

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is any kind of bullying or harassment done using technology. It really sucks because it can be public, hard to take down, or affect you at home. There are a lot of things it could be, and it can affect people in a lot of different ways. Take 5 minutes to skill up on how to protect yourself.

Cyberbullying- what it is and why it sucks

Cyberbullying is bullying that is done through the use of technology., for example, using the Internet, a mobile phone or a camera to hurt or embarrass someone. It can be shared widely with a lot of people quickly, which is why it is so dangerous and hurtful.

Why is cyberbullying so bad?

- > A lot of people can view or take part in it
- > It is often done in secret with the bully hiding who they are by creating false profiles or names, or sending anonymous messages
- > It is difficult to remove as it is shared online so it can be recorded and saved in different places
- > It is hard for the person being bullied to escape if they use technology often
- > The content (photos, texts, videos) can be shared with a lot of people
- > This content may also be easy to find by searching on a web browser like Google.

What does cyberbullying look like?

- > Being sent mean or hurtful text messages from someone you know or even someone you don't know
- > Getting nasty, threatening or hurtful messages through social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, or through sites where people can ask / answer questions like Formspring or internet forums
- > People sending photos and videos of you to others to try and embarrass or hurt you
- > People spreading rumours about you via emails or social networking sites or text messages
- > People trying to stop you from communicating with others
- > People stealing your passwords or getting into your accounts and changing the information there

Signs this might be a problem...

- > Someone has posted embarrassing photos of you online
- > You get harassing calls, texts or emails
- > People use Twitter, Facebook or another social network to exclude or be mean to you
- > People set up fake profiles and pretend to be you

Take action...

- > Keep a record of what's been said
- > Find out more about your legal rights
- > Talk to someone you trust

- › People setting up fake profiles pretending to be you, or posting messages or status updates from your accounts

How can it affect people?

- › Feeling guilty like it is your fault
- › Feeling hopeless and stuck like you can't get out of the situation
- › Feeling alone, like there is no one to help you
- › Feeling like you don't fit in with the cool group
- › Feeling depressed and rejected by your friends and other groups of people
- › Feeling unsafe and afraid
- › Stressed out wondering what to do and why this is happening to you

How to protect yourself

- › Don't share your private information like passwords, name and address, phone numbers with people you don't know. Be cautious about sharing photos of yourself, your friends and your family
- › Don't respond to messages when you are angry or hurt - either to strangers or people you know. This will often encourage them to continue or increase their harassment of you
- › Log out and stop messaging if you feel you are being harassed
- › Remember you have the option to block, delete and report anyone who is harassing you online and on your mobile
- › Find out how to report bullying and harassment on each of the different social networks that you use
- › Keep a record of calls, messages, posts and emails that may be hurtful or harmful to you
- › Remember to set up the privacy options on your social networking sites like Facebook in a way you are comfortable with.

For legal stuff, check out the legal rights fact sheet on ReachOut.com.

The Australian Human Rights Commission (1300 656 419) has a complaint handling service that may investigate complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying.