Youth and online risks

Dr. Hana Macháčková

Risks online

- The question of online risks salient from many perspectives:
  - Research, policy, prevention and intervention efforts

- What types of risks you know?

Online risks

- Important – differentiation of **risk and harm**

- **Risk** – probability to encounter something negative

- **Harm** – actual (long- and short- term) harm from the experience

- What does it say about the nature of the incident?
- Important – taking into account individual and social factors
  - And other factors (EST)

Online risks – individual factors

- Risk – who is prone to **encounter** more risks?
  - Inevitably connected with higher internet use
  - Personal traits – e.g., sensation seeking

- Who is capable to **efficiently deal** with the risk - on the level of the prevention and coping?
  - vulnerability, resilience and coping styles
  - „new factor" - digital skills

Online risks – social factors

- Social environment affects the individual factors + the predictors of risks + the outcomes of the incident (harm)

- Example – quality of family relationships

Online risks – other factors

- School/community
  - Social environment and its affordances

- Cultural/country level
  - Policies + legal system
  - Intervention programs + education

Selected risk: Aggression online

- Seemingly ubiquitous

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

Aggression online

- In the form of direct interpersonal attacks
  - E.g. discussions on SNS

- In the form of shared information and materials
  - On a specific websites

- Often both
  - E.g., comments below the articles

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….
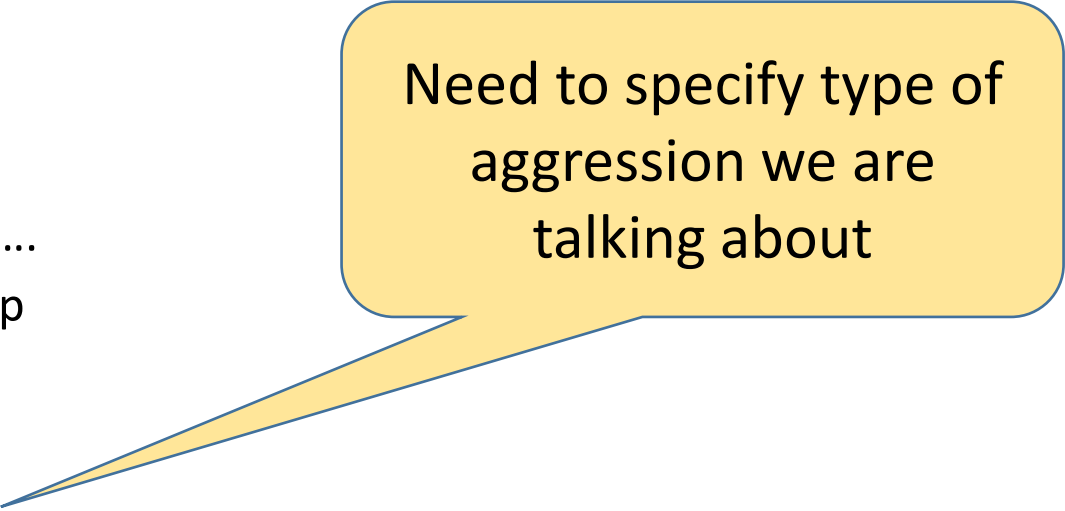- Interpersonal/intergoup
- Etc.

