

51 Critical Cyberbullying Statistics in 2020

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Bullying has been a part of life since people first started living in sedentary communities.

For some reason, people have always found it comforting to put other people down, even if the comments they make are mean and hurtful.

This can help explain why, in 2020, 73 percent of students (<https://cyberbullying.org/new-national-bullying-cyberbullying-data>) feel they have been bullied in their lifetime, and why 44 percent say it has happened in the last 30 days.

However, the emergence of and universal adoption of social media has opened the door for a new type of bullying: cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets, which includes, but is not limited to, SMS and text messages, social media, forums, online gaming and any other app that allows people to view, participate and share content.

[StopBullying.gov (<https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/index.html>) and the National Crime Prevention Center (<https://www.ncpc.org/resources/cyberbullying/what-is-cyberbullying/>)]

A Growing Problem in 2020

Cyberbullying is a real problem in today's society. Consider that:

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- Overall, **36.5 percent** of people feel they have been cyberbullied in their lifetime, and **17.4 percent** have reported it has happened at some point in the last 30 days. ^[1]
- These numbers are more than double what they were in 2007, and both represent an increase from **2018-2019**, suggesting we are heading in the wrong direction when it comes to stopping cyberbullying. ^[2]
- **87 percent** of young people have seen cyberbullying occurring online. ^[3]



[1 (<https://cyberbullying.org/2019-cyberbullying-data>)], [2 (<https://cyberbullying.org/summary-of-our-cyberbullying-research>)], [3 (<https://securingtomorrow.mcafee.com/consumer/family-safety/teens-and-screens/>)]

A Persistent Problem

In total, **95 percent of teens are connected to the internet, and 85 percent are social media users**, according to a study from the Pew Research Center.



In some respects, this is good. It means more and more kids are gaining access to the knowledge and information available on the internet.

However, it also increases their exposure to potentially harmful interactions, specifically, cyberbullying.

A Rite of Passage?

In school, bullying has traditionally been seen as a part of life. Most people have always thought of bullying as nothing more than "kids being kids."

However, this is quite simply not true. Instead, it's an excuse to ignore a real problem and to avoid trying to solve it.

Not convinced? Ask the kids.

In a survey conducted by Ditch the Label (<https://www.ditchthelabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2017-1.pdf>), over three-quarters of kids - **77 percent to be exact** - said that **bullying, and more specifically, cyberbullying, is not a part of growing up.**

A Larger Societal Problem

What's interesting is that it's not just children and teenagers who get cyberbullied. There is some evidence to suggest that cyberbullying also goes on amongst adults.

However, cyberbullying is often called something else when it's done to adults, such as harassment, or sometimes even stalking.

To give you an idea as to how prevalent these problems are, know that sixteen percent of women and one in 19 men (<http://sites.jcu.edu/vpac/pages/educate-yourself/stalking/stalking-statistics/>) have been stalked at some point in their lifetime. Four in ten Americans (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2017/07/11/online-harassment-2017/>) have experienced some form of online harassment.

Also, consider that:

- In Australia, around ten percent of adults admit to having been victims of cyberbullying. [The Sunday Morning Herald (<https://www.smh.com.au/business/small-business/cyberbullying-adults-are-worse-than-children-20170831-gy7pj8.html>)]
- In the U.S., 40 percent of adults have personally experienced some form of online harassment and 75 percent of adults have seen cyberbullying occurring around them. [Pew Research Center (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/10/22/part-1-experiencing-online-harassment/>)]

These numbers are troubling. They show that cyberbullying is not only pervasive but that it doesn't go away as we get older.

