

Cyberbullying Lesson plan

Cyberbullying Lesson 1
Years 7–9

Background

Cyberbullying is a complex issue, and the perpetrators are often unaware of the full implications of their actions. This session aims to raise young people's awareness of how their actions can either support or prevent instances of cyberbullying. It also aims to help children empathise with the victims of cyberbullying. From this perspective, ideally we can foster a more caring, supportive community for children. The ideas in the lesson aim to create as widespread coverage of the message as possible in our school and local communities.

Counsellors at Kids Helpline started to notice an increase in cyberbullying related contacts in early 2008 and since July 2008 have collected specific data on the issue. Of the 53,111 counselling contacts received by young people during 2009, a total of 2,176 (4.1%) recorded either bullying or cyberbullying as the main reason for contact. Consistent with other research findings, girls have been found to experience cyberbullying slightly more often than boys.[5]

Both the online survey and data from Kids Helpline suggests that most cyberbullying occurs in late primary school and early high school. During the 2009 year, the most common age group to contact Kids Helpline regarding cyberbullying were 10/14-year-olds (50.6%), followed by 15/18-year-olds (44.2%). While many of the dynamics remain the same across the ages, cyberbullying in the primary school years usually focused on appearances while cyberbullying in the secondary years tends to focus on the way people act, especially if they do not fit the norm.

Ref: Tip sheets – Cyberbullying. Information sheets for parents and carers. Kids Helpline.

Look for possible linkages

It is recommended that the lesson concepts be linked to your own school's policies, curriculum, themes, and/or student rules to complement and reinforce these. For example, you may refer to your school's ICT student policies and student rules, ie. *Be safe, Be responsible, Be respectful*. Ideally, these would be linked to the lesson concepts of recognising cyberbullying as a negative or unsafe behaviour that can have a lasting impact, and then promoting ways of being responsible by preventing or minimising the occurrence of cyberbullying.

Learning Objectives

This lesson will enable students the opportunity to:

- > define cyberbullying and identify cyberbullying as a negative behaviour;
- > learn to recognise cyberbullying;
- > develop a better understanding of the emotional impact of cyberbullying;
- > develop awareness that personal actions and choices may contribute to cyberbullying without intention or realisation;
- > understand what ethical online behaviour entails;
- > develop ways to prevent or minimise cyberbullying and to find help if victimised, thereby supporting oneself and others in their community.

Resources required for this lesson

USB Video "George," parent/carer information sheets and optional access to internet by students. Please see Resources below for details. Extension activity – computer access, paper, pens, etc for poster making.

TIME	CONTENT	TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS	LEARNER ACTIVITIES
5-10min	Introduction Defining Cyberbullying Cyberbullying is the use of technology, including the internet, to bully or hurt someone's feelings. What is the difference between cyberbullying and just having an argument with a friend on the internet? There are four things that can help you identify cyberbullying over a normal argument between friends. Bullying is targeted and persistent behaviour that is intended to: > demean > intimidate > embarrass, or > harass Bullying also involves: > An imbalance of power – for example a group ganging up on an individual or someone much more confident picking on someone who can't defend his/herself > Repeated attacks without justified provocation If all else fails, you know that you might be bullying someone if they ask you to stop and you don't. ACMA defines cyberbullying behaviour to include (<i>teachers translate this into students' language</i>): > anonymity and pseudonyms (masquerading as others) > flaming (heated, emotive arguments)	Ask students what the term cyberbullying means. Generate class discussion and interest in the topic by questioning students on their existing knowledge. Some questions you may wish to ask are: > What sort of technologies can be used for cyberbullying? > Is cyberbullying any different to offline bullying? Do you think it is worse or just different? > Do the people involved in cyberbullying have to know each other? Ref: Australian Media & Communications Authority (AMCA) www.cybersmart.gov.au/wiseuptoit	Students respond to questions.

TIME	CONTENT	TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS	LEARNER ACTIVITIES
(Continued)	> harassment (denigration of others) > outing (public release of others' personal information) > exclusion (making another an 'outcast')		
	Sequence		
5min	'George' is a short video of a story about two friends who are unaware that they are really cyberbullies.	Introduce and play the video 'George':	Students view video.
25min	Possible questions for video discussion (<i>Please adapt for the age group and characteristics of your audience</i>): What was Alex doing while Derrick was rapping? <i>He filmed Derrick with his mobile phone.</i> Why was it wrong for Alex to film Derrick while he was rapping? <i>You should only film someone if you have their permission. If you intend to use the footage to make fun of them, then it counts as cyberbullying.</i> Why was it wrong for George to post it on his Facebook wall? <i>You should only post images or footage of people to a Facebook wall with their permission. If you use the images or footage (video) with the purpose of humiliating them, then it counts as cyberbullying. The same applies if you write something about someone using the internet or a mobile phone with the purpose of humiliating them.</i>	Class discussion Ask students questions as part of a group discussion of the video concepts and to check their understanding and explore the topic. OR alternatively Small group work Arrange students in small groups and provide them with a question sheet to discuss and report back to the class. Teacher explanation as required.	Class discussion or small group work. Students respond to questions. Listen and ask questions. Respond to questions/statements.

