

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is a serious and growing issue that affects the lives of young people across the country.

The Cyberbullying Research Centre defines cyberbullying as the act of repeatedly harassing, mistreating, or making fun of another person online or while using cell phones or other electronic device. Some of the important elements of cyberbullying include:

- That it is willful: The behavior is deliberate, not accidental.
- That it is repeated: The bullying reflects a pattern of behavior, not just one isolated incident.
- That harm was done: The target perceives that harm was inflicted..

GetCyberSafe provides some specific examples of what cyberbullying is and how it is perpetrated:

- Sending mean and sometimes threatening emails or text messages.
- Spreading gossip, secrets or rumours about another person that will damage that person's reputation.
- Breaking into an email account and sending hurtful materials to others under an assumed identity.
- Creating blogs or websites that have stories, cartoons, pictures or jokes ridiculing others.
- Creating polling websites where visitors are asked to rate others' traits or features in a negative way
- Taking an embarrassing or sexually explicit photo of someone and emailing that photo to others, which is also called sexting.
- Tricking a person into revealing personal information about themselves and then forwarding that information to others, often referred to as phishing.
- Using someone else's password in order to change their profile to reflect sexual, racist and other content that may be hurtful or offensive.
- Posting false or hurtful messages on social media, online bulletin boards or in chat rooms.

Some Facts about Cyberbullying

- Nearly 1 in 10 Canadian youth say they have been victims of online bullying on social networking sites.
- More than 35 per cent of Canadian teens with a profile on a social networking site have seen mean or inappropriate comments about someone they know, and 14 per cent say they have seen mean or inappropriate comments about themselves.

- 18 per cent of Canadian parents say they have a child who has experienced cyberbullying. While 31 per cent say they know a child in their community who has experienced cyberbullying.
- 90 per cent of Canadians would support a law that would make it illegal to use any electronic means to coerce, intimidate, harass or cause other substantial emotional *distress*.

Impact of Cyberbullying

The impact of cyberbullying is terrible and long-lasting. Studies have found that young people who had been cyberbullied even once had:

- higher levels of health complaints
- daily smoking
- intense alcohol consumption
- increased mental health problems, like
 - depression
 - drug and prescription drug misuse
 - suicide attempts

In fact, cyberbullying victims were almost twice as likely to attempted suicide compared to youth who had not experienced cyberbullying, and in some tragic cases, like the death of Rehtaeh Parsons, young people end their lives as a result of painful, relentless cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is not only devastating to the target, but in many cases it is also illegal.

Under the criminal code of Canada it is an offence to share intimate images, which is an image that depicts a person engaged in explicit sexual activity or that depicts a sexual organ, anal region or breast, or any image where the person pictured had a reasonable expectation of privacy when the image was recorded.

Anyone convicted of distributing an intimate image without consent could face serious legal consequences, including:

- Up to five years of imprisonment
- Having computer, cell phone or other device used to share the image seized
- Being ordered to reimburse the victim for costs incurred in removing the intimate image from the Internet or elsewhere.

Remember! The internet has no delete button!

For Further Links on Cyberbullying

Canadian Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/violence--bullying-and-abuse-prevention/educators/bullying-andharassment-prevention/cyberbullying>

Government of Canada GetCyberSafe:

www.getcybersafe.gc.ca/cnt/cbrblng/prnts/cbrblng-en.aspx

PREVNet Canada's authority on bullying:

<http://www.prevnet.ca/bullying/cyber-bullying>

Cyberbullying Research and Resources

2015 cyberbullying data - Cyberbullying Research Center Retrieved 2/13/2016, 2016, from cyberbullying.org/2015-data/

Fridh, M., Lindström, M., & Rosvall, M. (2015). Subjective health complaints in adolescent victims of cyber harassment: Moderation through support from parents/friends – a Swedish population-based study. *BMC Public Health*, 15(1), 1-11.

Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. (2010). Bullying, cyberbullying, and suicide. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 14(3), 206-221.