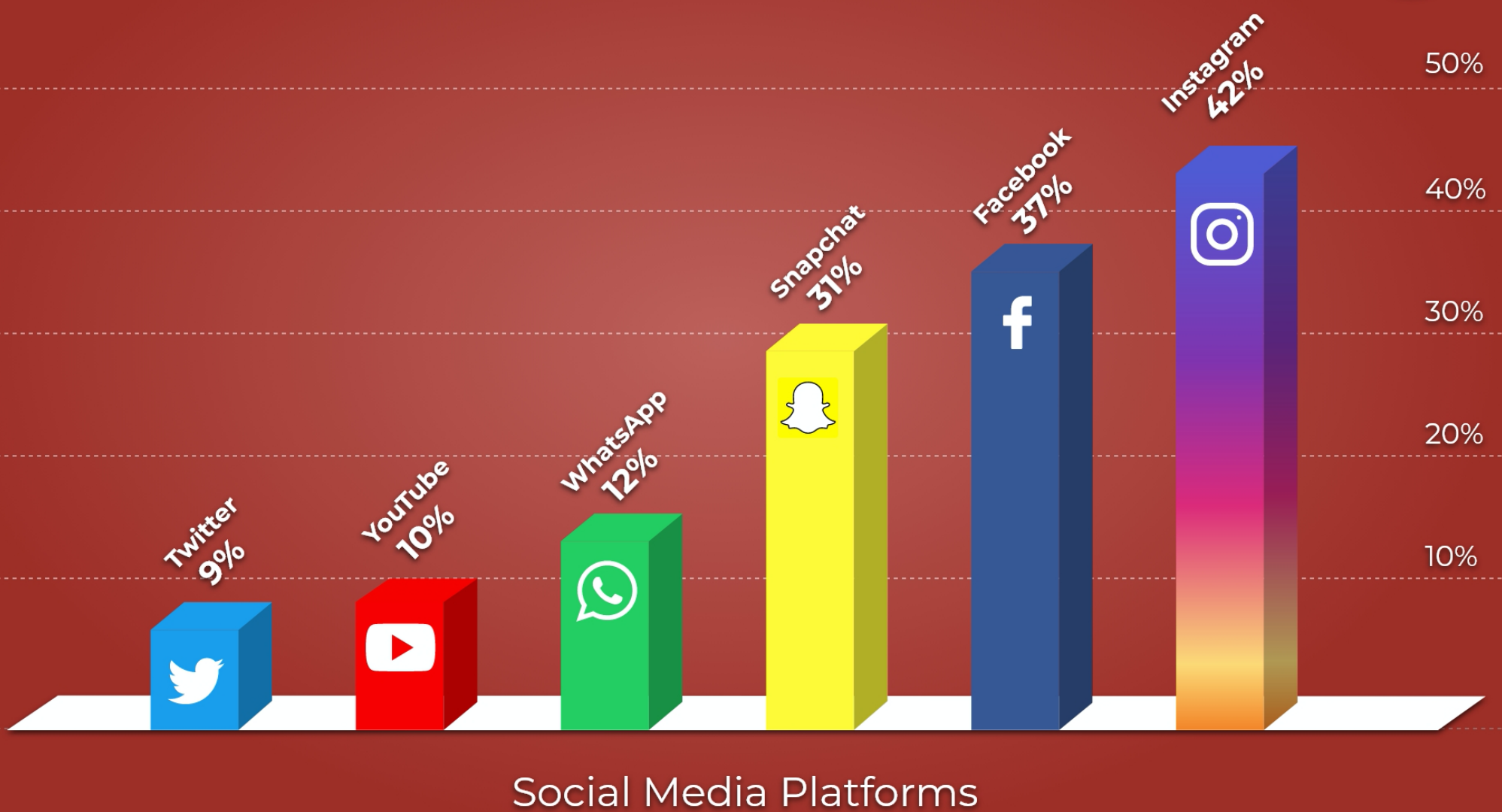
More Cyberbullying Statistics Everyone Should Know

At this point, it should be clear that cyberbullying is a large problem in today's society. But where does cyberbullying occur?

To get a little bit deeper into the problems cyberbullying causes, take a look at the following data provided by Ditch the Label (<https://www.ditchthelabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2017-1.pdf>), one of the world's leading anti-bullying organizations.

They asked students to indicate on which social media platforms they had experienced cyberbullying, and here are the results:

Where are People Cyberbullied?



The study also revealed some surprising statistics about the number of people that are perpetrators of cyberbullying. For example, they found that:

- 69 percent of people report having done something abusive towards others online.
- 15 percent of people admit to having cyberbullied someone else online.

These statistics are troubling because it suggests a general misunderstanding of exactly what cyberbullying is.

More specifically, it's likely these people who have admitted to doing something abusive towards others online actually engaged in cyberbullying, but because of a lack of awareness as to what this is, they do not admit it.

Here are some more cyberbullying statistics to consider:

- Over half of students who identify as being LGBTQ have experienced cyberbullying at some point. [StopBullying.gov (<https://www.stopbullying.gov/media/facts/index.html#stats>)]
- Girls are more likely to be a victim of cyberbullying than boys. Overall, around 36 percent of girls have reported being cyberbullied, as compared to 26 percent of boys. [Pew Research Center (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2007/06/27/cyberbullying/>)]
- 83 percent of those who have been cyberbullied have also been bullied in person, and 69 percent of those who admitted to bullying online have also admitted to in-person bullying. [Florida Atlantic University]

The Impacts of Cyberbullying

Even if you've been fortunate enough to escape cyberbullying, this doesn't mean you don't need to worry about it.

The effects of cyberbullying can have a tremendously negative impact on the mental health and well-being of victims. And these impacts are far more serious than just "feeling bad" about yourself. They go deeper and touch more sensitive parts of the human psyche.

These effects can be felt in both the short and long term, and they help point out why we should be taking cyberbullying so seriously.

Here is a rundown of some of the more troubling statistics about the impact of cyberbullying:

- 64 percent of people who have been cyberbullied say it affects their ability to learn and feel safe at school. [Cyberbullying Research Center (<https://cyberbullying.org/new-national-bullying-cyberbullying-data>)]
- Students who experience cyberbullying are more likely to have social, mental health and behavior problems particularly in school. [Center for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-factsheet508.pdf>)]
- Bullied students are twice as likely than other students to experience problems such as headaches and stomach aches. [Gini and Pozzoli, 2013 (http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/132/4/720?sso=1&sso_redirect_count=1&nfstatus=401&nftoken=00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000&nfstatusdescription=ERROR%3A+No+local+token)]
- 19 percent of bullied students say the experience has negatively impacted how they feel about themselves. 14 percent say it has negatively impacted their relationships with friends and family and 9 percent reported a negative impact on their schoolwork. [National Center for Education Statistics (<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017064.pdf>)]

What's perhaps more concerning, though, is the impact cyberbullying has on the one doing the actual bullying.

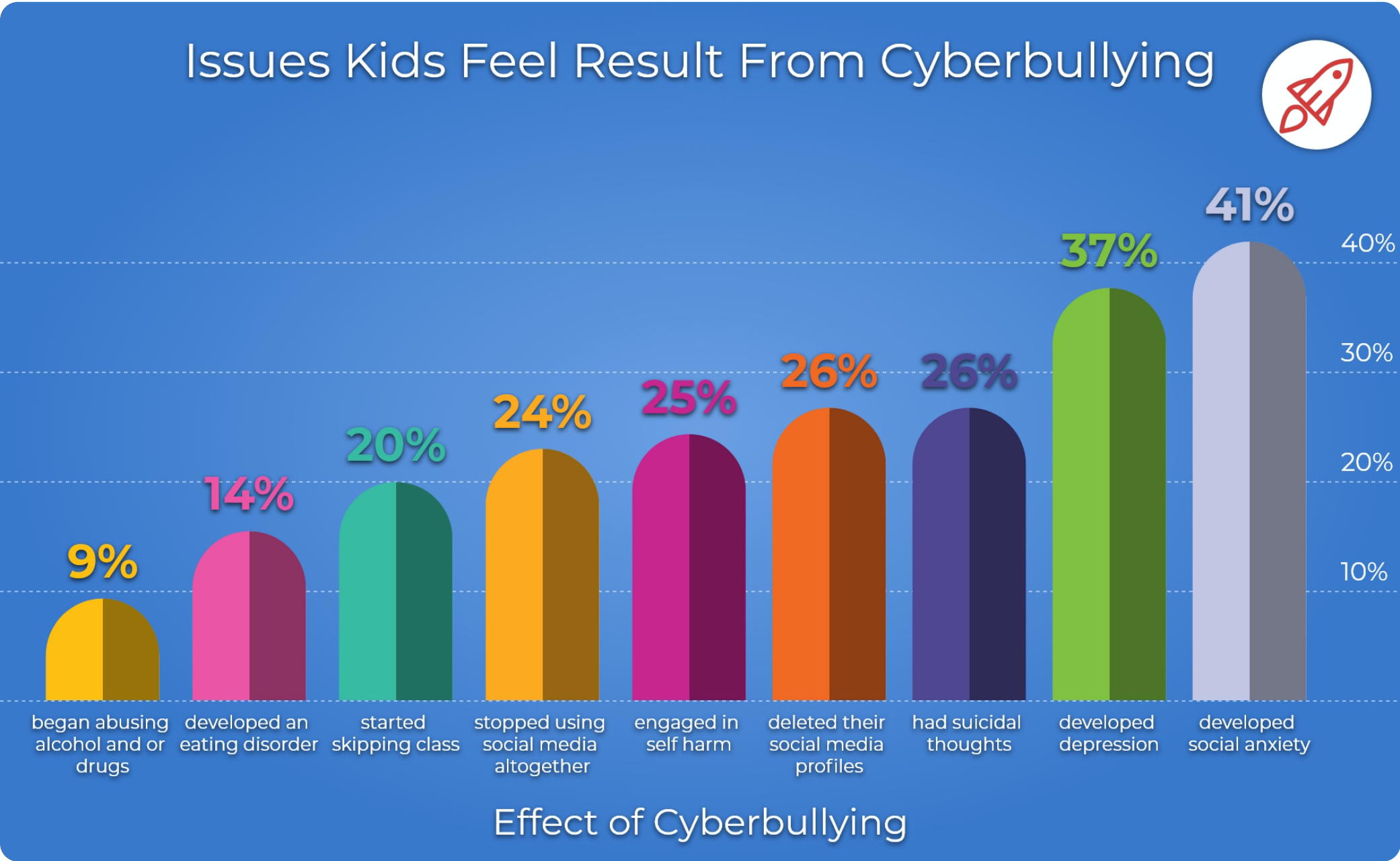
According to a study published in The Journal of Early Adolescence (<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0272431614556351>), **cyberbullying can actually help improve a student's perceived popularity.**

This suggests that we as a society encourage this type of behavior by rewarding those who engage in it with higher social standing.

