

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is the use of digital devices (cell phones, gaming consoles, computers, or tablets) to send, post, or share threatening, mean, intentionally embarrassing, or false information to someone either privately or publicly online.

Cyberbullying can occur **24/7** in the privacy of your child's bedroom, is easily spread, can be permanent and very public, and is frequently moved from one platform to another. It can be hard to recognize or identify the bully due to platforms that allow a user to hide their name.

Most states have laws requiring schools to respond to cyberbullying and may also have criminal statutes that apply when cyberbullying and harassment intersect.

TYPES OF CYBERBULLYING

Harassment (Flaming, Trolling, Outing) —

Repeatedly posting insulting and intimidating messages, chats, photos, and videos.

Rumor Spreading (Spilling the Tea) — Posting private or even false information online about an individual that consists of cruel rumors and gossip.

Impersonation (Catfishing) — Pretending to be someone you're not with the intent of hurting them.

Cyberstalking — A bully monitors a victim's online presence closely, often across platforms.

Exclusion — Posting group messages, photos, or events to intentionally hurt someone who was left out.

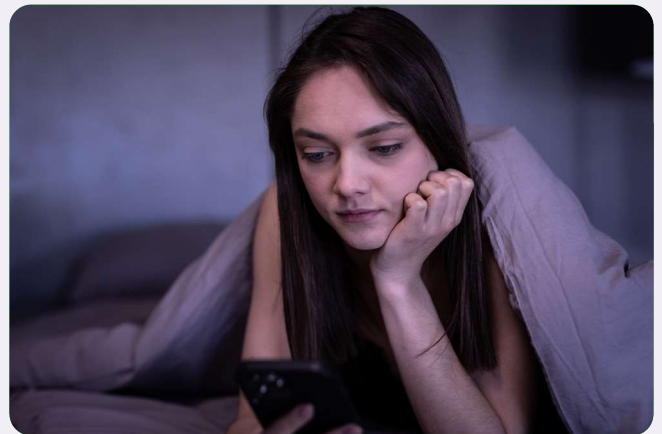
CYBERBULLYING STATISTICS

Nearly half (46%) of US teens aged 13-17 reported that they experienced cyberbullying.

—Pew Research Center

Children and young people under age 25 who were victims of cyberbullying are more than **twice as likely** to engage in self-harm and suicidal behaviors than their non-victim peers.

—Journal of Medical Internet Research



HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN

Ongoing discussions

- Have intentional and frequent conversations and role-play tricky situations! (See our Conversation Starters.)
- Let your children know they can always come talk to you. You will help them figure it out.

Boundaries and limits

- Set the expectation that all devices stay out of the bedroom overnight. Always.
- Create a Technology Contract with your children before they get their first device. Include the expectation that they will not cyberbully others and will report any cyberbullying to an adult.

Parental supervision

- Block downloads of new apps.
- Ensure that your child does not use apps that feature anonymous profiles or comments. These apps frequently lead to severe cyberbullying because there is no accountability for what is posted.
- Use an Internet filter to block inappropriate content. There are several methods of filtering the internet at home, including through your internet provider, your router or a monitoring app that includes a filter.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What is the difference between snitching and helping someone in need?

What was the funniest thing you saw online today? What was the worst thing?

What are some ways you can report or tell a safe adult?

Have you witnessed cyberbullying with friends or classmates?

What is our responsibility to help someone who is being cyberbullied?

ACTION STEPS

if your child is being cyberbullied

1. **Stay calm and do not dismiss it as “drama.”** Let your child know this is very common and you will help them get through this situation. Ask questions about how it started, who is involved, and how long it has been going on.
2. **Take screenshots** of the cyberbullying or use a second phone to take pictures. Do not delete anything.
3. **Block and report bullying messages** to the platform and document the communications.
4. **Report to your school, and work peaceably** with your school administration to end the abuse. Report to law enforcement if you feel a crime has been committed.
5. **Seek advice** from your pediatrician or a children’s mental health facility if your child is not coping well.

This resource was created by the Online Harms Prevention work group at the Screen Time Action Network in collaboration with Project Liberty.