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….
- Interpersonal/intergoup
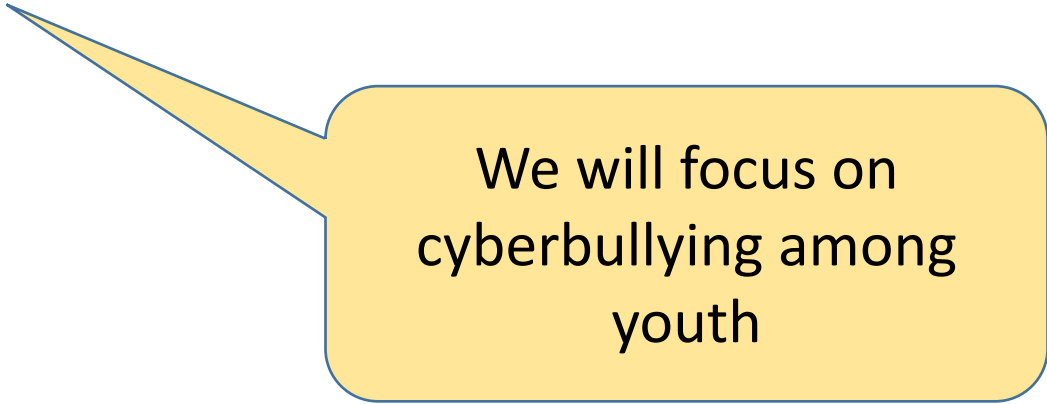- Etc.

- **<u>Online</u> / offline**

Need to specify type of aggression we are talking about

Aggression online

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

Aggression online

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

We will focus on cyberbullying among youth

Aggression online

- Various types
  - **Mirroring offline ones?**
  - Cyberbullying, online harassment, 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

Social vs. technical

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%

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/Social/Physical

- 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)
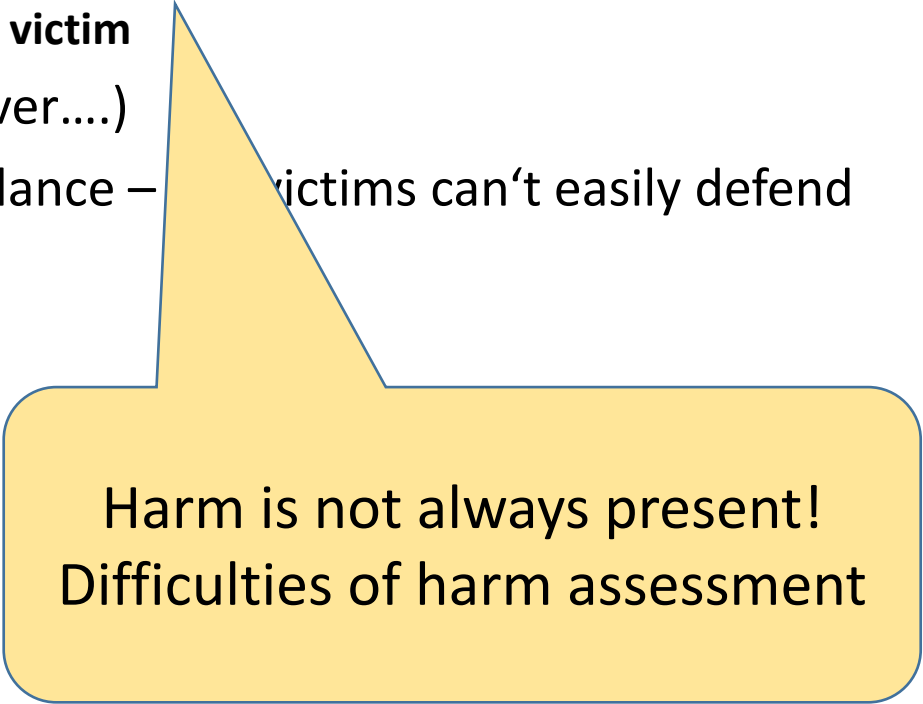
We are talking about cyberbullying if the aggressive attacks :

- 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)