TIME	CONTENT	TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS	LEARNER ACTIVITIES
(continued)	Who contributed to the cyberbullying in this video? i) Alex – for taking the video in the first place ii) George – for posting it to his Facebook wall without Derrick's permission iii) All the people who commented on the video through Facebook Apart from the cyberbullies, who could have helped to stop the bullying? <i>Anyone who saw the footage could have helped stop the bullying. If you come across something like this, you should either tell the bullies to stop, or tell your parent/carer or teacher.</i> Take a stand against cyberbullying Speak out whenever you see someone being mean to another person online. Most people respond better to criticism from their peers than to disapproval from adults. (Ref: bullyingnoway.com.au) How do you think Derrick felt when he found out that people from school had been laughing and making fun of him? <i>Sad, humiliated and alone.</i> For how long might Derrick feel this way and how might he react? <i>It could take Derrick a long time to stop feeling this way. He felt so hurt and humiliated by their actions that he could not face coming to school. Imagine how YOU would feel if something like this happened to you and you had no control over the situation. How would YOU react?</i>	Talk about the emotional impact of cyberbullying and link back to George's story. Draw students into empathising how the victim might feel and react, and who he/she could go to for support.	Listen, think, respond and ask further questions.

TIME	CONTENT	TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS	LEARNER ACTIVITIES
(continued)	Who could Derrick turn to for help? <i>His parents/carers, a trusted adult, teacher or Kids Helpline counsellor.</i> There are many different roles in cyberbullying. Even though George didn't take the video, he made the situation a lot worse by sharing it with all his friends on Facebook. All the people who commented on the video made it even worse still. Even the people who saw the video without commenting on it played a role in the cyberbullying. Bullies need an audience. If you are part of the audience then you are actually part of the problem. If you ever see someone share something mean about someone else, think twice before you comment on it or just let it pass. You should either ask them to stop or notify a teacher/adult/parent/carer. Tips/Code of Behaviour for preventing cyberbullying might include (develop your own class list): > Never post pictures or videos of someone without their permission. > Never communicate anything bad or negative about someone using the internet or mobile phone.* > If you discover others sharing nasty comments about someone online then keep a copy and show it to an adult or teacher to stop the bullying. > Never join in.	Working in small groups, ask students to develop a Code of Behaviour (or Tips) for preventing cyberbullying and supporting others in our school and local community. OR, if resources are available: Ask students to explore the websites to find out more about the impact of cyberbullying and what they can personally do to prevent it.	Students generate a Code of Behaviour or Tips. This is reported back to the class. Students search websites in preparation for reporting back to the class on what they have found and how it applies to them and their school.

TIME	CONTENT	TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS	LEARNER ACTIVITIES
(continued)	> Encourage victims of cyberbullying to seek help from a trusted adult or Kids Helpline counsellor on 1800 55 1800. *Respect your friends. Be a good friend, and treat them as you would like to be treated (Ref: ACMA). See www.cybersmart.gov.au – teens: > “You’re in control” > “Cyberbullying”.	Poster Competition: Extension activity for follow-up (this may be paper or computer-based, dependant on access to resources, age of students and theme/topic) Make a poster for one of the following locations, to tell others that cyberbullying is not OK and to stop cyberbullying: > school/class notice board > school intranet > shopping centre community board > wall paper for your computer The best posters can be displayed on the notice boards/sites. This could be an opportunity to involve the local newspaper for a story, thereby spreading the message further in the local community!	Students apply their information and ideas to create a poster.

Conclusion

5-10 min	Reinforce by repeating the key concepts which form a Code of Behaviour (or Tips) for preventing cyberbullying and supporting others in our community. Homework To share with their parents/carers: 1. What they learnt about cyberbullying. 2. Share the Kids Helpline Tip Sheet on Cyberbullying and ACMA parent tips. It is suggested that these be provided as parent information sheets to go home with students. (See Resources below for the links).	Ask students to report back to the class: > their Code of Behaviour/Tips for their group, OR > what they have found out online about preventing cyberbullying Set a homework activity for students to share with their parents/carers information/links on cyberbullying.	Share their Code of Behaviour/Tips with the class, or what they have discovered online about prevention of cyberbullying. Copy down homework and collect parent/ carer information sheets and links.
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Resources:

1. Video "George"

2. *Supporting Information for Teachers and Students – Cyberbullying.* See the pages that follow this lesson plan.

