



# Cyber Savvy Parents

ISSUE 5

FALL 2008

A SERIES TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THE ONLINE AND MOBILE WORLD.

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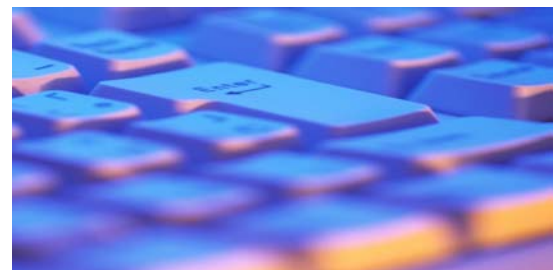
Cyber 5  
Bullying

## Cyberbullying

With a whole new world of communication comes a whole new way of bullying, Cyberbullying that is. Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by and individual or group, that is intended to harm others.

There are two different ways that cyberbullying is now available through electronic devices. One is through using a personal computer by sending harassing emails or instant messages, post obscene, insulting, and slanderous messages to online bulletin boards, or develop web sites to promote and disseminate non appropriate content. Second, harassing text messages can be sent to the victim by a cellular phone.

Electronic devices allow individuals to contact others (both for prosocial and antisocial purposes) at all times and in almost all places. Most adolescents connect to the internet from home which indicates that online bullying can hound a person even when they aren't around school. Cyberbullying has become easier for bullies because a physical location is no longer needed. Cyberbullying brings negative emotional responses including significant amounts of frustration, anger, and sadness. Parents must be continually monitoring their child's online activities. Parents must encourage keeping an open communication with them about safety and responsible internet use.



### How To Keep Safe In Chat!

- **Be in charge when you chat!** Never give out your personal information when chatting online such as your name, address, telephone number, Mobile number, private email address, or any pictures. Giving out this information to new friends might seem fine but it can make you vulnerable.
- **Be careful who you trust online** and remember that online friends are really strangers. No matter how long you have been talking to them,

**References:**

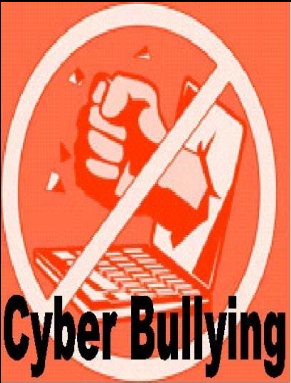
Me, Myspace, and I,

Rosen, Larry Ph.D.

[www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org)

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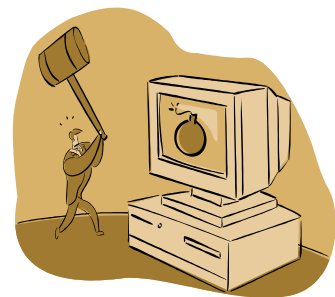
Don't send a message to someone else when you are angry. Wait until you have calmed down. Do your best to make sure that your messages are calmly and factually written. You will usually regret sending a "Flame" (angry) to someone else later on. Once you've sent a message, it is **VERY** hard to undo the damage that such "flames" can do.

## How to keep safe in chat! (continued)

- strangers. No matter how long you have been talking to them, people online may not be who they say they are.
- **Get away from an unpleasant situation in a chat room by logging out.** You can do this with just one click or change your screen name.
- **Think before you answer private messages.** It can be harder to end a conversation in a private chat than in a public one.
- **Check that you know how to report something** you feel is uncomfortable about to the chat room provider or moderator.
- **Use a nickname.** Never use your real name but make sure that the nickname you use isn't going to attract the wrong type of attention.
- **Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous.** Be sure to ask and talk to your parents before any type of communication is made.
- **Tell your parent or caregiver** if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.
- **Look out for your friends** and do something if you think that they are at risk.
- **Learn how to keep/save a copy of the conversation in chat.** This may be useful if you want to report something.
- **Learn how to block/ignore people.**
- **Check your profile and make sure it doesn't include any personal information.**

## A Child May Be A Victim Of A Cyberbully If He or She..

- \* Unexpectedly stops using the computer.
- \* Appears nervous or jumpy when instant message or email appears.
- \* Appears uneasy about going to school or outside in general.
- \* Appears to be angry, depressed, or frustrated after using the computer.
- \* Avoids discussions about what they are doing on the computer.
- \* Becomes abnormally withdrawn from usual friends and family members.