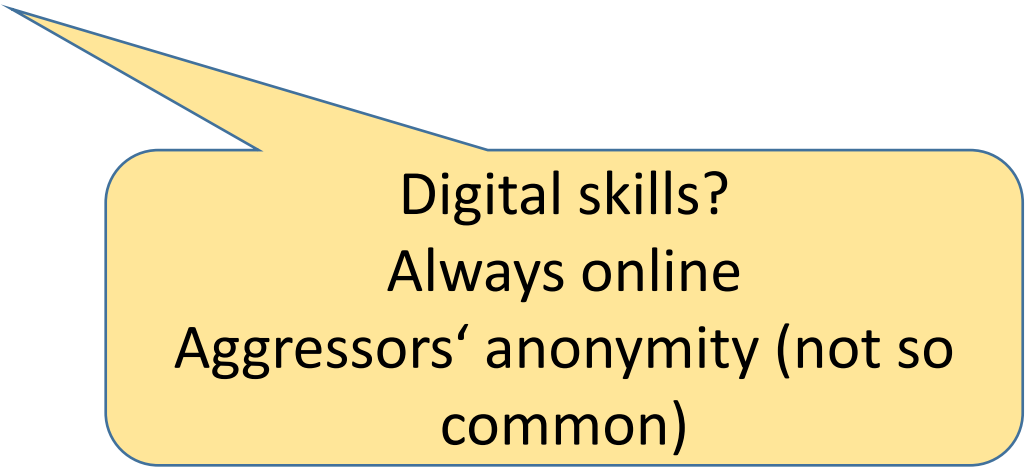We are talking about cyberbullying if the aggressive attacks :

- 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 (not so common)

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

- important to distinguish cyberbullying and harassment!

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

The impact depends on the severity of the attacks

- important 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

http://irtis.fss.muni.cz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/COST_CZ_report_II_CJ.pdf
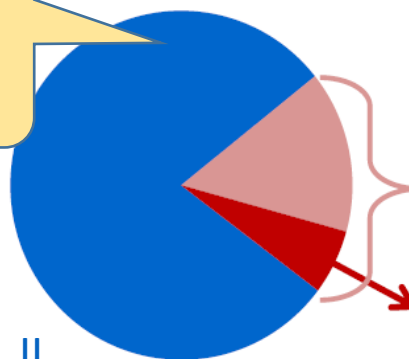
Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

The impact depends on the severity of the attacks

      - important 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 effectiveness 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

Technological coping – not so frequent

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, exceptions: „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 very 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%

Audience in aggressive events

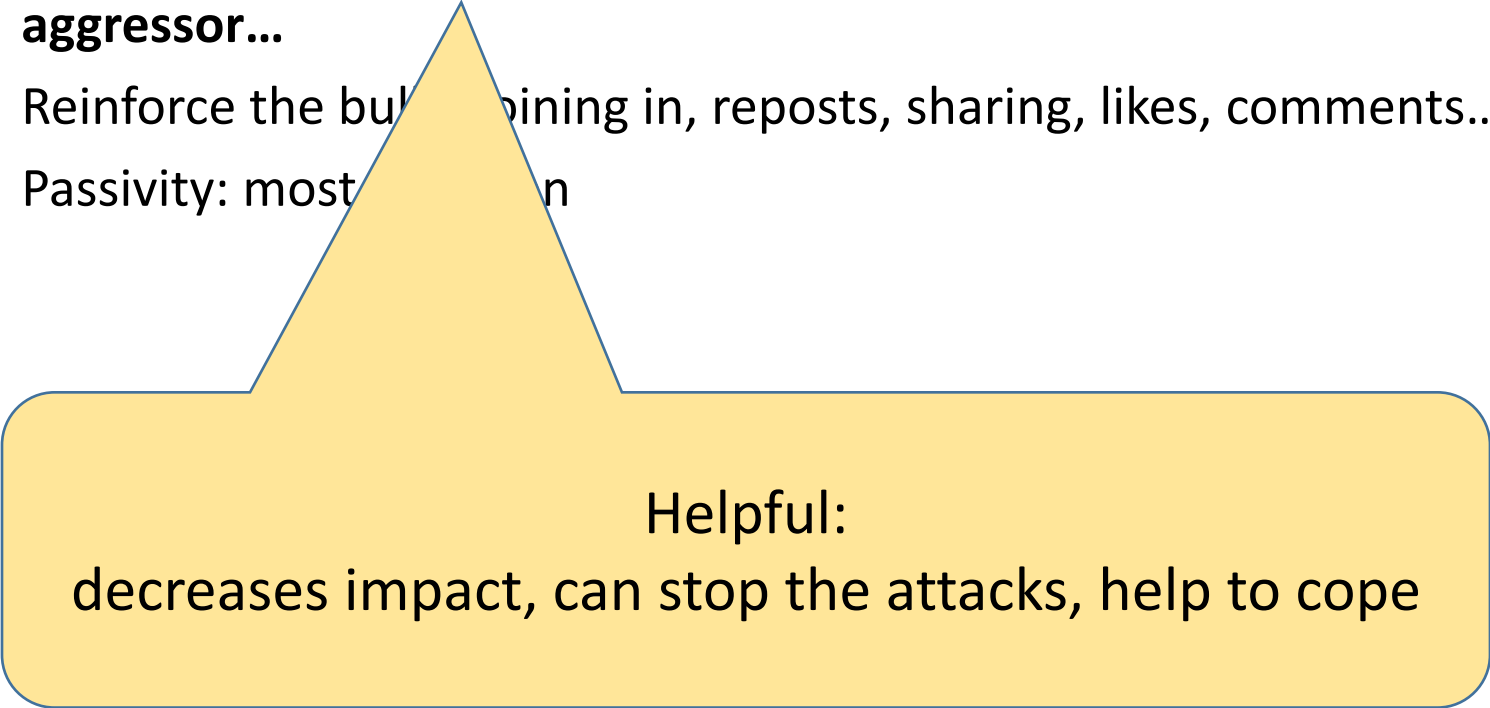- What is your experience with online aggression?
- How did/would you react?

