

Responding to Cyberbullying

Top Ten Tips for Teens

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Here are a few ideas for what to do when you are being cyberbullied:

1. TALK ABOUT IT. Tell someone if you're the target of cyberbullying. Whether it's your parents, a teacher, or another trusted adult, or even your best friend, never keep to yourself the fact that you're being bullied. We know it's not fun and it's hard to talk about it, but you should give others a chance to come through for you. It could help make the problem go away, which is the ultimate goal.



2. IGNORE THEM. If there is an isolated incident where you are being bullied, don't respond to the instigator. Those who cyberbully but who do not get a response from their target may just move on. They are looking for a response—don't give it to them!

3. NEVER RETALIATE. Be the bigger person and never retaliate against someone who is mean to you. Retaliation only further perpetuates the cycle of violence, and does nothing to solve the problem. Plus, if you retaliate you could get into trouble for what you are doing or saying to them.

4. TELL THEM TO STOP. For repeated bullying, if ignoring the bully doesn't work, tell them to stop. Let them know that what they are doing is hurtful and, more importantly, not cool and juvenile. Be respectful in approaching them and try not to come off in an aggressive manner.

5. LAUGH. If someone says something funny about you, try to laugh it off. Maybe they really are just trying to be funny and not hurtful. Sometimes we say funny things or make fun of a friend as a way of fitting in. Of course, this can be taken too far. If it is not funny at all, and you really are hurt by what was said, try one of the other responses listed here.



6. SAVE THE EVIDENCE. Record all instances of cyberbullying. Print out social media posts and emails, save texts, and capture screen shots when cyberbullying occurs. You can even make screen recordings of Snapchat, Facebook, or Instagram Stories. Then turn these over to an adult who you believe can help.

7. BLOCK ACCESS TO THOSE WHO CYBERBULLY. Block those who cyberbully from even contacting you. Most apps and gaming platforms allow you to block certain users from messaging you or even being able to "see" you online. Most phones have the capability to block preset phone numbers, and you can also contact your cell phone service provider (for example, AT&T or Verizon) to help. If certain people simply cannot reach you, it will be more difficult for them to harass you.

8. REPORT IT TO THE CONTENT PROVIDER. If you don't know who is cyberbullying you, contact the provider of the site or platform where the cyberbullying is occurring and make a report. The most popular sites and apps (like Instagram, YouTube, Google, PlayStation Network, Xbox Live) make it pretty easy to report cyberbullying. Harassment is a violation of the Terms of Service of all reputable online spaces.

9. CALL THE POLICE. If you feel your safety (or the safety of someone else) is in danger, call the police immediately. Any time there is a threat, tell an adult. They can help you make sure that you stay safe.



10. NEVER PASS ALONG MESSAGES FROM THOSE WHO CYBERBULLY. If you receive hurtful or embarrassing messages or photos of someone else, delete it and don't forward it to others. Don't be part of the problem, be part of the solution.

