



AM I CYBERBULLYING SOMEONE?



Cyberbullying is causing harm to a peer online, especially someone with less power. It's often on purpose and repeated. Sometimes it starts as a joke or "just messing around," but if it's hurting someone, it's still bullying.



SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

YOU POST OR SEND something mean, then feel a rush of excitement checking to see how people reacted.

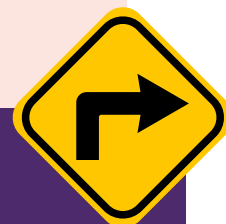
YOU KEEP GOING after someone even after they've asked you to stop.

YOU TELL YOURSELF "it's just a joke" when you know it actually hurt the other person.

YOU ACT DIFFERENTLY ONLINE than you would in person, like saying things you'd never say to someone's face.

YOU FEEL PRESSURE to keep it going because your friends are laughing along or expecting it.

YOU'VE MADE A FAKE ACCOUNT, spread a rumor, or shared something private about someone else.



WHAT YOU CAN DO...

Pause before you post: If you're angry, upset, or just want a reaction, wait before sending. A message you can't take back can do more damage than you meant.

Ask yourself how it would feel: Would you want this said or done to you? Would you say it to their face?

Notice the pull of the group: If friends are egging you on, it's still your choice whether to join in. You can be the one who says "that's not cool."

Talk to someone you trust: A parent, caregiver, teacher, counselor, or coach can help you figure out what's really going on, especially if you're angry or hurting about something else.

Understand the consequences: Decide whether you are prepared for the trouble that might come if a post you wrote is shared with your school or law enforcement.





IF IT'S ALREADY HAPPENING

Stop. Delete the post or message if you can, and don't send anything more.

Apologize sincerely. Not "sorry you're upset," but actually owning what you did and how it affected them.

Don't make excuses. "I was joking" or "everyone does it" doesn't undo the harm.

Talk to a trusted adult, especially if you're not sure how to fix things or if it's already gotten out of hand. They can help you make it right.

Think about what's underneath it. Sometimes people bully because they're dealing with their own stuff, like stress, insecurity, or things happening at home. Getting support for that can help you stop the cycle.



REMEMBER

Making a mistake doesn't mean you're a bad person—it means you have a chance to make things right. Owning it and changing your behavior is a strong and mature thing to do.



StopBullying.gov

Crisis Text Line Text HOME or HOLA to 741741

1. Crisis Text Line — Free 24/7 mental health support. In the U.S. and Canada, text HOME to 741741. <https://www.crisistextline.org>

2. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — Immediate emotional support for anyone in crisis or feeling overwhelmed. <https://988lifeline.org>



Online Harms
Prevention Work Group
fairplayforkids.org

