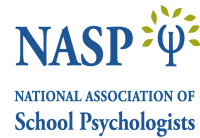




FROM YOUR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST



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Cyberbullying

A Handout for Students & Parents*

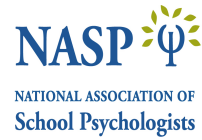
Cyberbullying occurs when students use various forms of technology, such as the Internet, cell phones, or other devices as a means of sending text or images that are intended to humiliate, harass, or cause psychological harm to another person. Although the majority of students do not engage in cyberbullying, most students have witnessed some form of it. Here are strategies to help prevent, reduce and resist cyberbullying:

1. **Maintain A Journal.** Keeping a detailed journal will enable teens to describe the psychological effects on them, clearly explain what has occurred, and provide sufficient information for adults to intervene.
2. **Collect Evidence.** Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying provides digital evidence. In order to avoid pitting one student's word against the cyberbully, save the hurtful text messages and emails. In addition, students can print pages from social media sites, download photos and videos, and take screenshots of offensive material (pressing "home" and "sleep" simultaneously on an iPhone will save a copy of the screen to the user's Camera Roll).
3. **Avoid Retaliation.** Although it may be tempting to fight back, retaliation will make it difficult for adults to determine who is at fault.
4. **Seek Out Others Who Care.** Find a trusted person to share one's feelings. This can be a friend, parent, coach, counselor or member of the clergy.
5. **Ignore Minor Offenses.** Bullies often enjoy the negative attention they receive from their actions. When possible, avoid giving them the satisfaction of knowing that their behaviors were upsetting.
6. **Employ Humor.** It is possible that the other person is trying to be funny and is not intending to be hurtful. If your students believe that this is the case, encourage them to try to diffuse the situation with humor.
7. **Ask The Person To Stop.** In cases in which the person is not intending to cause harm, speaking up may be a good approach. For those who are uncomfortable or scared, asking a good friend to speak on one's behalf might get the other person to cease bullying.
8. **Block The Bully.** The majority of websites, cell phones and social media programs, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Skype, provide "blocking" options to prevent cyberbullies from sending hurtful messages and contacting others.
9. **Report Offenses.** The good news is that most social media and gaming websites have reporting tools for abuse. Many times, hurtful content can be removed within 24 hours and repeat offenders may be temporarily or permanently banned from these sites.



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10. **Contact The Police.** This action should be used when a cyberbully threatens one's safety or the safety of others. This may include stalking, harassment, hate speech, and invasion of privacy. In these cases, please involve an adult.

*Adapted from *Words Wound*, Patchin, J & Hinduja, S. (2014) Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis, MN.

Here are some websites about bullying and cyberbullying:

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/at-school/>

<http://www.girlshealth.gov/bullying/school/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/connectedness.htm>

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt/>