

# **Cyber Bullying**

## **Cyber bullying is a Crime**

If you're like most teenagers, you spend a lot of time on a cell phone or instant messenger chatting with friends and uploading photos, videos and music to websites. You may have online friends whom you've never met in person, with whom you play games and exchange messages. Teens' lives exist in a variety of places such as school hallways, part-time jobs and friend's houses. Now many teens also have lives on the Internet and bullying has followed teens online.

Online bullying, called cyber bullying, happens when teens use the Internet, cell phones, or other device to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person. Cyber bullying is a problem that affects almost half of all American teens. Whether you've been a victim of cyberbullying, know someone who has been cyber bullied, or have even cyber bullied yourself, there are steps you and your friends can take to stop cyber bullying and stay cyber-safe.

## **How Are Teens Cyber bullied?**

Being a victim of cyberbullying can be a common and painful experience. Some youth who cyberbully:

- Pretend they are other people online to trick others
- Spread lies and rumors about victims
- Trick people into revealing personal information
- Send or forward mean text messages
- Post pictures of victims without their consent When teens were asked why they think others cyber bully, 81 percent said that cyber bullies think it's funny. Other teens believe that youth who cyberbully:
  - Don't think it's a big deal
  - Don't think about the consequences
  - Are encouraged by friends
  - Think everybody cyber bullies
- Think they won't get caught How Do Victims React? Contrary to what cyber bullies may believe, cyber bullying is a big deal, and can cause a variety of reactions in teens. Some teens have reacted in positive ways to try to prevent cyber bullying by:

- Blocking communication with the cyber bully
- Deleting messages without reading them
- Talking to a friend about the bullying
- Reporting the problem to an Internet service provider or website moderator Many youth experience a variety of emotions when they are cyber bullied. Youth who are cyber bullied report feeling angry, hurt, embarrassed, or scared. These emotions can cause victims to react in ways such as:
  - Seeking revenge on the bully
  - Avoiding friends and activities
  - Cyber bullying back Some teens feel threatened because they may not know who is cyber bullying them. Although cyber bullies may think they are anonymous, they can be found. If you are cyber bullied or harassed and need help, save all communication with the cyber bully and talk to a parent, teacher, law enforcement officer, or other adult you trust.

### **How Can I Prevent Cyber bullying?**

Remember that the Internet is accessed by millions of people all over the world, not just your friends and family. While many Internet users are friendly, some may want to hurt you. Below are some ways to stay cyber-safe:

- Never post or share your personal information online (this includes your full name, address, telephone number, school name, parents' names, credit card number, or Social Security number) or your friends' personal information.
- Never share your Internet passwords with anyone, except your parents.
- Never meet anyone face-to-face whom you only know online.
- Talk to your parents about what you do online.

***Students may face disciplinary action for cyber bullying.***