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

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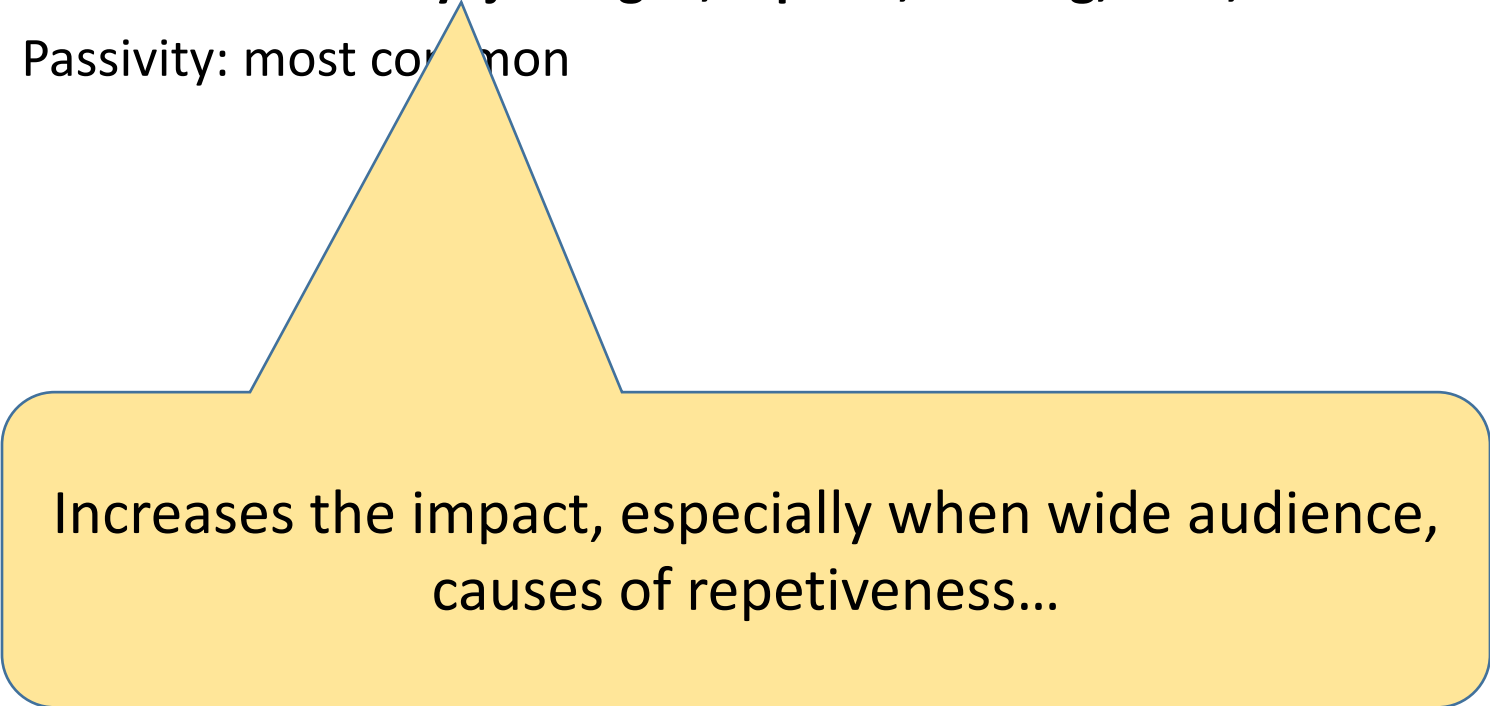decreases impact, can stop the attacks, help to cope

