What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is defined in legal glossaries as:
*Actions that use information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group.
*Use of communication technologies for the intention of harming another person.
*Use of internet service and mobile technologies such as web pages and discussion groups as well as instant messaging or SMS text messaging with the intention of harming another person.

What Can I Do to Prevent Cyberbullying?

*Never open messages from someone you don’t know.
*If someone attempts to contact you, do your research before allowing them access to your information – check for mutual friends or groups.
*Always remember to log out of your accounts when using a public computer and make sure that the computer is not remembering your login information!
*Google yourself to make sure you’re comfortable with the pictures and information available about you.

(US Cyberbullying Research Center)
What Can I Do if I’m Being Cyberbullied?

**RECOGNIZE** that you don’t deserve to be treated that way...even if it’s your close friends!

**REPORT** the content to the site and then block the user. Also, tell a trusted adult about what’s going on.

**RECORD** when/where the bullying is happening. Save the messages or photos for your record.

**RESIST** the urge to reply! Revenge is never the best answer.

**REFUSE** to participate in another person’s cyberbullying attempts by not forwarding or replying to messages or pictures.

(from the National Crime Prevention Council)

What Are Some Examples of Cyberbullying?

- Spreading rumors or gossip about someone online
- Sending hurtful messages or posting hurtful comments on their Wall/Feed
- Pretending to be another person
- Sending intimidating messages meant to start fights
- Posting embarrassing or degrading photos of someone

In one study, about 17% of teens reported that they had cyberbullied someone in the previous 6 months.

Popular websites for cyberbullying include Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube.

Girls are significantly more likely to be cyberbullied than boys.

In 2011, nearly HALF of all American teens reported being cyberbullied...and that number is increasing!

Cyberbullying occurs most frequently over instant messaging services/text messaging.

All 50 states have laws regarding forms of cyber harassment, with some states making it a misdemeanor offense.

Some states even have a “Parental Liability” clause that holds the parent of the bully liable for damages.

BUT IT’S NO BIG DEAL! IT WAS JUST A JOKE!!

Cyberbullying is no laughing matter. No matter how harmless you think the picture or comment is, the consequences can be great, even deadly. Victims of cyberbullying experience depression, loss of self esteem, and even suicidal thoughts. Consequences for the bully can include fines, disciplinary actions in school and even criminal charges. The bully will be caught and punished—regardless if everyone is doing it.

(from the Cyberbullying Research Center)

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