WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

Cyberbullying is using the Internet to bully someone. It might be harassment, name-calling, or creating fake profiles and it is illegal in almost every state.

It can happen online or through messages, and it's just as harmful as being bullied in person with the same terrible consequences. Bullying people online affects their self-esteem, status and even safety.

Some cyberbullies don't even consider themselves bullies – they are just acting the way they wish they could in real life, seeing online as their playground. But bullying, in real life or cyber, hurts people.

REMEMBER: If you wouldn't do it in real life, don't do it online.

ONLINE HARASSMENT

It is not harmless child's play.
It hurts. It has even killed.

Megan Meier, 13, committed suicide over a boy that did not exist. She had befriended the boy, "Josh," online and thought she was in love. They never met or spoke on the telephone. When "Josh" insulted her she hung herself in her bedroom closet. It was discovered soon after that "Josh" was actually Megan's former friend, her ex-friend's mother and an 18 year-old girl. They had created the account just to harass Megan.

Sadly, Megan is not alone. Numerous children have taken their own lives due to cyberbullying.

Rachel Neblett, 17 years old, killed herself after threatening emails detailed her movements.

Ryan Patrick Halligan killed himself after a girl published their romantic chats. She did it for a laugh. Ryan was thirteen.

Choi Jin-sil, a South Korean actress, hung herself after she was repeatedly accused online of having caused the cyberbully suicide of another actor.

Cyberbullying may seem like a safe, harmless way to get back at someone. After all, it's anonymous. It's not 'real life.' This is not true. Cyberbullying has real world consequences. If you use the Internet or a phone to insult, harass or stalk someone, you are hurting them. If you are being cyberbullied, don't do anything drastic. There are ways out. You are not alone.

RESOURCES

Stop Cyberbullying
www.stopcyberbullying.org

Facts and Research on Cyberbullying
www.cyberbullying.org

Stop Bullying
stopbullying.gov

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
988

in the know

CYBER-BULLYING

REVEALING
THE INVISIBLE ENEMY

THE CYBERBULLY

Cyberbullies are cowards. They don't have the courage to bully someone in person so they do it where they feel safe: online.

The cyberbully's motivation is to intimidate, frighten or stress you out. They often try to ostracize you. This means they want to isolate you from your friends and peers, whether it's from school or at parties. Most of the time they are angry or upset with their own life, so they want to make you feel bad too.

HANDLING THE BULLY

So how do you deal with cyberbullying? **Ignore it and report it.**

IGNORE IT: A cyberbully wants a reaction. Don't give one. If you don't know who the bully is, don't show anyone that it's bothering you. If you do, they win, and they'll keep doing it. Talk about the harassment with your trusted friends and adults.

REPORT IT: Cyberbullies think they are anonymous but they are not! Everything that happens online is traceable. Cyberbullies can be identified. You should not let the bullying get you down but you should tell the authorities what's happening. Tell your parents, teachers, coaches — any adult you trust.

If your friends have seen rumors about you online, have them report it with you. Together you can stop the bully or at least find out who it is.

TYPES OF CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullies harass their victims in many ways. Here are some of the more common and harmful cyberbullying practices:

CYBERSTALKING
This is done by using online tools to track someone's movements or obtain personal information. If someone can find out where you are, what you are doing or anything detailed about you, you might run into trouble.

POSTING HURTFUL COMMENTS ON SOCIAL WEBSITE PROFILES
Cyberbullies are afraid to say it in person so they do it online.

ANONYMOUS MESSAGES
These can cause a lot of distress and are a favorite cyberbully tactic.

STEALING PASSWORDS
Attempts to take control of your social media profiles, computer, online games, or even bank accounts.

CREATING A 'BASHING' ACCOUNT
These are created to insult people. They may vote on the ugliest kids at school or bash just one person.

SENDING HUNDREDS OR THOUSANDS OF MESSAGES
A form of intimidation to harass a person by sending hundreds or thousands of messages, sometimes all day and night, to make it harder to live.

PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE ELSE
By pretending to be someone the victim knows, or would want to know, cyberbullies will try to get them to reveal personal information. That information can be used against the victim or revealed to others to hurt their feelings.

The easiest way to prevent cyberbullying is to be safe online.

- *Don't share personal information.*
- *Protect your passwords.*
- *Review your privacy settings.*
- *Ignore messages from unknown senders.*
- *Block harassing numbers.*

With the ever-growing digital world, cyberbullying is most likely here to stay. That doesn't mean you have to be a victim. Learn how to stop bullies: Ignore them and report them. If someone is harassing you online, talk to your parents or a trusted adult.

More than half of all teenagers report having been cyberbullied in one form or another. Most say it made them feel bad.

BE KIND, STAY STRONG RISE ABOVE CYBERBULLYING