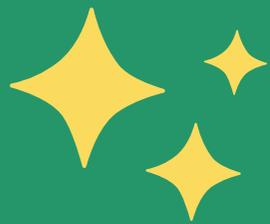# Guidebook for Youth Workers

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Preventing cyberbullying by developing a Positive Mindset

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This guide aims to approach the concept of bullying and to provide methods to address it through youth work, with the intention of serving as a tool to prevent and to stop bullying.

Youth workers can play an important role in the achievement of this goal as they are the ones that work directly with young people and they can therefore take advantage of this proximity to educate them in respect and zero tolerance to bullying.

What is cyberbullying?
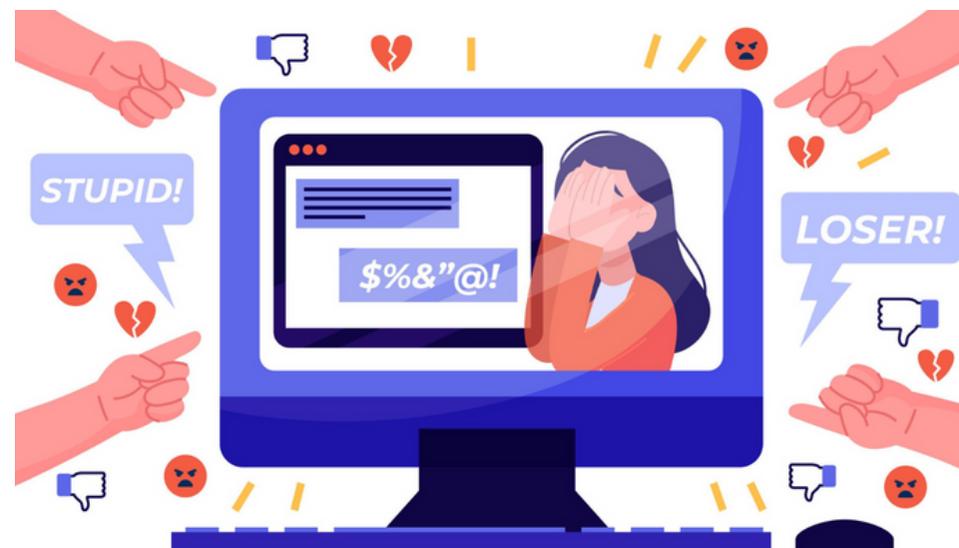
Cyberbullying is a form of bullying, characterized by the fact that it is carried out in the digital realm

Most of the time it is a prolongation of face to face bullying, as 90% of the people who suffer from cyberbullying also suffer from traditional bullying. However, there are some characteristics that differentiate cyberbulling from traditional bullying:

1. The victim can't get away of the situation
2. The greatest scope of the aggressive act, since it can be spread quickly to a large audience
3. The greater invisibility and anonymity of the aggressor

The most frequent spaces where cyberbullying takes place are:

- **Social media**: it is the main channel for cyberbullying, as young people upload personal content and the aggressors can use this personal content to ridicule the victim.
- **Messaging applications**
- **Online forums related to young people's studies**: aggression in the educational sphere.
- **Online game communities**: as it is a space where a large number of young people meet, it is conducive to cyberbullying attitudes.

What most frequently occurs in these aggressions is:

- Threatening people
- Insulting
- Spreading lies or false gossip
- Sending hurtful and denigrating messages towards people
- Incitement to cyberbullying

Youth workers can play an essential role in this prevention for several reasons:

- Youth workers have direct contact with young people
- They can be suitable facilitators for both bullies and victims
- They can provide the bullies with mechanisms and advice so that they do not engage in cyberbullying
- They can provide the victims with resources to help them recover, such as the use of a positive mindset
- This can rather be done through the implementation of specific activities or through more elaborated projects, but in both cases youth workers will play a key role.
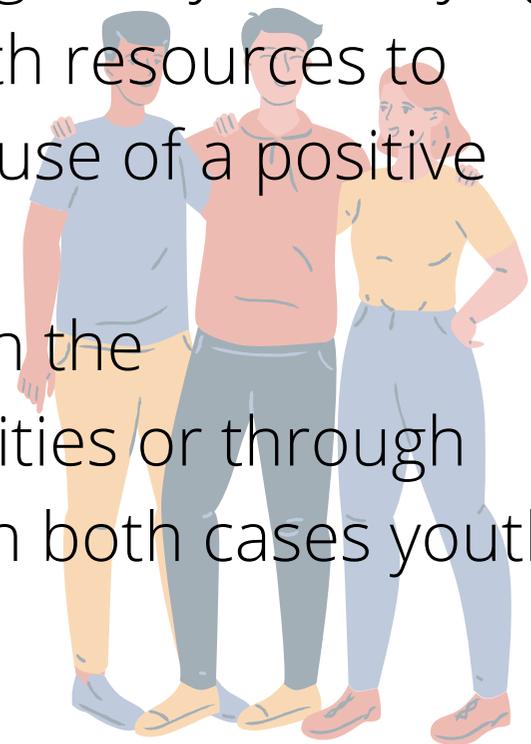
Tips for preventing cyberbullying

