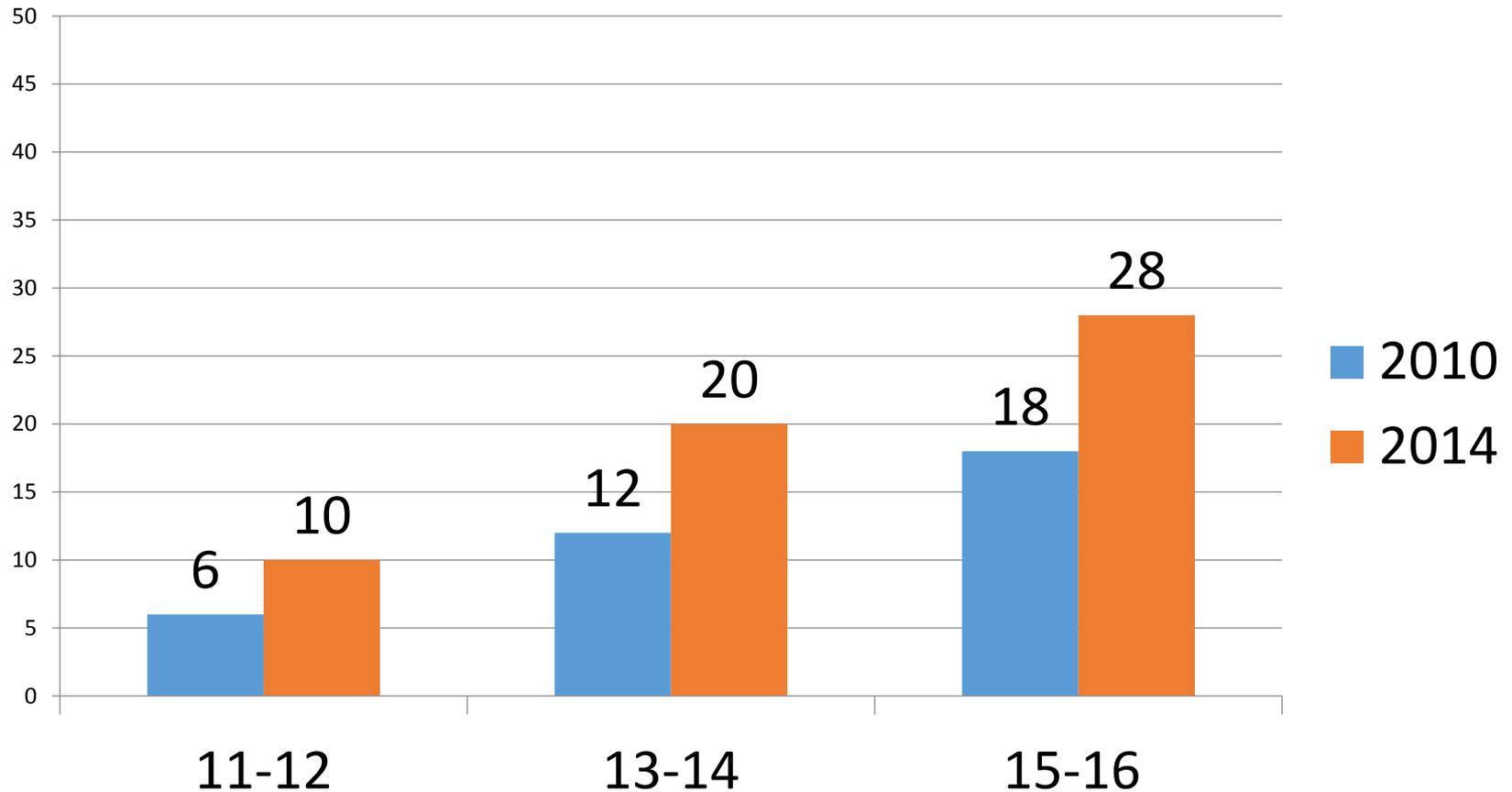
Combating hate online?

Problem with evaluation

…and freedom of speech

- Ban
  - Resistance, strengthening of identity?
  - Free speech?
- Law
  - no united international law

- General protest
- Humor, sarcasm
- Trolling

- http://www.adl.org/combating-hate/
- http://www.hatefree.cz/
- https://cs-cz.facebook.com/CeskeObludarium

Combating hate online?

Problem with evaluation

What is normal? What is moral? Legitimate? Legal? Normative?

Back to conceptualization aggression – different types
Different purposes

Hate communities
Framing: aggression as a mean to – seemingly justified - end

Online hate & intolerance

- Online disinhibition
  - Hostility
  - Anonymity, invisibility, asynchronicity, solipstic introjection, dissociative imagination, minimization of status and authority

- SIDE model
  - Strengthening of social identity (Tajfel, Turner)
  - Potential for expression of normatively negative attitudes, behavior

- Anonymity vs. identifiability
  - still no such constrains to join such group/express an attitude

Online hate & intolerance

- In concentrated form (online communities)

- „Link, educate, recruit" (Douglas, 2007)

Persuasion:
- Not often advocating violence as such
- „Objectivity"
- Establishing specific discourse and norms
- In-group

„Socialy creative"
Moral disengagement

Bandura: Morality – norms, social and internalised sanctions

- Self-monitoring, evaluation, regulation (affective)

- **Moral disengagement**: cognitive restructuring of inhumane conduct into a benign or worthy one

1. moral justification, sanitizing language, and advantageous comparison;

2. disavowal of a sense of personal agency by diffusion or displacement of responsibility;

3. disregarding or minimizing the injurious effects of one 's actions

4. attribution of blame to, and dehumanization of those who are victimized.