3. Parent/carer information sheets and links:

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/grownups/news-research/hot-topics/cyber-bullying.php> for Kids Helpline Tip Sheet on Cyberbullying. This also provides useful information for teachers on the research by BoysTown on cyberbullying.

<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Parents/Resources%20to%20use%20with%20your%20child.aspx> for "Parents – Resources to use with your child – Resources for young children" for resources that parents can work through with their child to explore internet safety and cyberbullying. This includes establishing who to go to if there is a problem with cyberbullying, etc.

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/talkout/spotlight/cyberBullyingParents.shtml> for what parents can do to prevent cyberbullying of their child.

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/grownups/news-research/research-reports/research.php> for Cyberbullying – Youth Studies Australia, Vol 29, Number 2, 2010. This research was undertaken by BoysTown's Strategy and Research Team.

4. Kids Helpline is a national, free 24-hour counselling service for children and young people aged 5-25 years. Counselling is available via the phone, email or web. Kids Helpline counsellors speak with more than 6,000 kids each week, and help with all sorts of problems, big and small – ph 1800 55 1800, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or online <http://www.kidshelp.com.au>.

Kids Helpline "Cyberbullying," information for teenagers and young adults – <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-info/hot-topics/cyber-bullying.php>

Kids Helpline "Staying safe online," information for primary school aged children – <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/kids/information/hot-topics/staying-safe-online1.php> See web pages 1-5.

Kids Helpline "Bullying," information for primary school aged children – <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/kids/information/hot-topics/bullying1.php> While this link is not specifically about cyberbullying, it does provide practical advice for seeking support and coping strategies for bullying.

5. Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) www.cybersmart.gov.au. This site has a list of other links for students and teachers to explore and learn more tips for safe internet usage. Developed by ACMA, Cybersmart is part of the Australian Government's cybersafety program. The site provides activities, resources and practical advice to help young kids, kids, teens and parents safely enjoy the online world.

6. Student and teacher information including student research links for this lesson.

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-info/hot-topics/cyber-bullying.php>
<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Teens/Tips%20and%20advice/Cyberbullying.aspx> for tips on Cyberbullying "If a friend is being cyberbullied" and "Help stop cyberbullying"

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/talkout/spotlight/cyberBullyingIs.shtml> "Cyberbullying?"

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/talkout/spotlight/bystander/bystanderstudents.shtml> "What can students do?" This provides clear advice on how students can act to prevent cyberbullying. An excellent support resource for this lesson.

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/chillout/help.shtml> "Helping yourself, helping your friends." More good ideas for prevention of bullying in general but very relevant to cyberbullying.

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/talkout/spotlight/cyberBullyingPrevention.shtml> "So what can we do?" This is good information for a follow-up lesson as it extends the topics further than the given video case study.

7. Teacher information.

Cybersmart offers training and resources for schools. Information related to this lesson includes:

What research tells us about 12/13-year-olds online

Cybercitizen profile ages 12/13 – this includes "Positive online behaviour." Positive online behaviour is the ability to develop positive, appropriate and constructive online relationships with peers, family and strangers in a variety of mediums.

What research tells us about 14/15-year-olds online

Cybercitizen profile ages 14/15

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/talkout/spotlight/cyberBullyingSchools.shtml> (Cyberbullying) I wonder what our school is doing about it.

<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Teens/Fun%20things%20to%20do/WiseuptoIT.aspx> for videos of case studies of students that could be included in this lesson or a follow-up lesson with the older students.

Follow-up/reinforcement:

Next lesson – recall the class Code of Behaviour or Tips for Preventing Cyberbullying. Gauge any feedback on the homework activity. Explore other forms of cyberbullying and ways to block/prevent it. Find out how bullying is handled at your school – how is bullying identified, reported and dealt with?

Note: This lesson may take longer than the suggested time for the younger classes and may require breaking up into smaller segments. Teachers are encouraged to accommodate their range of learners by modifying student learning experiences where appropriate.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

CYBERBULLYING

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is an extension of the 'traditional' type of bullying. The key difference being that the 'weapon' used to bully involves technology such as websites, text messages, social networking sites and emails to embarrass, demean, harass, intimidate, or threaten other people.

Cyberbullying can range from situations such as arguments between friends that get out of control, to groups of young people deliberately targeting other young people, or masquerading as them or as fake friends. However, it is important to remember that not all fighting or arguing is bullying. It is normal to have times when you have conflict and arguments with people. So, it is important to learn how to deal with conflict. Bullying is different to having an argument or a fight.

