

## Cyber Bullying: Stop, Block and Tell

By Craig Anderson

Program Specialist, the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion

"I hate you! Everyone else hates you!  
You should just die!"

Those hateful words have been shouted on playgrounds as long as we all can remember. But what if those words were in an email sent to your child or grandchild? What if they were sent to all her friends? What if they were posted on a Web site or the child's online guestbook?

These things — and worse — are happening all over the world. It's called cyber bullying.

Over the last several years, the Internet has changed the way young people communicate. Recent studies have suggested that for many members of "Generation Y" (those born in or after the 1980s), social networking sites like Facebook or MySpace, as well as blogs and online journals, have become a primary means of communicating with others.

Unfortunately, the explosion of online social networking and text messaging also comes with certain dangers — including cyber bullying.

Some people scoff at the idea of cyber bullying, falling back on the old "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" point of view. The problem is that cyber bullying, unlike traditional bullying, is not a simple prank between friends or a one-time name-calling incident. It is repetitious and often escalating behavior with potentially serious consequences.

Cyber bullying takes a number of forms: threatening or offensive emails, text messages or comments, the creation and spreading of hurtful rumors online, online sexual harassment, or even taking on someone else's identity online in order to harass or humiliate. These behaviors, especially when repeated over time, can cause bullying victims to become socially isolated, depressed and even afraid or embarrassed to attend school or see their peers. Extreme cases of such bullying have led young people to take their own lives.

Cyber bullying is limited only to the imaginations and bandwidth of the kids.

Parents' first reaction when hearing about cyber bullying may be to yank their child off the Internet entirely. However, if students think they may lose access to the Internet if they report a problem, then they will be much less likely to talk to parents or other adults if problems do arise.

Instead of avoiding the Internet, parents and guardians need to learn more about it. Become familiar with social networking sites like Facebook. Tell your teen that if she (or he) wants to have a Facebook profile, then she needs to add you as a "friend" so that you are able to see her page.

If your child does become the victim of cyber bullying, report it. One good piece of advice is, "Stop, block and tell." A growing number of schools now have policies in place to address cyber bullying, and many law enforcement agencies now have divisions that are devoted to Internet safety.

For more resources on cyber bullying, visit [www.miroundtable.org](http://www.miroundtable.org) or [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org).

8 a.m. check-in until 12:30 p.m.

Fee is \$20/person before March 6,  
\$25/person after March 6 or day of  
symposium

Grosse Pointe South High School,  
11 Grosse Pointe Blvd.  
Grosse Pointe Farms  
Use Entrance E (greenhouse doors)  
off Grosse Pointe Boulevard

To register, see page 2.

### TACKLING TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY

*Preparing, Managing, Protecting the Virtual Worlds of Toddlers, Tweens and Teens*  
(A Symposium for Parents & Professionals)

Saturday, March 14

8:30 a.m. Keynote Address: The 21st Century Family "Everything has changed but nothing is different."  
Sadie Bolos – Speaker, Author, Coach

#### 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Sessions

- A. Growing Up in a Digital Age  
Scott Bruns, MS.ED., LLP
- B. The Impact of Technology on Play & Learning  
Lori Warner, Ph.D., BCBA
- C. The Dark Side of the Internet: Predators &  
Child Pornography  
John O'Brien, Assistant United States Attorney

#### 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Sessions

- D. Cyber Bullying: Creating Safer Cyberspace  
Craig Anderson, Program Specialist
- E. A Whole New (Virtual) World: Internet, Video Games, & Other  
Technological Use, Abuse, & Addiction among Adolescents  
David Votruba, Ph.D., PLC
- F. Strangers Online: Keeping Our Children Safe  
Deputy Erin Diamond, CFCE, CEECS, A.C.E.

# Depression Awareness

## Ask the Expert: Eric Hipple



Eric Hipple

Eric Hipple is a former NFL quarterback whose 10-year career was spent entirely with the Detroit Lions, from 1980 to 1990. His accomplishments include two playoff bids and a divisional championship. However, Hipple's life took a tragic turn

in the year 2000 when his 15-year old son, Jeff, died by suicide. After struggling with depression himself in the aftermath of his son's death, Hipple decided to devote his energies to helping others to detect and treat depression, and to break down the stigma surrounding depressive illnesses.

Now, Hipple is an Outreach Representative for the University of Michigan Depression Center and speaks publicly about the importance of early detection and prevention of depression. His primary message is one of hope: that depression is a treatable illness. "If I can make a difference in someone's life, then Jeff didn't die without a purpose," says Hipple, who also serves on the board of the Mental Illness Research Association (MIRA), and the American Association of Suicidology (AAAS).

### Q: What are the signs and symptoms of depression?

A: Depression is a real illness that takes many shapes and forms. According to the University of Michigan Depression Center, some depressed patients show subtle signs and symptoms for months before they are officially diagnosed and treated, while others withdraw from people and isolate themselves. Some depressed patients become irritable and moody and have angry, eruptive outbursts while others experience a profound sense of sadness and just do not feel like themselves anymore. Depression differs from "regular" sadness in that the feelings are ongoing, impair behavior or functioning and prevent people from enjoying activities that usually bring them pleasure.

Following are some of the symptoms of depression, when experienced over an extended period of time (more than two weeks):

- Restlessness and irritability
- Loss of enjoyment of hobbies, friends, family or other leisure activities
- Recurring unexplained aches and pains that do not go away
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Others noticing a change in mood
- Significant change in weight (either loss or gain)

- Irregular sleep patterns
- Trouble managing chronic illnesses
- Thoughts of or an attempt at suicide

### Q: Why is it important to treat depression early?

A: The University of Michigan Depression Center reports that the good news about depression is that safe and effective treatments are available for most people suffering from the illness. The most effective treatment is a combination of medication and psychotherapy known as "talk therapy." However, if left untreated, depression has a strong tendency to recur. It also is likely to co-occur with other illnesses such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease and other psychiatric disorders, such as anxiety or substance abuse.

It is very important to get the right treatment for depression. Ninety percent of all suicides are due to some type of untreated or undiagnosed mental illness, depression being one of those. If someone suffers from depression and does not get treatment, the chance of him (or her) taking his own life is greater than someone who is treated.

To learn more about depression education, treatments or research at the center, visit our Web site at [www.depressioncenter.org](http://www.depressioncenter.org).

## REGISTER NOW FOR: TACKLING TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY – SATURDAY, MARCH 14

Please select first and second choice for each break-out session. Seating is limited at several sessions. Every attempt will be made to accommodate your first choice. No refunds.

	First Choice	Second Choice		First Choice	Second Choice
<b>Session I at 10:00 a.m.</b>			<b>Session II at 11:30 a.m.</b>		
A. Growing Up in a Digital Age Scott Bruns, MS.ED., LLP	___	___	D. Cyber Bullying: Creating Safer Cyberspace Craig Anderson, Program Specialist	___	___
B. The Impact of Technology on Play & Learning Lori Warner, Ph.D., BCBA	___	___	E. A Whole New (Virtual) World: Internet, Video Games, & Other Technological Use, Abuse, & Addiction among Adolescents (NOTE: (Virtual) in parenthesis) David Votruba, Ph.D., PLC	___	___
C. The Dark Side of the Internet: Predators & Child Pornography John O'Brien, Assistant United States Attorney	___	___	F. Strangers Online: Keeping Our Children Safe Deputy Erin Diamond, CFCE, CEECS, A.C.E.	___	___

Mail check (\$20/person before March 6, \$25/person after March 6 or day of symposium) payable with registration information to:

**The Family Center, 20090 Morningside Dr., Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236**

For more information, call **313.432.3832** or visit our Web site: [familycenterweb.org](http://familycenterweb.org).

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Approved for staff development credits for Grosse Pointe Public School Staff

# Letter From The Director



Each New Year brings hope of new beginnings, a time for new opportunities, a chance to reflect and refresh. With the present economic situation that faces us all, we have received

more requests and inquiries than ever for information from both parents and professionals. The Family Center stands ready to serve.

We have many new programs and offerings to share that will help address the needs of our community. Look for our sought-after enrichment programs to develop in the coming year, featuring new topics of interest for parents, caregivers, professionals and youth.