**Use Netiquette:**

**Be polite to others online just as you would off-line. If someone treats you rudely or meanly, don't respond. Online bullies are just like off-line ones—they want you to answer (don't give them the satisfaction)**



**Don't believe everything you read or see. Just because someone tells you that they are 15 doesn't mean they are telling the truth. Even adults can't tell when a male pretends to be a female or a 50 year old pretends to be a 15 year old.**

## A Child May Be Cyberbullying Others If He Or She...

- \* Quickly switches screens or closes programs when you walk by.
- \* Uses the computer at all hours of the night.
- \* Gets unusually upset if he or she cannot use the computer.
- \* Laughing excessively while using the computer.
- \* Avoids discussions about what they are doing on the computer.
- \* Is using multiple online accounts, or

an account that is not their own.



## What To Know About Public Chat Rooms

Public chat rooms are created, maintained, listed and monitored by the COS and other public domain systems such as Internet Relay Chat. A number of customers can be in the public chat rooms at any given time, which are monitored for illegal activity

and even inappropriate language by systems operators (SYSOP). Some public chat rooms are monitored more frequently than others, depending on the COS and the type of chat room. Violators can be reported to the administrators of the

system (at America Online they are referred to as terms of service [TOS]) which can revoke user privileges. The public chat rooms usually cover a broad range of topics such as entertainment, sports, game room, children only, etc.

## What Can Be Done About Cyberbullying

Hopefully this harmful phenomenon can be ended someday by actively addressing the potentially negative uses of technology. Parents need to be regularly monitoring their child's online activities. Parents need to also express the open communication with internet safety and responsible internet use

with their child. Schools can also help with spreading the word of the potentially harmful issues and can consider incorporating cyber safety curriculum to more effectively promote this issue. Hands-on and role-playing activities seem to be the best way to introduce the topic to the youth. School liaison

officers and law enforcement officials must investigate all instances of harassment including electronic bullying.

It is good to familiarize yourself with the different things that are available through technology today to better understand how they work and how we can prevent cyberbullying from happening.

## Familiarize Yourself With the Following Tools To Better Respond To The Problem...

- \* Practice “netiquette” and culturally acceptable rules of participation in online interaction
- \* Discover the psychological, emotional, and behavioral reasons why cyberbullying occurs.
- \* Learn pertinent terms, abbreviations, and online lingo.
- \* Teach de-escalation and conflict resolution strategies.
- \* Learn online communication skills to cope with textual harassment and mistreatment
- \* Learn techniques for digital evidence preservation.



## Help Stop Cyberbullying!

Victimization on the Internet through cyberbullying is increasingly becoming more frequent.

This negative experience is not only undermining the youth’s freedom to use and explore valuable online resources, but also can result in severe functional, psychological and emotional ramifications.

The Internet if used properly, can help the youth benefit from a wealth of information now available on-line so just make sure to keep a good communication with your child to help determine if they are being safe.

They will know where you stand on these issues, and will hopefully feel more comfortable coming to you with concerns. The earlier you initiate these conversations the better off you and your kids will be.

As soon as they start using the computer, be sure to talk with them about the potential risks and rewards of communication in cyberspace.

## Questions To Help Promote Dialogue With Your Children

What is it about the Internet that you like?

Have you ever had any problems with people on the Internet? Has anyone ever bothered or threatened you or treated you badly while online? I’m asking because I know that many people have been harassed and bullied on the Internet and I want you to be able to talk to me about things like that if they happen to you.

Are other kids picking on you online? If so, how?

Is it via email, or chat, or instant message or on MySpace or similar sites?

Does it just happen once in a while, or is it a constant problem?

How do you typically respond?

When someone picks on you or makes fun of you online do you usually know who the person is in real life?

Do you know in real life everyone who you’ve accepted as a “friend” on your MySpace (or equivalent) page? Are some of your “friends” people you only know online? How do you know you can trust them viewing the contents of your page?

How do you deal with it?

How can I help you make it stop, without embarrassing you?

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