Guidebook for Young People
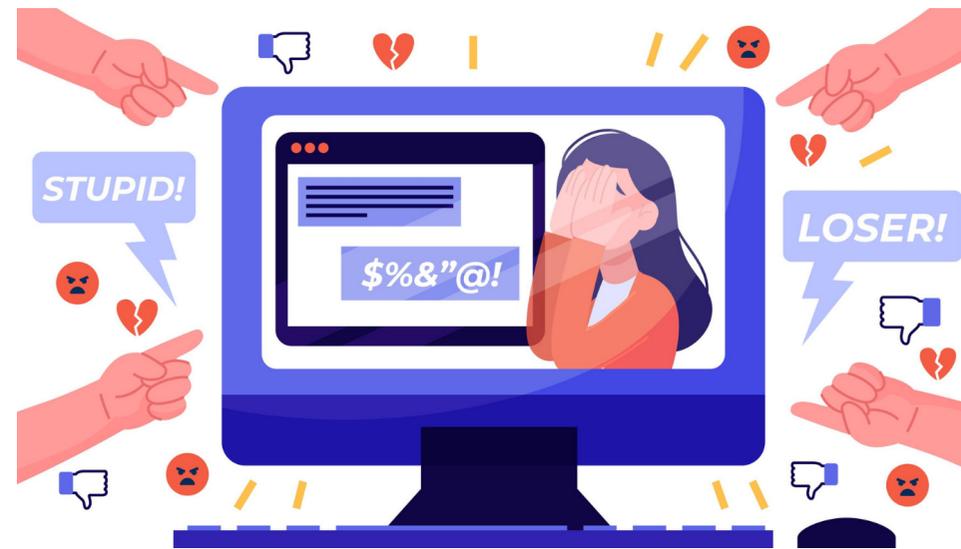
2020-2-NL02-KA205-002994
Preventing cyberbullying by developing a Positive Mindset

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital tools like cell phones, laptops, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where groups can view, take part in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes posting, publishing, or contribute to harmful, dangerous, wrong, or mean content about someone else. It can consist of giving out private knowledge about someone else triggering humiliation or shame. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into illegal or criminal behaviour.

# The most popular places where cyberbullying occurs are:
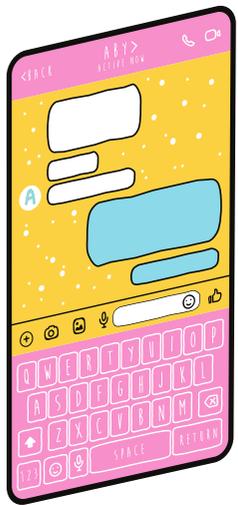
- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities [1]

Cyberbullying is the use of digital means to repeatedly do any or all of the following to a person:

- Make threats
- Spread lies, gossip, and rumours
- Share embarrassing photos
- Post or send insults
- Harass or send mean, hateful messages
- Encourage or engage in social bullying
- Impersonate the individual to engage in any (or all) of the above behaviour to their online friends and connections [6]
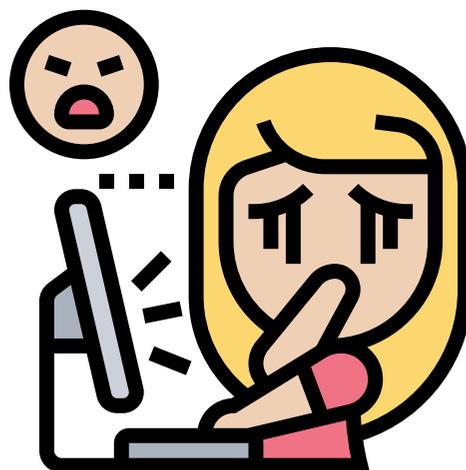
Special Concerns

With the predominance of social media and digital forums, comments, photos, posts, and content shared by individuals can often be viewed by outsiders as well as friends. The content an individual shares online – both their personal content as well as any negative, mean, or hurtful content – creates a kind of lasting public record of their views, activities, and actions. This public record can be thought of as an online status, which may be available to schools, managers, colleges, clubs, and others who may be stalking an individual now or in the future. Cyberbullying can harm the online characters of everyone implicated – not just the person being harassed, but those doing the bullying or participating in it.