- Bandura, A. (1999). Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. *Personality and social psychology review*, *3*(3), 193-209.

MORAL JUSTIFICATION
PALLIATIVE COMPARISON
EUPHEMISTIC LABELING

MINIMIZING, IGNORING,
OR MISCONSTRUING THE
CONSEQUENCES

DEHUMANIZATION
ATTRIBUTION OF BLAME

REPREHENSIBLE
CONDUCT $\longrightarrow$ DETRIMENTAL
EFFECTS $\longrightarrow$ VICTIM

DISPLACEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY
DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY
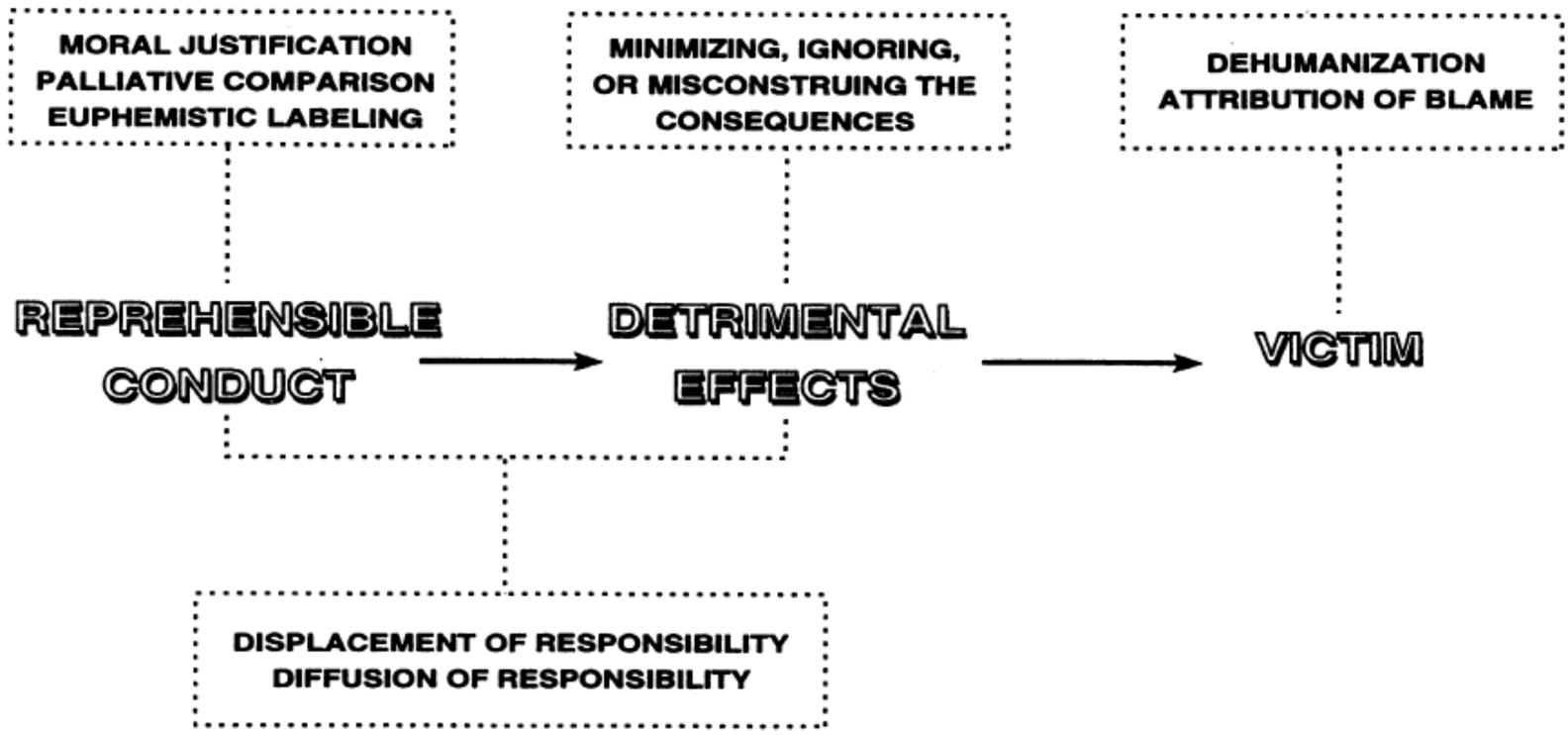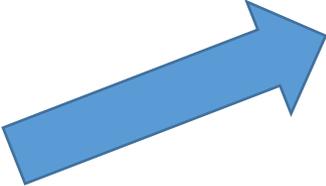
„We are saving humanity"
„Its better then what they did!"
„War vs. Fight for freedom"

