

What Is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

Technology means that bullying is no longer limited to schoolyards or street corners. Cyberbullying can occur anywhere, even at home, via smartphones, emails, texts, and social media, 24 hours a day.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities

Effects of cyberbullying

- Mental effects such as: Depression and anxiety, low self-esteem, academic issues, suicidal thoughts and self-harm
- Behavioral effects: using drugs or alcohol, skipping school

Tips for dealing with cyberbullying

- Don't respond to any messages or posts written about you, no matter how hurtful or untrue. Responding will only make the situation worse and provoking a reaction from you is exactly what the cyberbullies want, so don't give them the satisfaction.
- Don't seek revenge on a cyberbully by becoming a cyberbully yourself. Again, it will only make the problem worse and could result in serious legal consequences for you. If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online.

- Save the evidence of the cyberbullying, keep abusive text messages or a screenshot of a webpage, for example, and then report them to a trusted adult. If you don't report incidents, the cyberbully will often become more aggressive.
- Report threats of harm and inappropriate sexual messages to the police. In many cases, the cyberbully's actions can be prosecuted by law.
- Prevent communication from the cyberbully, by blocking their email address, cell phone number, and deleting them from social media contacts. Report their activities to their Internet service provider (ISP) or to any social media or other websites they use to target you. The cyberbully's actions may constitute a violation of the website's terms of service or, depending on the laws in your area, may even warrant criminal charges.

Interesting facts about cyberbullying

- Girls are more likely than boys to be both victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying.
- About half of LGBTQ+ students experience online harassment -- a rate higher than average.[5]
- Instagram is the social media site where most young people report experiencing cyberbullying.
- Young people who experience cyberbullying are at a greater risk than those who don't for both self-harm and suicidal behaviors.[7]
- Only 38% of cyberbullying victims are willing to admit it to their parents.