



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



STOP
CYBERBULLYING
DAY

A large, dark teal silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, wearing a headset with a microphone. The person is facing forward. The background is white with scattered light gray geometric shapes: squares, triangles, circles, and crosses.

CYBERBULLYING

in an online gaming
environment

A Guidline for Caregivers

(Social Workers, Counselors, Psychologists
and Special Needs Specialists)

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STOP CYBERBULLYING DAY

Every year – and specifically every third Friday in June – International Cyberbullying Day is celebrated in the UAE and across the globe. Individuals, schools, governments, institutions, and organizations celebrate the day by raising awareness about the prevention of cyberbullying, to provide a safe learning environment for students in particular and for other members of the community.

Each year, Cyberbullying Day focuses on a different topic. In 2022, the focus is on cyberbullying in an online gaming environment.



The Guideline Idea:

The main idea of this guideline is drawn from the 'Enactivism Theory' and how the caregivers can use it to get a clear understanding of the causes of cyberbullying in online gaming environments for each client/student. This will help caregivers to develop an accurate treatment plan based on the need of each student/client.

Who will benefit from the guideline:

Caregivers who are working in the field of social work, counseling, mental health, child protection and special needs services.

Target group:

Children in early childhood (0 - 5 years old), cycle 1 (6 - 9 years old), cycle 2 (10 - 14 years old), cycle 3 (15 - 17 years old), higher education (18 - 25 years old) and lifelong learners (25 and above).

Guideline's objectives:

- 1-Increase the caregivers' knowledge in "cyberbullying in online game environment" topic.
- 2-Educate the caregivers about the enactivism theory and how they can apply it in their work with student/client.learners (25 and above).



Part

1

General information about cyberbullying in online gaming environments

Cyberbullying definition:

Cyberbullying is intentionally abusive behavior by a person who targets another person on the Internet using electronic devices, such as computers, smartphones, and tablets by making a true or false comment or sharing a picture of the victim with the intent to insult, humiliate, extort, intimidate and/or harass. Cyberbullying can differ from other types of bullying, as it may be actioned by one person against several people and the impact of cyber bullying on the victim can be ongoing, as the bullied person may receive several negative comments because of a single image.



Potential causal factors of cyberbullying in online gaming environments:

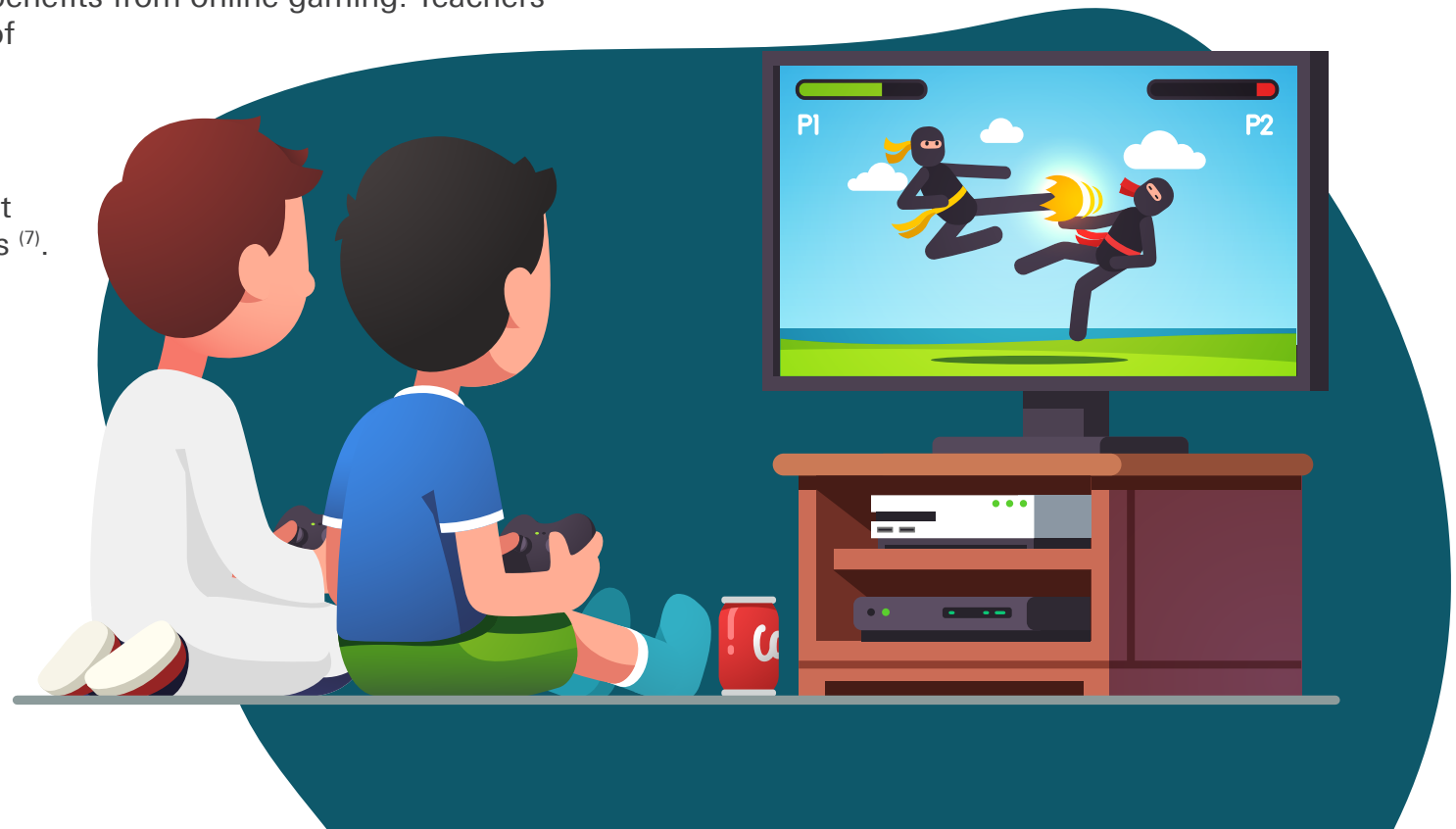
- Anonymity; it is difficult to identify the cyberbully ^{(1) (2)}.
- Online games may contribute to the development of aggressive behavior in the players ^{(2) (3)}.
- Online games can lead players to be less empathetic with others ⁽⁴⁾.
- The time spent in playing online games increases a person's chances of being a victim of cyberbullying. (Remove repeating line). ⁽⁵⁾.
- The features that are available in some online games, like the chat and speaker, increase the socialization between players, which in turn may increase the opportunity for the occurrence of cyberbullying ⁽⁵⁾.
- Some players may feel they will escape punishment for cyberbullying ⁽⁵⁾.
- The cyberbully cannot see the direct effects of his or her bullying against others behind a screen ⁽⁵⁾.
- Cyberbullying may result from the cyberbully suffering from stress, anxiety and depression that cause the bullying behavior ⁽⁵⁾.
- The cyberbully has been bullied in real life ⁽⁵⁾.





Positive impact of online gaming:

- Playing online games can help in developing and maintaining friendships between players ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽⁶⁾.
- Improving mental skills like memory retention, attention, processing skills, visual and spatial skills, and problem-solving strategies ⁽⁷⁾.
- Playing online games can help in maintaining good mental health for players, which includes increasing positive emotions and moods, finding a way to entertain, and improving resilience. It may also help relieve stress ⁽²⁾⁽⁷⁾.
- People may feel more comfortable socializing with others online than when they meet in person, as it may help avoid negative comments from others, e.g., regarding their appearance due to online anonymity ⁽⁷⁾.
- Children in classrooms can gain benefits from online gaming. Teachers can use online gaming as a way of learning ⁽⁷⁾.
- Online games help as a source of support and a chance to create friendships for people who are not able to attain this in their real lives ⁽⁷⁾.
- Online games help in developing teamwork skills, as some of the games require multiple people to work together to accomplish a common goal ⁽⁷⁾.



