

Media Release

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SCHOOLS UNABLE TO DEAL WITH GROWING CYBERBULLYING

Existing policies and practices in schools are inadequate to deal with the growing common behaviour of cyber and other covert bullying, according to bullying prevention expert Professor Donna Cross from Child and Adolescent Health at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia.

She says that research shows that despite reporting bullying to adults, as many as 50 per cent of young people believe the behavior gets worse or stayed the same.

“Most won’t tell for fear of what adults will do and the control they will lose,” Professor Cross said.

She believes that young people, as active positive bystanders, are the most effective social solution to address cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is becoming a common behaviour among upper primary and secondary school students in Australia. Studies show whilst teachers conveyed a willingness to address cyberbullying, they also noted a lack of support and training to do this effectively. Professor Cross believes young people must be actively involved in identifying strategies to address cyberbullying.

Professor Cross will be one of the keynote speakers presenting her research findings on the comparisons between cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying at the 4th Biennial National Centre Against Bullying (NCAB) Conference in Melbourne from April 9-10.

Professor Cross, a Director of the University’s Health Promotion Research Centre, has conducted studies throughout the world with organisations such as WHO, UNICEF and the American Health Foundation. Currently she is heading a \$1.5 million research program with grants from the Telstra Foundation and Healthway to reduce bullying and cyberbullying to decrease the prevalence and harmful developmental effects on adolescents.

The NCAB “Navigating the Maze” themed conference will give schools evidence-based information and strategies about cybersafety, how to use new technologies to enhance learning, and ways to improve student wellbeing. The 2010 Conference at the Hilton on the Park in Melbourne will seek a national, uniform approach to cybersafety in schools and the wider community.

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Information on the NCAB Conference see website www.amf.org.au/NCABConference