

Mental Health Matters

January 2024



Need Mental Health Support?

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Effects of Bullying on Mental Health

Bullying may seriously affect the mental health and well being of children and youth. Parents, teachers, coaches, and other youth-serving adults are in positions where they are able to notice when there are signs of mental distress or bullying behavior.

Research suggests that children and youth who are bullied over time are more likely than those not bullied to experience depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. They also are more likely to be lonely and want to avoid school. There are many ways that parents and youth-serving adults can help prevent or address bullying.

The same study showed that children and youth who bully others over time are at higher risk for more intense anti-social behaviors like problems at school, substance use, and aggressive behavior. Parents should pay attention to warning signs that their child may be engaging in bullying behavior, like getting into physical or verbal fights or blaming others for their problems.

Bystanders to bullying may also experience mental health effects. The same study showed that students who witness bullying at school experienced increased anxiety and depression regardless of whether they supported the bully or the person being bullied. Bystanders may experience stress related to fears of retaliation or because they wanted to intervene but didn't.

When a parent, trusted adult, or teacher notices that a child or youth seems withdrawn, depressed, anxious, avoids activities that they used to enjoy, or is exhibiting bullying behavior, it's important to talk about what may be the cause. Parents may find it helpful to talk with a professional social worker, counselor, physician, or psychologist to help address the effects of bullying and to identify protective strategies. They can also work with schools and community organizations to put bullying prevention strategies in place or to address specific bullying incidents or behaviors. Addressing bullying and related mental health concerns early can help prevent harmful negative experiences and keep children and youth moving forward in a positive trajectory at school, with friends, and in their personal development.

[StopBullying.gov's Training Center](#) includes guides for [mental health professionals](#), [parents and caregivers](#), and [recreation leaders](#). To learn more about the effects of bullying, see our resources on [Bullying as an Adverse Childhood Experience \(ACE\)](#) and on the [Consequences of Bullying](#).

Full article found at <https://www.stopbullying.gov/blog/2019/10/25/effects-bullying-mental-health>





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In case of an Emergency:

- **911 For Immediate Support**
- **Ventura County Crisis Team (866) 998-2243 –(24 hours)**

**MENTAL
HEALTH
MATTERS**
#ENDTHESTIGMA

Cyberbullying: What is it and how can you stop it?

Cyberbullying can happen anywhere with an internet connection. While traditional, in-person bullying is still more common, data from the Cyberbullying Research Center suggest about 1 in every 4 teens has experienced cyberbullying, and about 1 in 6 has been a perpetrator. About 1 in 5 tweens, or kids ages 9 to 12, has been involved in cyberbullying (PDF, 5.57MB).

As technology advances, so do opportunities to connect with people—but unfettered access to others isn't always a good thing, especially for youth. Research has long linked more screen time with lower psychological well-being, including higher rates of anxiety and depression. The risk of harm is higher when kids and teens are victimized by cyberbullying.

Here's what you need to know about cyberbullying, and psychology's role in stopping it.

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying occurs when someone uses technology to demean, inflict harm, or cause pain to another person. It is "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices." Perpetrators bully victims in any online setting, including social media, video or computer games, discussion boards, or text messaging on mobile devices.

Virtual bullying can affect anyone, regardless of age. However, the term "cyberbullying" usually refers to online bullying among children and teenagers. It may involve name calling, threats, sharing private or embarrassing photos, or excluding others.

One bully can harass another person online or several bullies can gang up on an individual. While a stranger can incite cyberbullying, it more frequently occurs among kids or teens who know each other from school or other social settings. Research suggests bullying often happens both at school and online.

Online harassment between adults can involve different terms, depending on the relationship and context. For example, dating violence, sexual harassment, workplace harassment, and scamming—more common among adults—can all happen on the internet.

How can cyberbullying impact the mental health of myself or my child?

Any form of bullying can negatively affect the victim's well-being, both at the time the bullying occurs and in the future. Psychological research suggests being victimized by a cyberbully increases stress and may result in anxiety and depression symptoms. Some studies find anxiety and depression increase the likelihood adolescents will become victims to cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying can also cause educational harm, affecting a student's attendance or academic performance, especially when bullying occurs both online and in school or when a student has to face their online bully in the classroom. Kids and teens may rely on negative coping mechanisms, such as substance use, to deal with the stress of cyberbullying. In extreme cases, kids and teens may struggle with self-harm or suicidal ideation.

Full article found at <https://www.apa.org/topics/bullying/cyberbullying-online-social-media>