

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying occurs online via social media sites including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Reddit, message boards, chat rooms, or gaming communities over phones, tablets, or computers. It presents in emails, text messages, instant messages, rumors, or photos. Bullies post embarrassing or hurtful statements or photos to humiliate, harass, or threaten their victims. Bullies even hack into their victim's accounts and stalk them online.

Since technology is always on, it consumes the lives of youth twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; they cannot get away from the trauma. Sadly, many youths escape only by suicide when it becomes too much with which to cope.

Schools can educate students about cyberbullying by tools and resources from The Bully Project found at https://www.thebullyproject.com/tools_and_resource.

What can youth do if they are bullied online?

If you are being bullied online, talk to a counselor or other trusted adult. Act by not interacting with your bully. The internet has strict rules about online behavior. If harassment continues after reporting the incident(s), file complaints with email and internet providers, web sites,

and phone companies. It may be necessary to press legal charges; make sure you save all messages as proof. Additional ways to act against your bully include:

- Blocking the person(s) bullying you
- > Logging out of your computer and online accounts
- Changing your screen names, phone numbers, and email addresses

HELPING YOUR CHILD WHEN THEY ARE CYBERBULLIED

Foster the skills they need to stay safe online

What can youth do to prevent being bullied online?

You can prevent cyberbullying by taking precautions. Before using social media, understand no online activity is private; set your account settings to private and turn off your location, and do not share any personal information. A top-notch safety measure is to make parents aware of your accounts and giving them the passwords. Precautions while online include:

- Never communicating with strangers
- Never leaving your technical devices out of sight
- > Not opening unknown or suspicious communications
- > Not posting comments that will offend or hurt others



How can parents protect their children online?

Parents can best protect their child by setting boundaries with technology and parental controls. Warning your child about internet dangers is critical; teach them about the 4 Ps of internet safety: privacy, predators, pornography, and pop-ups.

Strong self-esteem can prevent a child being bullied. Parents who build their child's confidence keep them safer. Confidence building comes from being involved in what your child does online and maintaining open communication with them. Further safety methods include:

- Putting the computer in a public area
- Creating a separate user account for each user
- Telling your child you will check their online activity, files, and contact lists



How do I know if my child is being cyberbullied?

Watch for signs and symptoms of abuse

Being bullied is traumatic, having short-term and longterm effects. Children present with many symptoms. Parents should look for lower grades, loss of friends, withdrawal from activities, low self-esteem, or anger. More severe signs of stress, anxiety, or depression, or PTSD may be evident; these can include mood swings, or self-harming behaviors such as running away or physical injury. Other signs a child is being bullied include:

- Insomnia or nightmares
- Fear of going to school
- > Frequent feelings of illness
- Changes in eating including starvation or binging

How do you support your child when they are cyberbullied?

There are many ways to support your child when they are cyberbullied; teach them how to be assertive and handle bullies, support them when they come forward, assure them it is not their fault, and help them act.

Parents also support their child by empowering themselves and working to prevent cyberbullying. Examples of how to empower yourself as parents include:

- Knowing your child's online friends
- Knowing the technologies youths are using and how to navigate them
- Helping your child understand the difference between tattling and reporting

Resources

The **Cyberbullying Resource Center** provides resources for parents, students, and educators on various aspects of cyberbullying including sexting, dating violence, LGBTQ students, tech misuse, and warning signs.

https://cyberbullying.org/resources

Other Resources

There are a wide range of other resources to help parents protect their children. Here are a few examples:

ConnectSafely – Parent's Guide to Cyberbullying https://www.connectsafely.org/cyberbullying/

American Bar Association — Bullyproof Resources for Parents www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/committees/bullyproof/parent- resources/

Student Training & Education in Public Service The Anti-Bullying Guidebook

https://www.publicservicedegrees.org/resources/bullying-prevention/

Common Sense Media – Parenting, Media, and Everything in Between http://api.commonsensemedia.org/articles/cyberbullying