Mental Health Problems Stemming From Cyberbullying

To help you get a better idea about some of the impacts cyberbullying can have on mental health, consider the following findings from the Ditch the Label (<https://www.ditchthelabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2017-1.pdf>) study.

In this survey, students who had been cyberbullied were asked to identify what issues they felt arose because of their experience with cyberbullying. The results were:



How Can You Tell If Someone Is Being Cyberbullied?

Knowing the detrimental effects of cyberbullying, and also that people who suffer from it are unlikely to say anything about it, it's critical you know the signs someone is suffering so that you can step in and be the helping hand which they are often too shy or embarrassed to ask for.

According to the National Crime Prevention Center (https://www.ncpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NCPC_Cyberbullying-SpottingTheSigns.pdf) (NCPC), there are several behavioral changes that someone being cyberbullied may undergo. For example, they may:

- Become shy and withdrawn
- Be moody, agitated, anxious or stressed out
- Act more aggressively towards others

- Protest more about going to school
- Get into trouble at school
- Skip school
- Experience a dip in academic performance
- ****Stop using the computer or other devices that connect to the internet****
- Change eating and sleeping habits. For example, they may begin experiencing nightmares
- Attempt self-harm or threaten suicide
- Suddenly begin hanging out with a new group of friends

****This is considered to be one of the biggest red flags, largely because kids are so connected to their devices. If you notice a major change, then it's important to speak to them to find out what they are experiencing.****

Recognizing Cyberbullies

On the other side of things, it's important to look out for some of the signs that someone is engaging in cyberbullying.

As shown by the statistics, more people engage in cyberbullying than you might think, and these numbers are based on those who admit it. It's quite possible there are more people than the research suggests.

It's tricky to determine when someone is engaging in cyberbullying, but it's not impossible. Typically, children, or adults, who are engaging in cyberbullying will:

- Stop using their computer or phone when someone comes near them.
- Look nervous or jumpy when online.
- Be secretive about what they are doing online.
- Spend an excessive amount of time on the computer.
- Become angry or upset when internet privileges are taken away (this is obviously more the case with children than adults)

If you see anyone exhibiting these types of behaviors, then consider investigating more and intervening where possible.

What Should You Do If You Believe Someone is a Victim of Cyberbullying?

As of 2020, around 81 percent (http://www.cox.com/wcm/en/aboutus/datasheet/takecharge/2009-teen-survey.pdf?campcode=takecharge-research-link_2009-teen-survey_0511) of kids think that bullying is easier to get away with online. Part of the reason for this could be that 90 percent (<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Teens-and-social-media.aspx>) of kids who see cyberbullying ignore it.

However, 84 percent (<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Teens-and-social-media.aspx>) of students report having seen someone stand up to a cyberbully to tell them to stop what they are doing.

This suggests that a small group of people are speaking up about cyberbullying, something that needs to change.

As an adult, if you see a kid being cyberbullied, consider doing one of the following:

- Ask your child to go over their list of contacts in their phone and instant messaging apps so that you can know more about the people with whom they communicate.
- Talk to your kids about cyberbullying so that they know what it is and how to understand when it is happening.
- Emphasize to kids that they will not lose internet privileges if they are being cyberbullied. Believe it or not, this is the main reason kids choose not to speak up about cyberbullying, according to the NCPC. (https://www.ncpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NCPC_Cyberbullying-TipSheet-TipsForTeens.pdf)
- Raise the issue with teachers and school administrators so that they can look for signs of bullying in school and address the issue the best way possible.
- Reach out to your child's friends. Engaging bystanders is a key component of fighting cyberbullying, so it's important those witnessing the abuse know what they are seeing and how to react.

As you can see, cyberbullying is a real issue that is prevalent all around the world, amongst both children and adults. Those being cyberbullied have options, too.

Make sure kids know this by going over what they should be doing if they feel they are a victim. Some things you can do if you feel you're being cyberbullied are:

- Tell someone you trust about what's going on so that you can get some help.
- Keep emails, texts, comments, etc. that could serve as evidence of the cyberbullying
- Don't strike back. Two wrongs don't make a right.
- Report the issue to the website. For example, Facebook and YouTube both have places where you can report cyberbullying in a safe environment.

Conclusion

As you can see, cyberbullying is a real issue that is prevalent all around the world, amongst both children and adults.

However, we are not helpless in trying to prevent this from happening.

There are things you can do to help stop harassment and abuse online and to help contribute to a society based on respect and compassion for all.



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