Cyber-bullying Awareness and Response

Cyberbullying - is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, cell phone, or other interactive digital technologies. It is a deliberate, repeated, and hostile form of communication that can come as text or pictures through instant messages, emails, social networking sites, voting/polling booths, chatrooms, and posts on a website.

Electronic communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, or humiliate the recipient.

The National Crime Prevention Council reported in 2011 that cyber-bullying is a problem that affects almost half of all American teens, and kids report being mean to each other online beginning as young as 2nd grade.

Just like the real world, there are people online that are bullies. But unlike the real world, these bullies are hiding behind their computer, cell phone, iPod touch, or other electronic device. And sometimes, you don't even know who is bullying you.

Cyberbullies may pretend they are another person online to deceive others; they spread lies and rumors about victims, and they trick people into revealing personal information. A Cyberbully may send or forward mean text messages or post pictures of victims without their consent.

Cyberbullying is not acceptable under any circumstances. Any type of bullying is a serious matter. Cyberbullying is actually much easier to document and track than other forms of bullying and therefore is often more likely to lead to consequences.

How you should respond to cyberbullying:

1. Recognize the attack for what it is! Don't respond with hate or fear, it's better to take the high road and not fan the flames of aggression. Things posted online can't be taken back, so don't tarnish your own reputation or get dragged into somebody else's mud pit.
2. Take measures to block the cyberbully, and protect yourself and others from future attacks.
3. Tell a trusted adult what is going on, such as a parent or teacher. Talking about the situation can help calm your emotions, and bring added understanding to the situation. You don't have to face this alone.
4. Keep personal information private. One good way to make sure your information is private is to Google yourself and look what comes up under your name.
5. Don't be an accomplice. Remember, sometimes your friends can pull you into a bad situation and you can become part of the problem by allowing them to bully someone else.
6. Words can hurt. Think twice before forwarding something that could hurt someone else.
7. Support those being bullied. Show that you take a stand against all forms of bullying.
8. Most people realize that bullying is wrong. Sometimes you can stop bullying if you ignore or block the person.
9. You also can report abuse to the website where it's taking place. If it continues, save the evidence and ask for help from an adult you trust.
10. Practice the "Golden Rule" and treat others with digital respect.

Some of the harmful effects of cyberbullying may include the following.

- Lower self-esteem, loneliness, disillusionment, distrust of people, and even self-harm.
- A victim's emotional responses may include: retaliation, fear, frustration, anger, and depression.

Risks and consequences for the cyberbully

- Internet Communications can permanently haunt you online.
- Can lead to punishment from school authorities or the police.

Cyberbullying. (2013, January 5). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 00:38, January 29, 2013, from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cyberbullying&oldid=531519269