

CYBER BULLYING

What is Cyber Bullying?

Cyber hate and bullying that happens on social media such as Facebook and Twitter are just as harmful as bullying on the playground or in person, but sometimes it can be much worse. The primary reason is that the victims can't escape, and they can be harmed by people no matter where they live in the world while the villain remains anonymous.

It may be hard to understand why this is happening to you or why the bully is doing these things. Most of the time people who bully are often in pain and insecure about themselves or things that have happened in their past. As a result, they immorally take their negative feelings out on you as they may lack the coping skills to solve problems. We all know this is not right, but it might help to understand that their mean actions are not about you, it's about their insecurities and lack of self-worth. Don't allow these people to tear you down no matter what anyone might say, you didn't do anything to deserve this.

What can you do if you're being bullied online?

Getting bullied on social media platforms through constant harassment from cyber hate groups or individuals can involve fake pictures and even threatening messages which can leave you feeling helpless and violated. When you set up a personal profile on social media website bullies can sneak into your life while pretending to be your friend and steal your personal information. They will even go as far as taking your pictures to create fake profiles causing great harm by impersonating you making it feel like there's no safe place to be.

What can you do to stop online bullying?

Block and unfriend - Block any harassing accounts, email addresses, or phone numbers.

- Never give your personal or private details - Avoid publishing your address, phone number, date of birth, or any other personal information that only you would know.
- Adjust your privacy settings - Be sure you set very strict privacy settings on all your social media accounts. Set your accounts and post to "friends only" or "private."

- Take a break from social media - If it feels like the online bullying just won't stop, walk away from social media.
- Save harassing evidence - Take screenshots of harassment. This could be very important evidence later.
- Report bullying when it happens - You can report the posts or group to site administrators of Facebook or Twitter if you're bullied on their platforms.
- Talk to someone that you trust - tell a friend, parent, teacher, coach, or someone who will be supportive through this difficult time. No one can help you if they don't know about the problem.
- Never respond to threatening messages - Most of the time this will only make the bullying worse.
- Report serious threats to - If someone threatens your safety or shares personally explicit pictures or video of you, report it to the authorities immediately.

Can you prevent cyber hate or online bullying?

Stop the spread of online rumors.

- Never contribute to online cyber hate.
- Try to call out misinformation and gossip.
- Don't encourage bullies by liking or sharing their comments or posts.
- Defend people when they're being attacked or bullied online.
- Don't forward harmful messages or posts.
- Block and report harassers.

**Social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter are places where you can report harassment.*

Online Impersonation?

Impersonation online refers to the act of creating an online presence in someone else's name to cause intentional harm. This is potentially a complex issue as some social media sites permit parody accounts or accounts that are intended to inflict harm on real individuals. It is not

necessarily illegal to impersonate someone per se, for example, in comedy, but online impersonation is a growing problem. Many social media sites have anti-impersonation policies, but this is not a sufficient guarantee or protection against the risks of online impersonation.

Are you an online bully or part of a cyber hate group?

- Some may think that cyberhate groups and online bullying are no big deal and can be done anonymously. However, online cyberhate and bullying are a big deal and are never going away with the countless fake profiles and anonymous groups on social media having long-term negative effects on people.
- Always remember, that what you share and post on the internet can live forever, even if you delete it. Always assume that anything you post or share online can be seen by anyone no matter what kind of privacy settings to have your account set to.
- Cyberhate and bullying can have serious long-term consequences making you feel worthless, alone, and scared. Some people have even committed suicide because they were harassed online relentlessly and didn't think it would ever stop. When this type of harassment happens it's normally done by someone you know using a fake account. Other times cyber hate groups target individuals because of race, color, political views, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, and even celebrity status. Some people will go as far as sharing explicit pictures or videos of others without their consent which can prompt serious legal actions.
- It's easy to get caught up in a mob mentality when so much of our digital interactions revolve around who can win an online argument or who can come up with the snarkiest put-down. Cyberbullying is no better or worse than its real-life equivalent, but it will continue to be propagated until people accept that there's a real person behind every profile picture or username. Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected online including the person you're bullying.

Resources and References:

- <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>: Free, 24/7 confidential counselling, information and referrals, and support service for young people. Text: 686868; Call: 1-800-668-6868
- <https://www.cybertip.ca/en/>: Canada's tip line for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children.

- <https://needhelpnow.ca/app/en/>: Helps teens stop the spread of sexual picture or videos and provides support to youth.
- <https://www.prevnet.ca/bullying/cyber-bullying/>: Provides online resources for youth and parents to prevent and or deal with cyberbullying.
- <https://getcybersafe.gc.ca/en/>: A national public awareness campaign created to inform Canadians about cyber security and the simple steps they can take to protect themselves online.
- <https://cssn.me/about/>: The Canadian Safe School Network is a national, not-for-profit, registered charitable organization with a mandate to reduce youth violence and make our schools and communities safer.
- <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/cyberbullying.html/>: Internet harassment tip sheet from Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
- <https://www.peelpolice.ca/en/safety-tips/child-and-teen-safety.aspx#Bullying-Resources:> Cyberbullying tip sheet from Peel Regional Police.