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 stays passive???

Despite common antibullying norms

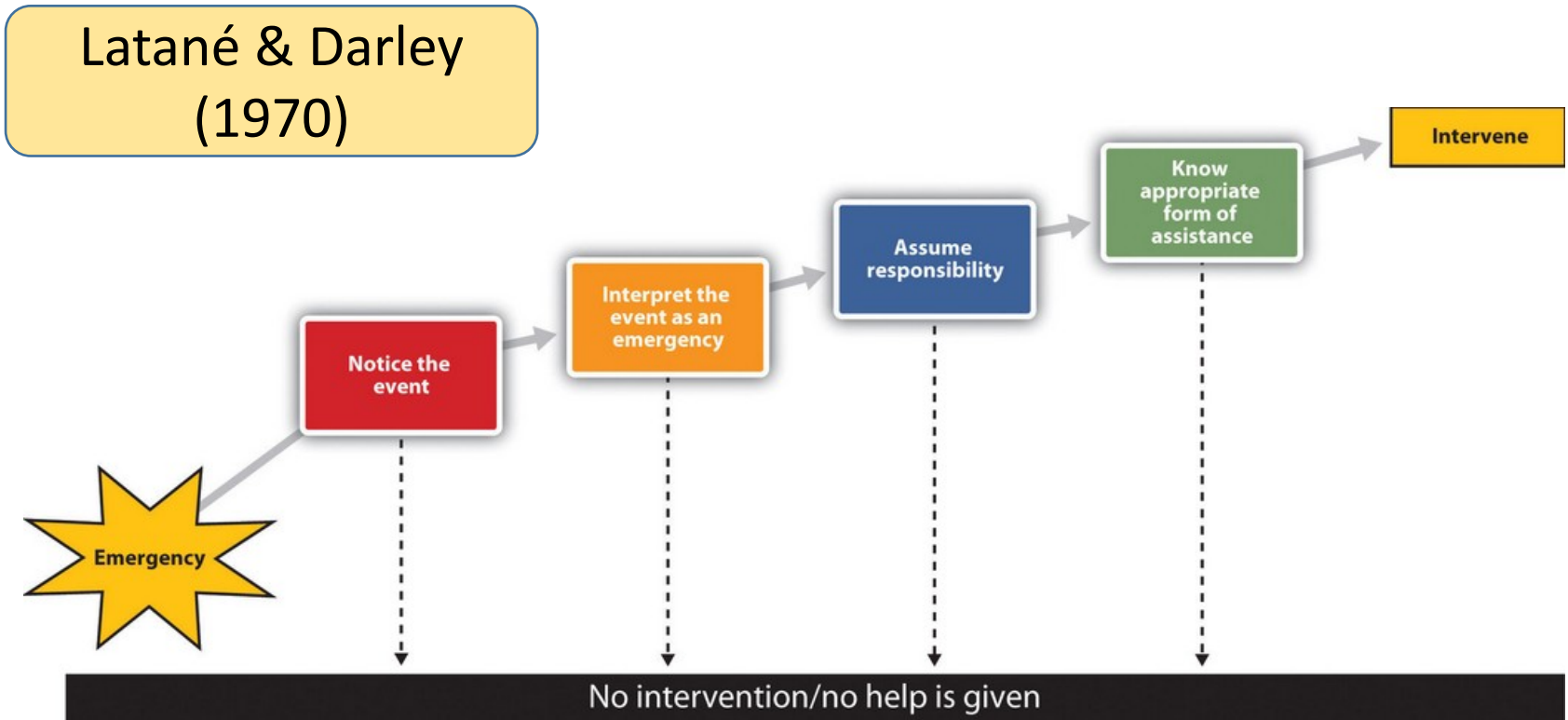# Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