Negative Impact of Online Gaming:



	Victim of cyberbullying	Cyberbully	Both
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety, depression ⁽²⁾⁽⁸⁾. • Suicidal tendencies ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁸⁾. • Lower self-esteem ⁽⁴⁾⁽⁶⁾. • Having difficulty in developing empathy and sympathy for others. ⁽⁴⁾. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression ⁽²⁾⁽⁶⁾. • Anxiety ⁽²⁾⁽⁶⁾. • Lower self-esteem ⁽⁶⁾. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It negatively affects the mental health of the victim ⁽²⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾⁽⁸⁾ and the mental health of the cyberbully too ⁽²⁾⁽⁶⁾.
Behavior Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to behave more aggressively in their daily activities ⁽²⁾⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾. • Victims of bullying may become smokers or drug abusers ⁽¹⁾. • Victim of cyberbullying may become a smokers or drug users ⁽⁶⁾. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person who bullies others online is more likely to bully others in real life ⁽⁸⁾. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing games online could make people have problem behavior. • Games involving violence tend to increase aggressive behavior among children ⁽⁴⁾⁽⁶⁾.
Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim of cyberbullying may suffer from physical effects, such as headaches, reduced appetite, and sleeping problems ⁽⁵⁾. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing online games could cause physical health problems, including muscle pain, eating and sleeping patterns ⁽²⁾. • People who spend a long time playing online games may develop weight related health issues, if too much time is spent eating while playing and not moving or exercising while playing online ⁽¹⁰⁾.
Academic and professional life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims of cyberbullying could suffer from difficulties in their academic and professional life ⁽⁶⁾. • Continuous low ability to perform academically extends to the college life ⁽¹²⁾. 		
Social interaction			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online games could lead to decreased social interaction with others for both victims and bullies in their real lives ⁽⁶⁾.

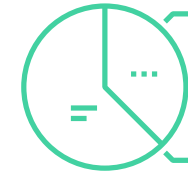
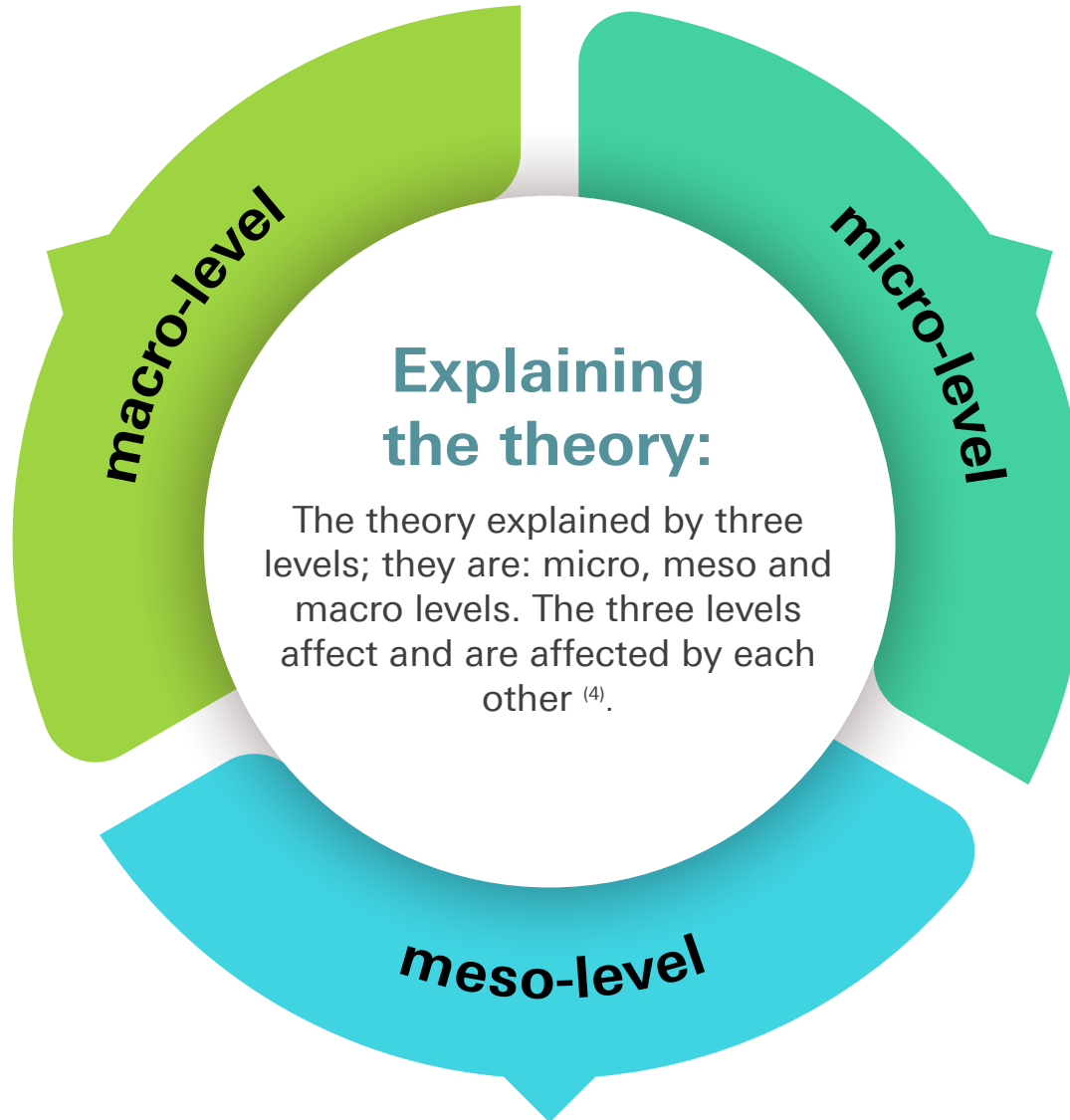
Part