MORAL JUSTIFICATION
PALLIATIVE COMPARISON
EUPHEMISTIC LABELING

M
OF

REPREHENSIBLE
CONDUCT → DETRIMENTAL
EFFECTS → VICTIM

DISPLACEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY
DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY

MORAL JUSTIFICATION
PALLIATIVE COMPARISON
EUPHEMISTIC LABELING

MINIMIZING, IGNORING,
OR MISCONSTRUING THE
CONSEQUENCES

DEHUMANIZATION
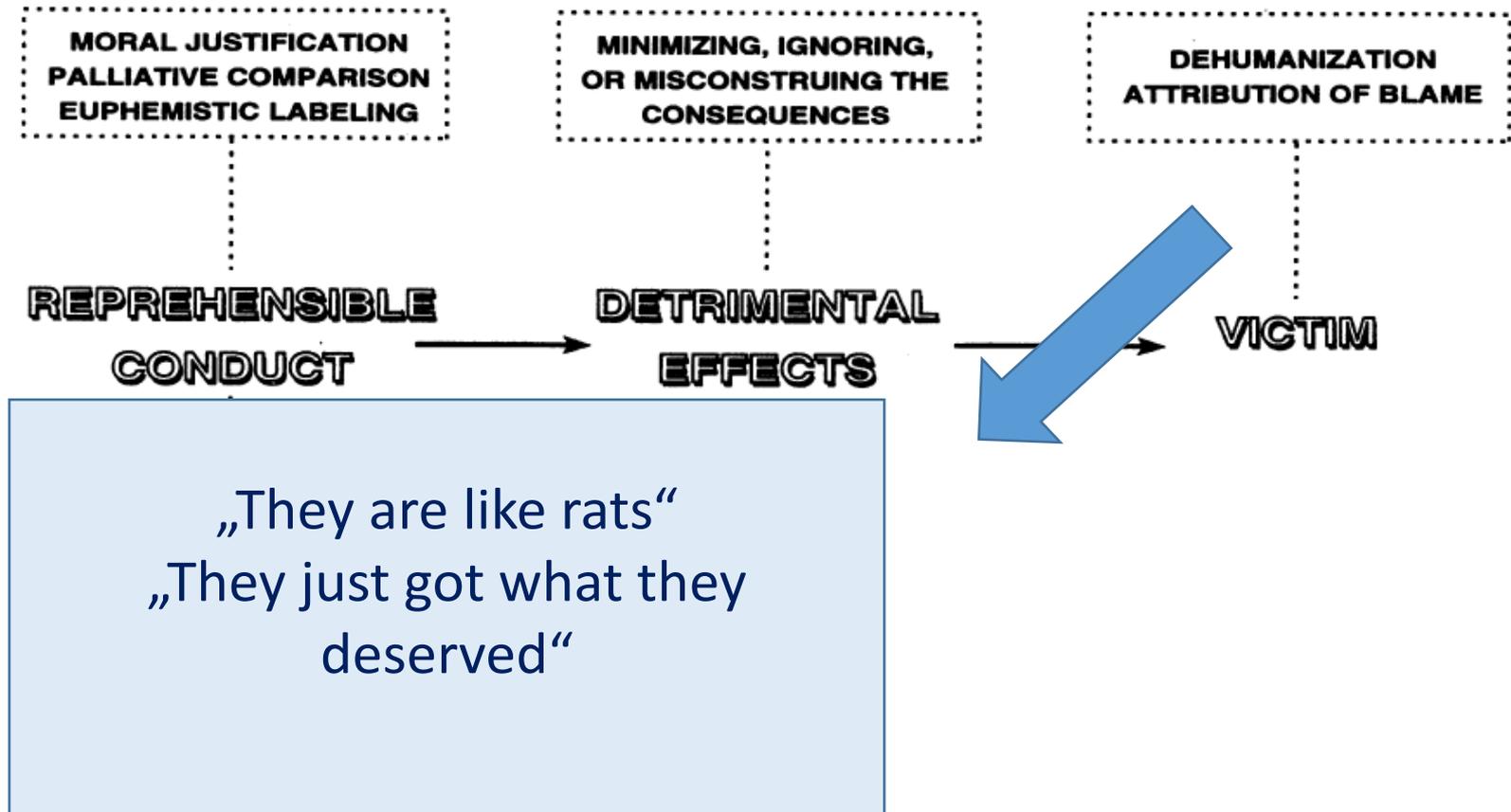ATTRIBUTION OF BLAME

NTAL
TS

VICTIM

„It was not that bad"
„Its not like we killed them"
„We just teached them a lesson"

Hate communities online

- Concentrated materials, information – selected discourse, no opposite views

- Mutual support, reinforcement of attitudes

- In-group: shared identity, belonging

- Access

- May be invisible to offline environment
  - Chance for discussions with family, friends?