We have just launched a complete redesign of our [familycenterweb.org](http://familycenterweb.org) Web site. The newly enhanced site serves as a community hub providing extensive online access to information, resources and referrals. Visitors will be able to view or download *Navigating the Adolescent Years: A Road Map*, *Ask the Experts* articles, program fliers and much more valuable information! We've added the new Association of Professionals online referral directory, along with polls, links and improved photo galleries.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our grateful appreciation to all of the sponsors, individuals, businesses, schools, students and organizations that supported our sixth annual HOLLY FEST benefit on Dec. 4. It was a great, festive way to begin the holiday season! Special thanks to Lois and Gail Warden, our honorary chairpersons, to Lois Warden and Beth Moran, benefit

co-chairs and to the HOLLY FEST committee for its dedication to make this annual benefit a true success!

We would also like to acknowledge all of our special friends who contributed to our CELEBRATE 8!! appeal. Their names are listed in this issue. Thank you for helping us to celebrate this milestone!

Your support is invaluable, as together "we" make a difference!

Wishing a New Year filled with promise for all!

Deborah A. Liedel, Executive Director  
[Debbie.Liedel@familycenterweb.org](mailto:Debbie.Liedel@familycenterweb.org)  
313.432.3832

## Programs & Resources

### The Art of Parenting

CARE of Macomb and Emmy Award winning parenting expert Michael Brandwein present an all-day program, "Leading and Listening: How to Bring Out the Best in Your Kids."

- Saturday, March 7, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Macomb Intermediate School District Conference Center  
44001 Garfield (between 19 Mile and Hall Road), Clinton Township
- Cost: \$30 (includes continental breakfast and lunch)
- For more information and to download a required preregistration form, go to [www.careofmacomb.com/events.php](http://www.careofmacomb.com/events.php)

### SAVE THE DATE: ChariTea Bear

ChariTea Bear, a new spring benefit to support The Family Center, will provide parents and grandparents an opportunity to enjoy a traditional tea party with their little ones. Children will enjoy an appropriately themed story time and will receive a teddy bear to dress (clothing provided).

Guests may bring a new teddy bear to the Tea for donation to children in local cancer and trauma programs.

- Sunday, May 3, 2-4 p.m.
- Grosse Pointe Farms Pier Park Community Center

### Coming of Age: Legal & Health Aspects of Turning 18

This presentation is for Middle & High School Students, Parents & Professionals. Grosse Pointe Woods prosecuting attorney Charles "Chip" Berschback will discuss "legal issues for teens and young adults." He will cover the legal aspects of turning 18, including contracts, living wills and medical power of attorney for parents of young adults in addition to underage drinking.

After the legal presentation, additional presenters from CARE, Beaumont Hospitals and St. John Health will touch on the mental health issues faced by teens and young adults — depression, bi-polar disorder, substance use and addictions — since involvement in the criminal justice system and these issues tend to go hand in hand.

- Wednesday, March 18, 6:30 to 9 p.m.
- Grosse Pointe Woods Community Center, 20025 Mack Plaza
- Approved for staff development credits for Grosse Pointe Public School Staff.
- There is no cost for the program.

### BUSINESSES: SUPPORT THE FAMILY CENTER

The Family Center offers several new ways to help promote your business, organization or practice. Advertise in our quarterly newsletter. Sponsor a presentation, program or event. Become a member of our new Association of Professionals online directory. Contact us at 313.432.3832 or [info@familycenterweb.org](mailto:info@familycenterweb.org)

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# The Family Center

Grosse Pointe • Harper Woods

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## Family Center Launches Revamped Web Site

The Family Center of Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods is pleased to announce the rollout of its redesigned and more user-friendly Web site, [www.familycenterweb.org](http://www.familycenterweb.org).

The Web site still offers the popular items from the old Web site, such as past issues of our quarterly newsletter, Family Central, as well as past Ask the Expert columns and coming Family Center events listings.

New, besides the site's more eye-pleasing and more easily navigated design, is our Association of Professionals listing and a donation link so supporters of The Family Center can more easily contribute to the parent- and family-focused organization.

The Association of Professionals guide is designed to give parents and other family caregivers the opportunity to quickly and confidently connect with local professionals and practitioners, including social workers and therapists, psychiatrists and psychologists, drug and alcohol counselors, nurses and clergy.

The Donate Now button in the upper left-hand column of the new homepage allows contributors to support The Family Center using a credit card or their own PayPal account.

The redesign and maintenance of The Family Center's Web site is being done by Construct Visual Consultancy.

## Thank You's

Many thanks to the following donors who contributed to our **CELEBRATE 8!!** annual appeal: (Names of donors through 1/13/09.):

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