Cyberbullying has unique interests in that it can be:

persistent

DIGITAL DEVICES OFFER AN ABILITY TO IMMEDIATELY AND CONTINUOUSLY COMMUNICATE 24 HOURS A DAY, SO IT CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN EXPERIENCING CYBERBULLYING TO FIND RELIEF

permanent

MOST INFORMATION COMMUNICATED ELECTRONICALLY IS PERMANENT AND PUBLIC, IF NOT REPORTED AND REMOVED. A NEGATIVE ONLINE REPUTATION, INCLUDING FOR THOSE WHO BULLY, CAN IMPACT COLLEGE ADMISSIONS, EMPLOYMENT, AND OTHER AREAS OF LIFE

hard to notice

EDUCATORS AND PARENTS MAY NOT OVERHEAR OR SEE CYBERBULLYING TAKING PLACE, IT IS HARDER TO RECOGNIZE[1]

A Way Out

1. Positive Self-Talk

Promote positive thinking by exercising positive self-talk. The self-talk we engage in may be obvious or hidden, and is linked with a range of higher mental functions, including thinking, problem solving, planning and plan execution, awareness and motivation.

Here are some examples of negative self-talk vs positive self-talk:

I cannot do it.	I will give it my best shot.
I always mess things up.	If I mess up, I will learn from it.
I will fail.	I want to succeed.
No one likes me.	I like myself.

"You live the words you tell yourself in your mind."
Dr. Magdalena Battles

2. Positive Thinking

Positive thinking can help develop a plan of action:

- join forces with other bullying victims and help each other to overcome bullying and make it stop.[3]
- broaden your thought–action process
- undo lingering negative emotions
- fuel psychological resilience

3. Develop a growth mindset

People with a mature mindset are frequently more resistant in the face of bullying compared to people with a rigid mentality. The main difference is that having a mature mindset can help you be reassured that the situation is not enduring, the role as one who is bullied is not fixed, and therefore you will not always suffer or see yourself as vulnerable or subservient.[4]

4. It is ok to ask for help

Asking for help is ok, learn to ask for it. It is fine to report bullying. In such circumstances it is wise to ask for help. There is no need to feel timid.[4]

5. Work on your social skills

Indirect methods include programs in which the inhibition or decrease of bullying occur by encouraging social and emotional skills and encouraging pro-social comportment that favours non-violent social connections with peers and adults through conflict resolution and establishing bonds. Poor social skills could lead to isolation. When you are surrounded with friends, it makes it more difficult for bullies to pick on you.

6. Learn Assertiveness
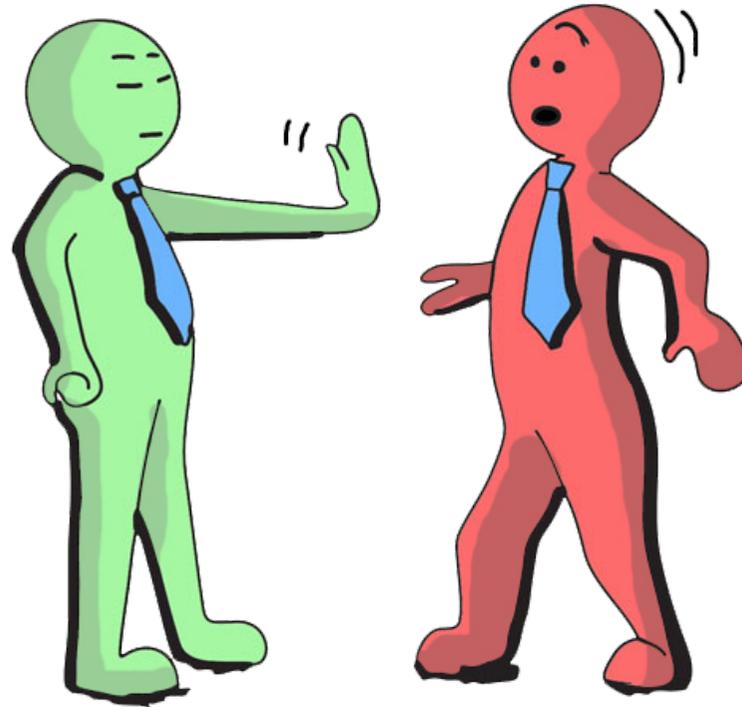
While to some assertiveness comes naturally, to others it does not. Not everyone is able to stand for their rights. Enroll in classes, workshops, youth organisations that can help you learn the difference between being assertive and being aggressive. Believing in yourself, in your skills and having the right leaders to mentor you, can help you develop freedom of choice and the right to say no to things that you do not like.