What is „new"? – Context

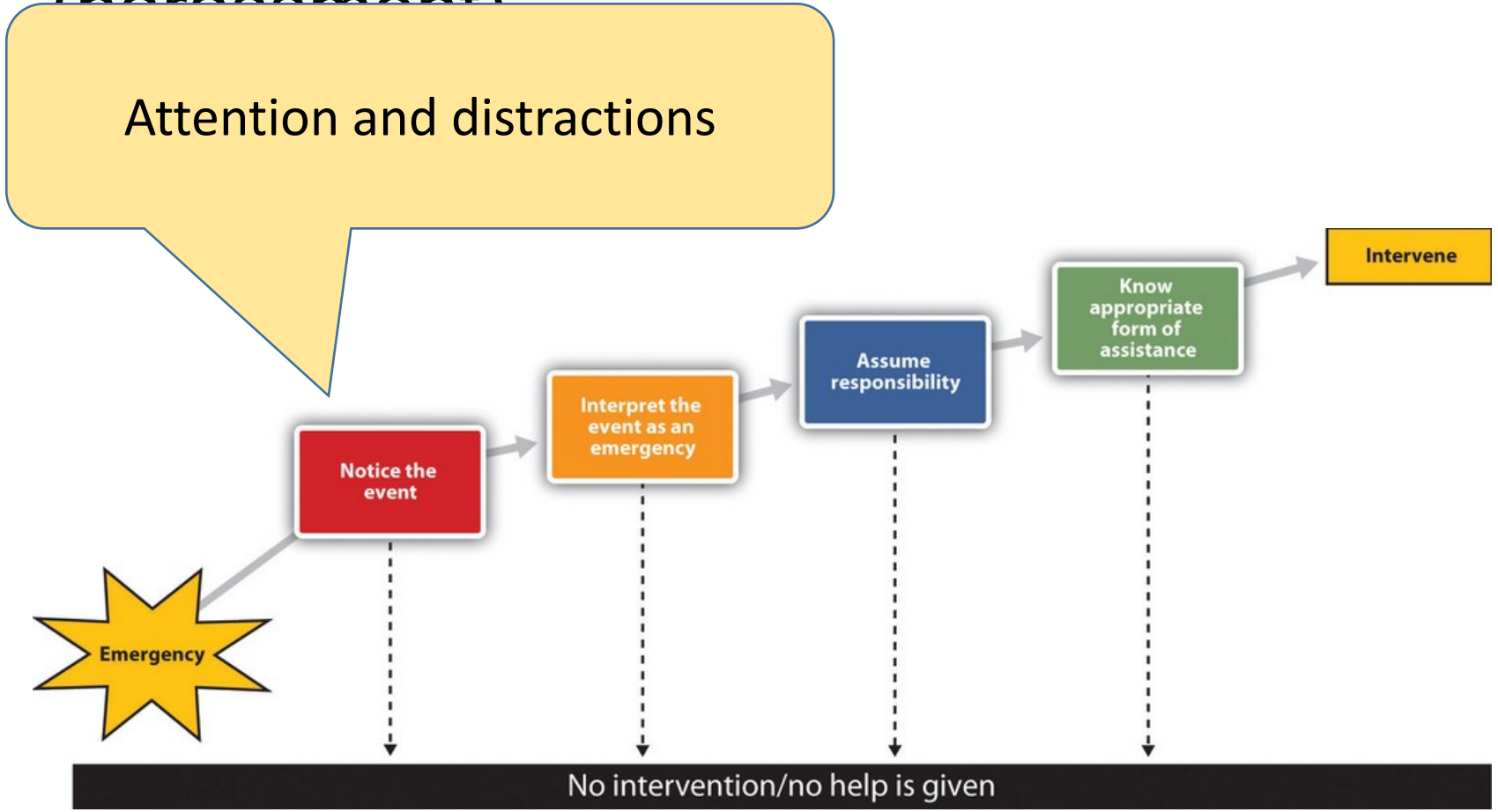Specific communication and environment

Distance

Lack of cues

Wide audience
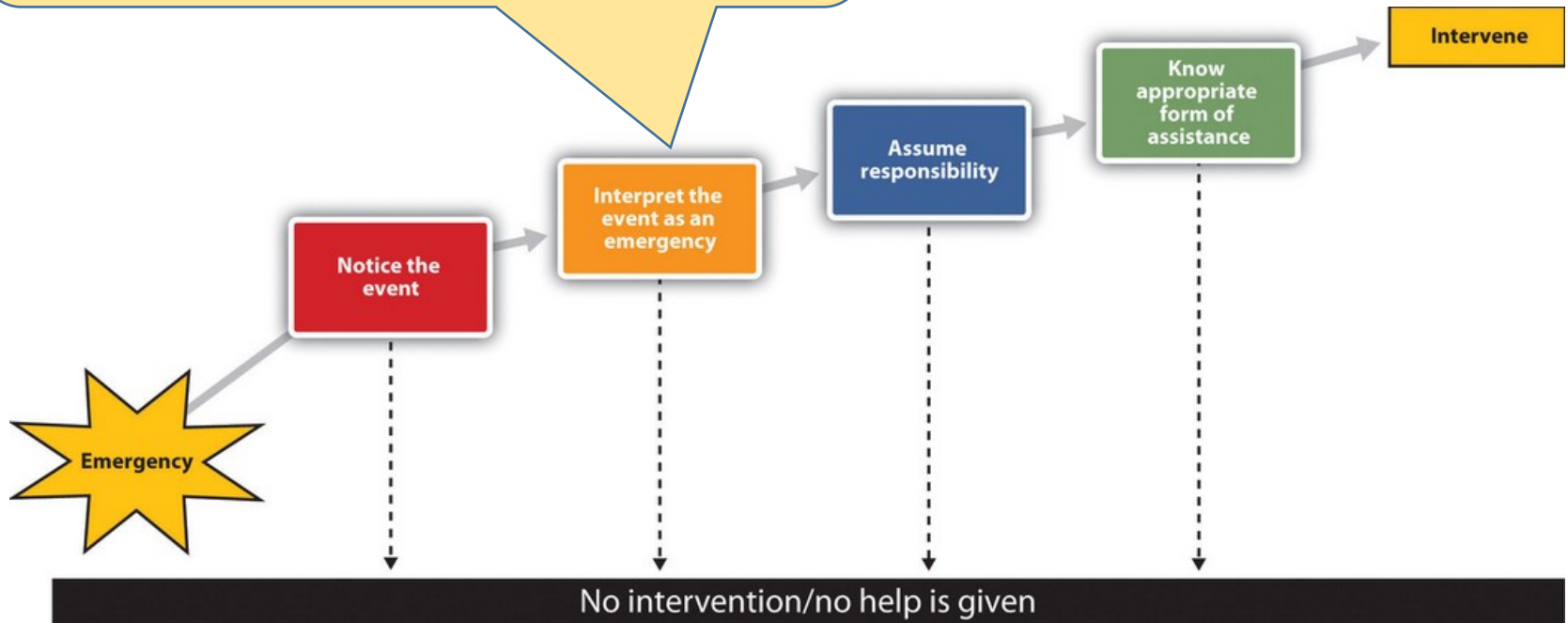
Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

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

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)

Complicated assessment, „just a joke", not serious

Intervene

Know appropriate form of assistance

Assume responsibility

Interpret the event as an emergency

Notice the event

Emergency

No intervention/no help is given

Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Wide audience, who (where) is victim, ongoing event?

