SCHOOL SAFETY AND CRISIS

CYBERBULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Cyberbullying is a serious form of bullying that can negatively affect children and adolescents. Recent estimates suggest that, in the U.S., about 1 in 4 students (29.3%) from ages 9 to 18 have been victims of cyberbullying at some point in their life. Cyberbullying victimization can lead to harmful mental health outcomes ranging from stress to suicidal ideation. Adults can help by taking preventive action against cyberbullying and intervening when it occurs.

WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING

- Cyberbullying is willful and repetitive harm through the use of technology (text messages, social media, and other online means).
- Cyberbullying can be anonymous, spread to large groups of people, and occur 24/7.

RISK FACTORS FOR CYBERBULLYING INVOLVEMENT

- Students involved in one form of bullying (e.g., traditional bullying) are more at risk for being involved in other forms (e.g., cyberbullying).
- Students involved in cyberbullying face a higher likelihood of substance use, depression, anxiety, loneliness, and suicidal ideation, as well as decreased self-esteem and poor academic performance.
- Warning signs of cyberbullying may include changes in emotion after online use, attempts to hide online activities from adults, or a tendency to be insensitive or callous toward peers.

PARENTS CAN HELP PREVENT CYBERBULLYING BY:

- Talking with children early and often about safe, respectful, and responsible online behavior
- Setting clear expectations related to technology use
- Modeling safe and responsible online behavior
- Monitoring technology and social media use

CAREGIVERS WHO DISCOVER A CHILD IS INVOLVED IN CYBERBULLYING SHOULD:

- Provide nonjudgmental support.
- Document incidents of cyberbullying (e.g., save screenshots and text messages).
- Report cyberbullying incidents to the child's school.
- Contact law enforcement in cases of illegal activity or physical threats.

SCHOOLS CAN HELP PREVENT CYBERBULLYING BY:

- Implementing school-based cyberbullying prevention programs
- Using social–emotional learning programming to promote healthy school climate
- Understanding that zero-tolerance policies are not effective responses
- Using restorative rather than punitive practices
- Teaching students digital citizenship skills (i.e., skills for engaging in safe and responsible online behavior)
- Monitoring activity on school-issued technology

FAMILY–SCHOOL COLLABORATION

- Collaboration plays a key role in prevention and intervention.
- Schools can provide digital literacy education for families.
- Parents should aim to keep an open line of communication with their children's teachers regarding bullying issues.

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