

Cyber Bullying, the Menace

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Ileana E. Castro, LPC-S

Technology has developed in the past decades with such fast pace that has given the opportunity for a menace to grow, cyber bullying. It is difficult to escape from it because the internet allows anonymity and access to a larger community. Hence, the victims can be tormented anytime and from anywhere due to the easily access to digital devices.



Definition: Bullying is defined as an aggressive behavior that is deliberated and involves imbalance of power and strength. It can be physical, verbal, or relational. Cyber bullying is defined as electronically mediated behaviors; making fun of, telling lies, spreading rumors, threats, and sharing private information or pictures without permission to do so.

How serious is it? According to some studies, one out of five children have been cyber bullied, and continue growing especially in preteens.

How: Historically bullying happens where supervision is limited or absent.

To Whom : Anyone can be the victim

By Whom: Anyone, but usually peers of victims

What is the motivation to bully? Power

Can we prevent it? Yes, we can. Preventing and stopping bullying involves a commitment to creating a safe environment where children can thrive, socially and academically, without being afraid.

Educate your children and yourself about cyber bullying and teach your children not to respond or forward threatening emails. Participate as a friend of your child on Facebook or MySpace and set up proper filters on your child's computer. Make the family computer the only computer for children, and have it in a public place in the home where it is visible and can be monitored. If your child has a cell phone think carefully before allowing them to have a camera option. Monitor their text messages. As a parent, you can insist that phones are stored in a public area, such as the kitchen, by a certain time at night to eliminate nighttime bullying and inappropriate messaging. Parents should report bullying to the school, and follow up with a letter that is copied to the school superintendent if their initial inquiry receives no response. Parents should report all threatening messages to the police and should document any text messages, emails or posts on websites.

Tips to Identify and Handle Cyber bullying.

- Observe your child for signs of depression or anxiety; refusal to go to school, decreased appetite, nightmares, or crying.
- Supervise and set boundaries with technology.
- Teach your children to report cyber bullying.
- Pursue the report and ask for perpetrator to face consequences.

If depression of anxiety persist, consult a mental health professional. They can help patients to develop resilience and confidence to thrive socially and academically.

**Information was modified from different sources.*

Food for thought:

"I want to be an example that you can be funny and be kind, and make people laugh without hurting somebody else's feelings."

Ellen DeGeneres

"Circumstances are beyond human control, but our conduct is in our own power."

Benjamin Disraeli



Reading Suggestions:

