

### Cyberbullying

Bullies have always been around, but technology now provides them with a new inroad. Cyberbullying is unique because it can happen 24/7 and there is always an audience. Oftentimes the bully can remain anonymous and be difficult to trace, all while never leaving his/her chair. Bullying can have a serious impact on the emotional state of our teens and may lead to anxiety, depression, withdrawal, and even thoughts of suicide. Staying involved in your teen's cyber world, just as in their real world, can help protect them.



#### What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is “the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person.” **One in three teens has experienced cyberbullying.** Examples of cyberbullying include mean texts, tweets, or emails; rumors posted to social networking sites; and embarrassing pictures or videos sent out through social media.

#### How to Respond to Cyberbullying?

- **Talk about it!** Encourage your teen to talk with a trusted adult.
- **Save all evidence!** Record dates and times. Save and print all screenshots, emails, comments, pictures, text messages, etc. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers.
- **Ignore them!** If the cyberbully doesn't get the response they want, they may move on.
- **Never retaliate!** Teens should never bully back because it will only continue the cycle of bullying behavior. Retaliation can be used against your teen and only further humiliate them. Don't respond or forward cyberbullying messages.
- **Block cyberbullies!** It will be harder for someone to bully your teen if he/she can't be reached.
- **Report cyberbullying!** Report the instances to your online service providers. Harassment is a violation of the “terms of service” for most providers.
- **Report inappropriate behavior!** Report the bullying to social media sites. Click [here](#) for information on how to make a report to various social media sites.
- **Notify police!** If someone threatens your teen or if someone you know is in danger, contact the police.



#### How is Cyberbullying Prevented?

- Change your teen's online and social media settings to “private” to help prevent their information from getting into the wrong hands.
- Encourage your teen to:
  - Only communicate with people they know. They shouldn't follow strangers or allow strangers to follow them.
  - Think before posting. Posts are permanently online, so they shouldn't post something they'll regret.
  - Never share their personal information online, including passwords.
  - Never meet face to face with someone they've met online.

For more information, click [here](#) to read an October 2014 report by the Cyberbullying Research Center.

SOURCES: [Kids Health](#), [Stop Bullying.gov](#), [Megan Meier Foundation](#), [Cyberbullying Research Center](#)