



Tips to Help Stop Cyberbullying from ConnectSafely.org

Don't respond. If someone bullies you, remember that your reaction is usually exactly what the bully wants. It gives him or her power over you. Who wants to empower a bully?

Don't retaliate. Getting back at the bully turns you into one and reinforces the bully's behavior. Help avoid a whole cycle of aggression.

Save the evidence. The only good news about digital bullying is that the harassing messages can usually be captured, saved, and shown to someone who can help. Save evidence even if it's minor stuff - in case things escalate.

Block the bully. If the harassment's coming in the form of instant messages, texts, or profile comments, do yourself a favor: Use preferences or privacy tools to block the person. If it's in chat, leave the "room." This may not end the problem, but you don't need harassment in your face all the time, and no reaction sometimes makes aggressors bored so they'll stop.

Reach out for help. You deserve backup. Of course you know there are different kinds of help, from talking with a friend to seeing if there's a trusted adult who can help. It's usually good to involve a parent but - if you can't - a school counselor can sometimes be helpful. If you're really nervous about saying something, see if there's a way to report the incident anonymously at school. Sometimes this can result in bullies getting the help they need to change their behavior.

Use reporting tools. If the bullying took place via a social network, use that service's reporting or "abuse" tools. The social network may also have "social abuse-reporting" tools, which allow you to forward hurtful content to a trusted friend or directly ask someone to take offensive content down. If the abuse threatens physical harm, you may have to call the police, but think about involving a parent if you do.

Be civil. You're doing yourself a favor. Even if you don't like a person, it's a good idea to be decent and not sink to his or her level. Research shows that gossiping about and "trash talking" others increase your risk of being bullied.

Don't be a bully. You know the old saying about walking a mile in someone's shoes; even a few seconds of thinking about how another person might feel can put a big damper on aggression. That's needed in this world.

Be a friend, not a bystander. Forwarding mean messages or just standing by and doing nothing empowers bullies and hurts victims even more. If you can, tell bullies to stop, or let them know bullying is not cool - it's cruel abuse of fellow human beings. If you can't stop the bully, at least try to help the victim and report the behavior.