

CYBER BULLYING

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages.

It can also involve the use of mobile phones to transmit hurtful messages and images. According to the Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study, one in ten young people in Australia have experienced some kind of cyberbullying.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF CYBERBULLYING

It's important to remember that it's not your fault. It is very normal to feel confused about the situation and wonder why this is happening or even question if you have done something to cause it. Bullies simply target people they think they can intimidate. Whenever you feel this way, remind yourself that you deserve to be treated with respect and live free of intimidation and fear. Below are some practical steps you can take to address the situation:

1. Talk to someone you can trust, such as an adult. You don't have to suffer in silence.
2. Ignore the messages and don't reply to the communication. If the bully doesn't get a response, they might get bored and leave you alone.
3. Block the cyberbully. If you can block the person on your phone or computer this will prevent you from seeing the hurtful messages and texts.
4. Keep the evidence: Keeping copies of the emails, online conversations, images and posts can be helpful in tracking down the bully. Keep these in a separate file so you don't have to look at them every time you use your computer or phone.

5. Report the problem to:

Your school or university; they should have policies in place about cyberbullying.

Your internet or phone service provider.

A relevant website administrator – Facebook and Instagram have links where you can report abuse.

The police if the bullying is a threat to your safety.

6. Change your contact details.

7. Keep your username and passwords secret: Don't share this information, even with your best friend. Also, change your passwords regularly and don't use terms that are familiar to your peers such as the name of your pet, a fast food restaurant or a music artist.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR FRIEND IS A VICTIM OF CYBERBULLYING

Support your friend and encourage them to talk to an adult. Cyberbullying can turn nasty and get out of control very quickly. So it's important to take practical steps and address the issue as soon as possible.

Suggest some of the points outlined above. Remind your friend that they deserve to be treated with respect and dignity and that cyberbullying is a serious issue that can lead to police involvement. Therefore, they have the right to take action.

If you have the capacity to support your friend in this process, offer your assistance. You might also want to refer them to a few websites (outlined below) so your friend can learn more about cyberbullying and get some useful information and strategies. Just hanging out with your friend and being available will be a tremendous help as they could possibly be feeling stressed and isolated.

NEED HELP?

SALVOS COUNSELLING

salvos.org.au/more/get-help/cyber-bullying

All information on this page is provided by professional counsellors, but is not a substitute for face-to-face professional help. If you or someone you know is struggling with this issue, please seek help as soon as possible.