2

Enactivism Theory



The macro-level includes social environment (parents, teachers, peers), society, schools, culture, law, education, parental knowledge and media ⁽⁶⁾.



The micro-level includes demographics (age, race, gender), beliefs, self-concept, emotional status, personality (traits/factors), physical health and mental health ⁽⁴⁾.



The meso levels are the relational interaction between the macro and micro levels and is where the gaming and cyberbullying take place.

Part

3

**How caregivers can use the
Enactivism Theory while working
with the client**



Explaining the theory:

Gaming and cyberbullying interactions on the meso-level affect and are affected by micro and macro levels. The aggressive behavior (micro-level) of the individual may affect the playing environment (meso-level) and make this person bully others in online games ⁽⁴⁾. Playing a type of game that has aggressive content (meso-level) could also lead the person to be aggressive (micro-level) ⁽⁴⁾. Parental interest and involvement in the child's online life that provides appropriate guidance and explanation of social engagement, interaction and behavior can reduce the the opportunity of being bullied and/or bullying others. On the other hand, a lack of parental interest and involvement in their child's online life may increase the likelihood of bullying or being bullied by others.

Cyberbullies may suffer from mental problems like stress, anxiety and depression that cause them to take it out on others in the form of cyberbullying ⁽¹⁾. Mental problems on a micro-level could affect the gaming experience of the person (meso- level). Likewise, the person who has a mental problem (micro-level) may easily become a victim of cyberbullying because of their low self-esteem. Mental problems can lead to cyber bullying due to anger issues.

Individuals' personality (micro-level) and educational levels (macro-level) can shape a person's gaming experience (meso-level). On the other hand, people's gaming experience (meso-level) can influence the person's feelings (micro-level), which affects the way the person interacts with others in the social environment (macro-level). The media (macro-level) can also affect the gaming experience (meso-level), which will affect the feelings or mental health of the person (micro-level) ⁽⁴⁾.



How caregivers (social workers, counselors, psychologists, child protection and special needs specialists) can use the Enactivism Theory while working with the client.

In applying the Enactivism Theory, caregivers can use the generalist model of social work practice. This model consists of seven components, namely engagement, assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, termination, and follow-up ⁽¹⁴⁾. More importantly, caregivers can use the generalist model while working with the client in different areas and problems. The following explains how caregivers can use this model while working with client, who is a cyberbully or a victim of cyberbullying:

1) Engagement:

The ability to build a relationship with the client, to make him or her feel comfortable. Establishing a rapport is important to be considered and start with by caregiver before working with the client in micro, meso, and macro levels. Caregivers can also use their counseling skills, which include listening and interviewing, to help in developing the relationship with the client ⁽¹⁴⁾.

2) Assessment:

Assessments should be done based on all three levels: micro, meso and macro ⁽¹⁴⁾. Caregivers should complete the assessment by drawing on the three levels of the Enactivism Theory with the client. This helps in highlighting strengths and needs, as well as identifying the level of the problem, allowing the caregiver to assign the relevant support plan ⁽¹⁴⁾.

• The macro level:

- Highlighting the problems, concerns and needs of the client that he or she may face due to belonging to a particular group ⁽¹⁴⁾.
- Considering the social policies and how they could affect the client's problem positively or negatively ⁽¹⁴⁾.
- Highlighting the support provided by the family of the client to him or her and how this affects the client ⁽¹⁴⁾.
- Knowing the programs and services that the client already has and determining if there is a need for a new programming ⁽¹⁴⁾.

• The micro level:

- Understanding the client's values and beliefs ⁽¹⁴⁾.
- Knowing the mental, physical, and psychological history of the client ⁽¹⁴⁾.
- Determining the demographic information ⁽⁴⁾.

The meso level:

- Knowing the amount of time that the client spends in playing online games ⁽⁴⁾.
- Knowing the types of games that client plays ⁽⁴⁾.

3) Planning:

This stage contains 6 main steps, which are: working with the client: prioritizing problems, translating problems into needs, evaluating levels of intervention for each need, establishing goals, specifying objectives, specifying action steps and formalizing a contract ⁽¹⁴⁾.

- **Working with the client:** In engagement and assessment phases, the caregiver starts to highlight with the client the problems, gaps, strengths and resources that he or she has.
- **Prioritizing problem:** The caregiver works with the client to identify three problems that may lead them to becoming a victim of cyberbullying or a cyberbully, such as lack of after-school activities (macro), low-self-esteem (micro) and playing aggressive games (meso).
- **Translating problems into needs:** Examples include the needs for after-school activities; the needs of programs that help in improving self-esteem and the needs of changing the types of games that the client plays.
- **Assess intervention levels for each need.**
- **Establishing SMART goals and specifying objectives:** The goals established should be SMART:
 - **Specific:** Making goals specific ⁽¹⁵⁾.
 - **Measurable:** Goals should be measured in a quantity perspective, so that the degree of achievement can be accurately measured ⁽¹⁵⁾.
 - **Achievable:** Goals should be written based on a realistic timeline and resources. The goal should also be realistic and not exceed normal expectations ⁽¹⁵⁾.
 - **Relevant:** Doing the right and related things ⁽¹⁵⁾.
 - **Time bound:** Objectives should be accomplished by an agreed-upon timeframe ⁽¹⁵⁾.
- **Specifying action steps:** Write down detailed steps with the client to help them reach their goal.

4) Implementation:

The fourth step requires the client to action and accomplish the goals agreed upon during the planning phase ⁽¹⁴⁾.



5) Evaluation:

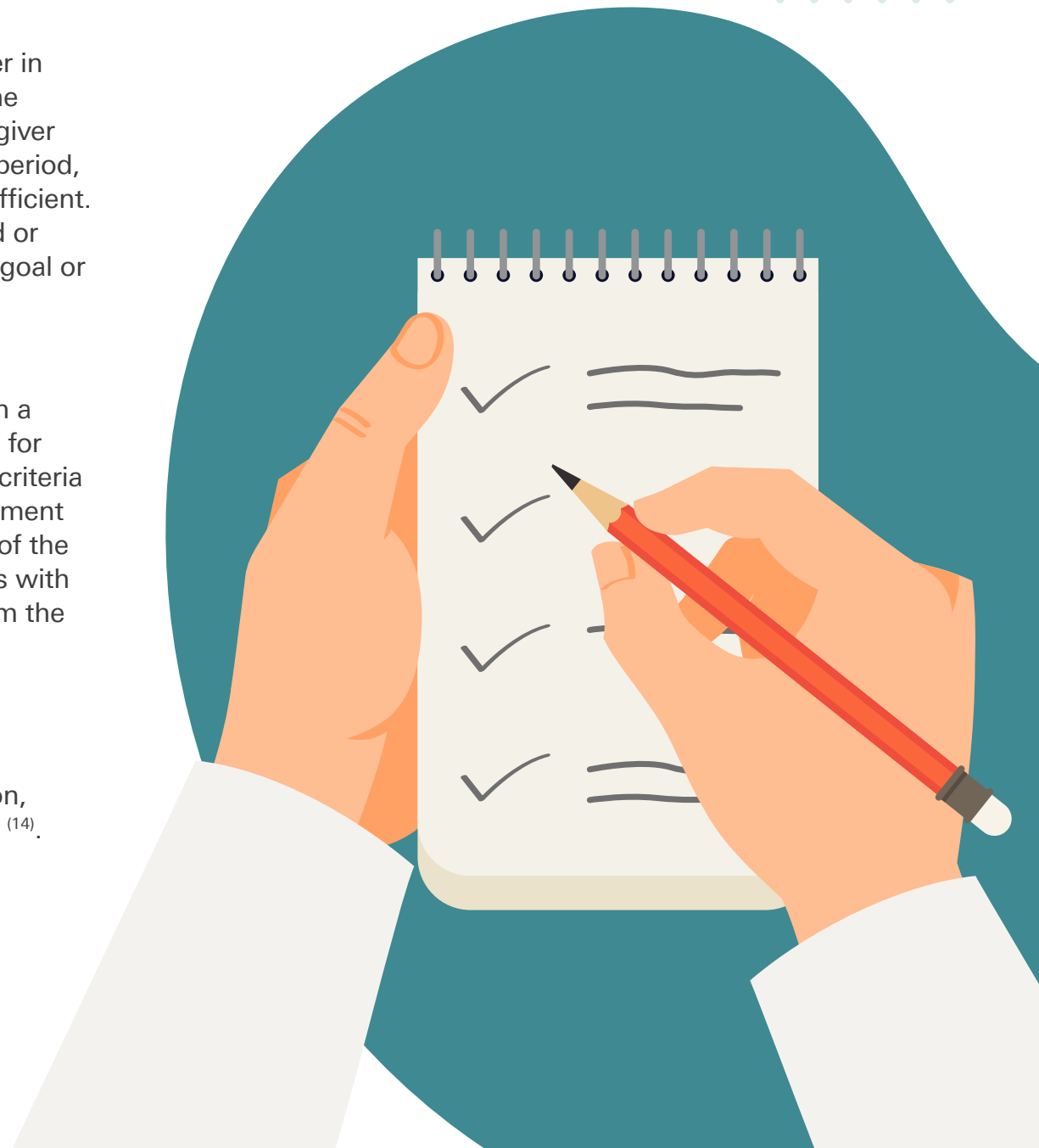
Evaluating the usefulness of the programs for the caregiver in professional and ethical practices. It helps ensuring that the clients gain the most appropriate services. When the caregiver provides a program or applies intervention for a specified period, evaluation needs to be done to find out if the program is efficient. Goals should be evaluated too to figure out if it is achieved or not. Here, we can decide whether we need to change the goal or move to a new one or to terminate the service ⁽¹⁴⁾.

6) Termination:

Termination of programs needs to be done by caregivers in a professional manner. Termination of the program could be for the following reasons: The client no longer meets the age criteria of the program; the client is not showing efficient improvement after applying the program; or the client has met the goal of the program. Termination should include feedback discussions with the client about the gains achieved and skilled learned from the program ⁽¹⁴⁾.

7) Follow-Up:

Follow-up with the client after termination is important to determine how they have benefited from the intervention, exploring how they applied the program in their daily lives ⁽¹⁴⁾.





How to use it in the school environment:

Schools can use the laws, policies, and regulations they have to decrease cyberbullying in the following ways:

The first example here is Student Behavior Management Regulations in the school environment that includes penalties in the event of bullying, which would remind students of the consequences of their behavior and reduce cyberbullying. Informing students of this can help in reducing cyberbullying by reminding them of the consequences of their behavior.

Another example is that schools should raise awareness about the bullying policy. This will help in decreasing the cyberbullying, as victims of cyberbullying will know their rights and defend themselves. Moreover, the bully will know the consequences of his or her bullying against others, which will make him or her think carefully before bullying others.



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