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

No intervention/no help is given
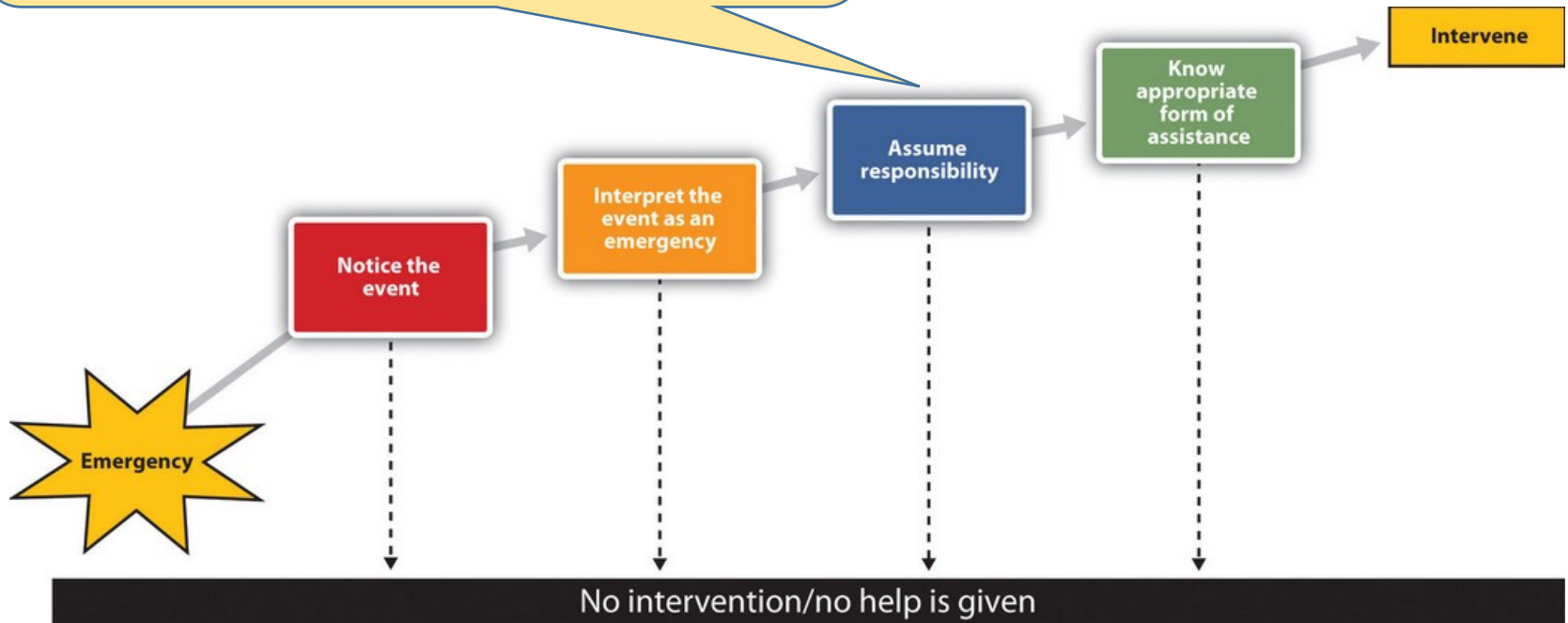
Cyberbullying and online aggression (harassment)

Assessment, self-efficacy, own victimization, aggravation of problem?