

Empowerment ***INITIATIVE***

Supporting Personal, Social & Cultural Acceptance

Strategies for Preventing and Intervening in Cyberbullying

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Definition of Cyberbullying:

- Cyberbullying is “an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against victims who cannot easily defend themselves.”

Smith and Slonje (2010)

Possible Methods for Cyberbullying:

- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Ask.fm, etc.)
- Mobile Applications (i.e., “Apps”, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.)
- Text & Picture Messaging
- Email
- Chat Rooms
- Instant Messaging
- Online Gaming

Strategies for Youth (From www.cyberbullying.us):

- Protect your password
- Keep pictures and videos “PG”
- Don’t open messages from someone you don’t know
- Log out of accounts when you’re done
- Setup privacy controls—don’t let everyone have access to your accounts
- NEVER retaliate
- If repeated, tell them to stop
- Block people who are being mean from contacting you
- Never pass on cyberbullying messages or posts
- Save the evidence and take screen shots to share with adults and law enforcement

- **THINK before you press send**
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Strategies for Parents (From Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012, *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age*):

- **Know what your children are doing online (e.g., social media, apps)**
 - **Learn about these sites: How safe are they?**
 - **Monitor what your children are saying and use instances of negative online behavior as teachable moments**
 - **Address any incidents of cyberbullying perpetration or victimization**
 - **Have open lines of communication with your children so they feel comfortable sharing what's going on in their online world**
 - **Encourage youth to protect their passwords and never share with friends**
 - **Save evidence of any incident**
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Strategies for School Staff: Prevention (From Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012, *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age*)

- **Assess cyberbullying in your school by conducting annual, anonymous surveys**
 - **CDC Compendium of Bullying Assessment Tool:**
http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/measuring_bullying.html
 - **Define cyberbullying for staff and students**
 - **Develop and incorporate clear policies for cyberbullying into existing anti-bullying policies**
 - **Like any form of bullying, encourage students to report instances of cyberbullying to staff**
 - **Spend time in class on cyberbullying**
 - **Discussions with students of online safety**
 - **Activities on cyberbullying**
 - **Incorporate digital citizenship into computer classes**
 - **Share information with parents**
 - **Education on cyberbullying**
 - **Discuss any incidents of cyberbullying or cybervictimization involving their children**
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Strategies for School Staff: Intervention (From Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012, *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age*)

- **School discipline**
 - **Because of the online nature of the behavior, it is difficult to determine if discipline is possible, given freedom of speech rights. Consult with district officials and legal counsel for what is permissible under the law**
- **Notify parents when instances of cyberbullying or cybervictimization occur**
- **Share information on how to remove negative posts from their social media sites.**

- Facebook recently created a page for youth on how to report and respond to cyberbullying behaviors (See link for more details:
https://www.facebook.com/safety/bullying/?referrer=safety_center).
 - Most social media sites have blocking functions
 - Monitor students who have reported cyberbullying for changes in mood or behavior. Possible mental health services may be needed
 - Continue to share information on cyberbullying and its effects with students who cyberbully/are cyberbullied
 - Like with traditional bullying, do not bring the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) together to talk. Discuss what happened with the individuals and their parent(s) separately
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Selected Online Resources

<http://www.cyberbullying.us>

<http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/>

<http://empowerment.unl.edu>

<http://www.sticksandstones.com>

<http://www.stopbullying.gov>
