



# Cyberbullying

## Raising Awareness of Bullying in the Online World\*



Youth today have never known a world without Internet. The world is more connected than ever. Skype, email, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and Tumblr are just a few social media sites connecting individuals in the online world. You can snap a picture on our phones, post a thought or share a joke with thousands of other people instantly. Problems arise when technology is used to harm or abuse others. Being pushed out of a social network by your peers can lead to a world filled with loneliness, embarrassment, isolation, fear or shame.

Cyberbullying involves communication technologies to repeatedly intimidate or harass others it includes:

- Sending mean or threatening emails or text/instant messages.
- Posting embarrassing photos of someone online.
- Creating a website to make fun of others.
- Pretending to be someone by using their name.
- Tricking someone into revealing personal or embarrassing information and circulating it to others.

Traditional forms of bullying may allow for victims to find safe places to escape. Cyberbullying can follow a victim anywhere 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This may include to and from school, at the mall or in the comfort of their home. Youth who cyberbully are often able to hide behind the technology by choosing to remain anonymous.

### Practice Netiquette online

Just like the offline world, there is etiquette to follow for safe and acceptable online behaviour.

- Respect people's feelings, never treat someone online in a way that you would not feel comfortable doing face to face.
- Never share passwords other than with a trusted adult.
- Never share cellphone numbers or email addresses (yours or anyone else's) unless you know and trust the person or have permission to do so.
- Never share personal information or photos (of yourself or anyone else) in a chat room.
- Never post, email or forward naked photos of yourself - or anyone else – to anyone.

### What to do if being cyberbullied

- Walk away or leave the online conversation.
- Keep track of the bullying (write it down and/or save a screenshot of the online message).
- Tell a trusted adult. If you do not trust anyone or need to speak with someone urgently, contact the confidential and toll-free *Kids Help Phone* at 1-800-668-6868.
- Report bullying to school administrators.
- Report criminal offences, such as threats, assaults and sexual exploitation to the local police.
- Report unwanted text messages to your telephone service provider.
- Report online bullying to the social media site and block the person responsible.

### Be Part of the Solution

Youth are more likely to convince their peers to stop bullying than adults. As an active bystander, you can have a greater impact on bullying than your teachers or parents.

- If you feel it's safe to do so, tell the bully to stop.
- Find friends/students/youth or an adult who can help stop it.
- Befriend the person being bullied and lead them away from the situation.
- Report it to a teacher or school staff, or fill out an anonymous letter and drop it off to a teacher or any trusted adult.
- Remember, once you post it, it's there for all to see—you can apologize, but you cannot take it back.
- Refuse to forward hurtful emails, text messages or embarrassing photos to friends - by refusing to pass it on, you become part of the solution. The choice is yours!

\*Adapted from resources found at [www.PrevNet.ca](http://www.PrevNet.ca) - Canada's authority on research and resources for bullying prevention