



PREVENT CYBERBULLYING

WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

Cyber bullying is the willful and repeated act of harming others electronically through email, instant messaging, Web sites, chat rooms, social networking sites, cell phones and other electronic means. About one-third of all teens using the Internet have been bullied!

If you or someone you know is being bullied consider these tips developed by ConnectSafely.org, on how to end or prevent the cycle of aggression.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Don't respond. If someone bullies you, remember that your reaction is usually exactly what the bully wants. It gives him or her power over you. Who wants to empower a bully?

Don't retaliate. Getting back at the bully turns you into one and reinforces the bully's behavior. Help avoid a whole cycle of aggression.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET CYBER BULLIED

Talk to a trusted adult. You deserve backup. It's always good to involve a parent but - if you can't - a school counselor usually knows how to help. Sometimes both are needed. If you're really nervous about saying something, see if there's a way to report the incident anonymously at school. Sometimes this can result in bullies getting the help they need to change their behavior.

Save the evidence. The only good news about digital bullying is that the harassing messages can usually be captured, saved, and shown to someone who can help. Save evidence even if it's minor stuff - in case things escalate.

Block the bully. If the harassment's coming in the form of instant messages, texts, or profile comments, do yourself a favor: Use preferences or privacy tools to block the person. If it's in chat, leave the "room."

Be civil. You're doing yourself a favor. Even if you don't like a person, it's a good idea to be decent and not sink to his or her level. Research shows that gossiping about and "trash talking" others increase your risk of being bullied.

Don't be a bully. You know the old saying about walking a mile in someone's shoes; even a few seconds of thinking about how another person might feel can put a big damper on aggression. That's needed in this world.

Be a friend, not a bystander. Forwarding mean messages or just standing by and doing nothing empowers bullies and hurts victims even more. If you can, tell bullies to stop, or let them know bullying is not cool - it's cruel abuse of fellow human beings. If you can't stop the bully, at least try to help the victim and report the behavior.

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