- Developing empathy and positive thinking
- Sending the youth messages that foster personal growth.
- Raising awareness among young people on why they should not bully
- Explaining them the consequences that bullying can have on the victims

Tips for preventing cyberbullying

- Facilitate emotional expression
- Talks or small colloquiums with young people
- Improving self-awareness and self esteem
- Family education in good values

How to help young people cope with cyberbullying

- It is essential not to blame the victim
- Listen to his/her feelings and offer emotional support
- Remind that he/she is not alone
- Keep the evidence of the cyberbullying
- Offer him your support or/and professional support if needed
- Help them develop a positive mindset

How to prevent and fight against bullying with a positive mindset?

- Addressed young people with messages that foster personal growth.
- Enhancing self awareness:
  - Fostering self-respect
  - Forming a whole picture about oneself
  - Rising awareness of the irreversibility of time
  - Stimulating the discovery of your inside world
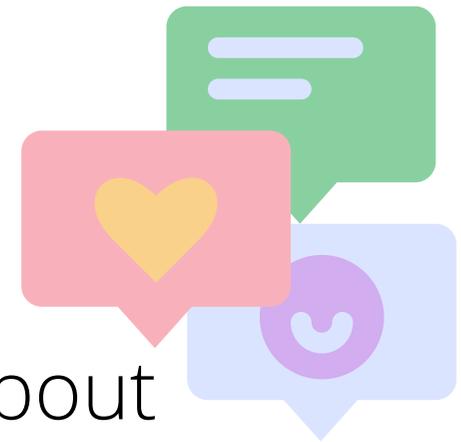
How to prevent and fight against bullying with a positive mindset?

- Improving self-esteem through
  - Watch out your posture
  - Watch out your appearance
  - Keep a diary of your achievements
  - Allow yourself to make mistakes
  - Learn how to separate your personality from your actions
  - Increase your competences
  - Have time for yourself
  - Look for a balance
  - Look for things that help you
 - Look for support
  - Act! Just start acting

How to prevent and fight against bullying with a positive mindset?

- Developing empathy through conversation
  - Discuss what is happening in his/her life
  - Ask them how they feel.
  - Argue situations that appear on TV or video games
  - Talk about experiences they have had at school.
  - Modeling is very important: the best example as youth workers is through our own behavior
  - Teaching how to express your emotions and feelings.

How to prevent and fight against bullying with a positive mindset?

- Helping young people to deal with stressful situation
- Educating in problem solving
- Practicing gratitude: "If you want to find happiness, try to explore gratitude". Gratitude recalls strong positive feelings in the person who gives and receives it.
- Getting involved in actions to evolve compassion: compassion can reinforce positivity through activities as volunteering, donating goods or money and helping people in need.
- Practicing optimism: an exercise for improving optimism is the "Imagine Yourself" test in which participants are asked to write about where they see themselves in the future.This test can help them understand how positive they are about themselves and others.
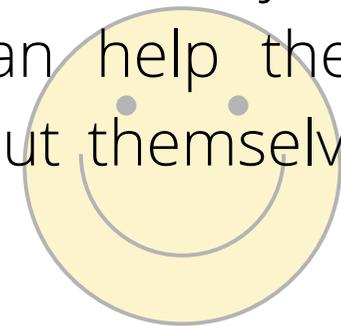
- Valuing yourself: awareness and acknowledgment of own power
- Practicing planning: a person with clear goals and expectations has a higher likelihood of feeling contentment and happiness.
- Smaller-scale exercises like finding meaning in daily activities and setting realistic goals.
- Finding effective means to reach those goals and reflect on certain thoughts and emotions. These types of practice guide individuals in regaining certain positive emotions and coping with their trauma's after-effects.

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