Over the internet:
Ways to stop cyberbullying

The Internet is a fantastic thing. A place to join and reconnect with people and colleagues. A source of alienation and de-stressing from our routine. A means to calm down and be amused. However, for many teenagers, the cyberspace offers not a relief but grief — a way for bullies to find and agony them, in college and out.[6]

Due to the characteristics of the internet, it is not easy for cyberbullying targets to find a runaway from their aggressors. The virtual world follows us everywhere and cyberbullies use this prevalence to their benefit. With all this potential for long-lasting, and sometimes hurtful effects, it's easy to see why it's so important to take action and prevent cyberbullying as much as possible.[6]

1. Educate Yourself

Learn the difference between a bully using an Instagram post to engage in cyberbullying and a negative comment from a fellow classmate. Learn what cyberbullying is so that you can identify it properly.

2. Establish a relationship that encourages communication

Parents and teachers who are easy to talk to — trusted communication partners — are often approached earlier by the victim in a bullying situation. Look around for other people that you can go to and be heard.

3. Be Smart Online

Keep in mind simple acts that can help, such as:

- Keeping passwords as private.
- Thinking before posting an enraged or aggressive reaction.
- Using privacy controls to aid in who sees and comments.
- Logging off public/classroom computers and keeping your phones locked in group settings.

4. Be Prepared

You are not alone; many young people fall prey to online bullying, even celebrities and professional athletes have been victims. Keep in mind that there are others that have been in your shoes, they have sought help and it can be overcome.

Cyber-bullying can be overcome; report the bully to school authorities, to parents, to the police or other adults. Create new social media accounts if necessary and speak to responsible adults about it. They can help you.

Respond by not responding; Many times, the bully is looking for a reaction or response. If they do not receive the attention, and if their attacks are ignored, they will often try elsewhere to get it.

Always keep in mind your positive traits; Most bullies look for weaknesses and use them mercilessly. By reaffirming strengths and positive aspects of your life, you can work to undo the damage the cyberbully has tried to inflict.[6]
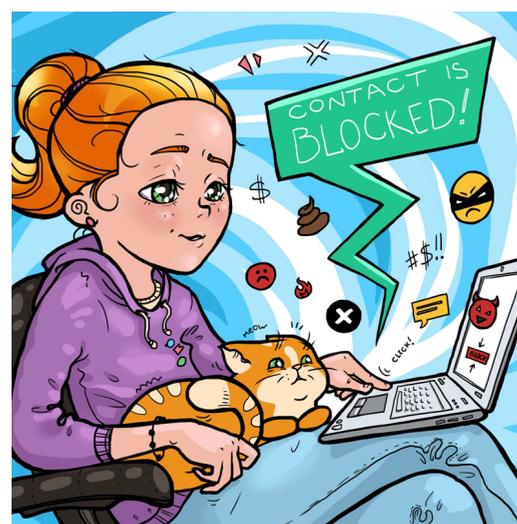
Conclusion

Because messages can be posted anonymously, cyberbullying often allows bullies to avoid the consequences of their words. Whether it is a mean text message, rumours posted on social media sites or embarrassing photos, cyberbullying can reach a large audience fast. It is difficult to delete the messages after they have been posted or sent. If it is online, it lives forever.

Bullying is an attack on a person's sense of belonging and identity, which often leads to low self-esteem. For many, bullying can result in a reluctance to go to school, increased anxiety, the onset of depression and more.

When it comes to cyberbullying, young people can also be part of the solution. Alerts exist in the form of apps, that notifies users when they are about to post common phrases associated with cyberbullying. A popup asks the writer, "Are you sure you want to do that?" This appears to cause enough self-reflection as in several cases it has been noted that the writer decides not to post the message.

The internet is an amazing thing, and it is to be a safe place for everyone. As you are online today, think about how you can spread some love. Do not just be a bystander to negativity. If you see someone getting put down, build them up.[7]

References

1 https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it

2 Geurts B. Making Sense of Self Talk. Rev Philos Psychol. 2018;9(2):271–285. doi:10.1007/s13164-017-0375-y

3 Fredrickson BL. The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. Am Psychol. 2001;56(3):218–226. doi:10.1037//0003-066x.56.3.218

4 da Silva JL, de Oliveira WA, Braga IF, et al. The effects of a skill-based intervention for victims of bullying in Brazil. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2016;13(11):1042. doi:10.3390/ijerph13111042

References

5 The Effects of a Skill-Based Intervention for Victims of Bullying in Brazil - PMC (nih.gov)
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5129252/#B24-ijerph-13-01042

6 How to prevent and stop cyberbullying in schools: 6 effective ways
https://www.positiveaction.net/cyberbullying-prevention

7 How spreading positivity can reduce cyberbullying
https://www.bluecompass.com/blog/how-spreading-positivity-can-reduce-cyberbullying