There are four things that can help you identify bullying (including cyberbullying) over a normal argument between friends. Bullying is targeted and persistent behaviour that is intended to:

- > demean
- > intimidate
- > embarrass, or
- > harass

Bullying also involves:

- > An imbalance of power - for example a group ganging up on an individual or someone much more confident picking on someone who is less confident
- > Repeatedly picking on someone over the phone, email, website or online forum (for example, sending messages to the same person over and over)¹

Cyberbullying is NOT the fault of the victim

There are many reasons for young people bullying others. Sometimes, it's about them trying to become popular, or to intimidate or make someone afraid of them. At other times, it's a reaction to being bullied themselves or because they are jealous of the person they are bullying.

If you are being cyberbullied, it is important to remember that it is not your fault and is never something you deserve.

Reaching out for help is really important and should not be seen as a weakness:

The ways to deal with a cyberbullying problem are always going to be different depending on the situation, who is doing the bullying and how it started. It is important to keep in mind that dealing with cyberbullying is about finding a solution that works for you. Sometimes, it can be really hard to reach out for help or tell someone because you are concerned that people won't understand, know what to do or that it will make the situation worse.

Research tells us that most young people do not perceive bullying as being 'cool' and would help out their friends if they knew what was going on. It also showed that most of the young people who told someone about being bullied (particularly a friend and/or adult), found it was helpful for them.



Places you could go to for help might include friends, teachers, parents or counsellors. You can also get help from the police and take legal action if needed. Kids Helpline counselling can be a great way to get your head straight before you start to work out what to do. Often the first step is for the counsellor to really get to know and understand the situation you're in. Often people who are being bullied do not believe that anything will help. Kids Helpline counsellors can help you work through your emotions and get some control back in your life.

Other steps you might also find useful could be to block the bullies from sending you messages or emails, avoid responding to bullies, change your online username or mobile number and/or stay offline for a while. It can help to keep copies of abusive messages that are sent to you because they can be used later as evidence.

Friends can play a key role in helping to reduce the potential and/or impacts of cyberbullying:

The reactions many young people have to being cyber bullied are similar to those provoked by traditional bullying. However, because of the more covert nature of cyberbullying, some have speculated that cyberbullying may induce more severe reactions. It is important to try to understand the impact of each young person's situation of bullying and treat it as their own unique experience as not every young person will respond to cyberbullying in the same way.

Some common impacts include low self esteem and loss in confidence, anxiety, sadness or depression, fear, anger and/or embarrassment. Decreased academic achievement and/or truancy behaviour due to difficulties in concentrating or being in a classroom with bullies has also been reported. At its most extreme, cyberbullying has also been known to result in self harming and suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

Unfortunately, there is no one strategy or 'quick fix' that works for all. Like other types of bullying, the covert nature of cyberbullying can make it difficult for others to detect when it is occurring. Some people can also feel shame associated with the bullying and/or may feel afraid to tell others.

Friends (and teachers) can assist by looking for any overt changes in their friend's behaviour, which could give a clue that they may be being bullied. These signs may include:

- > Sudden aversion to socialising with you or other friends
- > Disinterest or avoidance of school
- > Dropping out of sports or other recreational activities
- > Extreme sleeping behaviour (either lots more or lots less)
- > Abnormal nail biting or other minor or severe self harming behaviours
- > Abnormal changes in mood and/or behaviour

Friends who witness cyberbullying can also assist by themselves and others taking a stand against the bully and letting them know that their behaviour is not cool and not going to be tolerated. Friends can also offer to support their friend in seeking help from an adult.



Useful tips to help sort out or avoid conflict when communicating online:

When communicating by text it is important to remember that the people who read it don't get to hear your tone of voice or see your facial expressions. This can lead to potential confusion and can then result in conflict. Sometimes you may even be perceived as a bully.

Sometimes school conflict can become a bigger problem and people can start to bully other people over something that initially started as an argument. To help with this, we've included some tips to avoid fights and disputes that are occurring online:

- > Remember that things can be misinterpreted. If you have a reaction to something someone has said in an email or online you might want to think about whether replying online is the most effective way to communicate with them
- > Be mindful of the people that you involve in an argument. Have a think about whether you need to bring them in and be careful using the 'reply all' function
- > If you are posting photos or videos of your friends be aware they might feel embarrassed so make sure you check with them first
- > Avoid using sarcasm in texts – people often can't tell when it's being used

Beware that information, photographs and clips can remain on the internet forever. Also once online the person posting the material loses all control over its distribution. Be cautious and think carefully about what you post.

Contact Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 www.kidshelp.com.au

Some helpful links:

www.cybersmart.gov.au

www.bullyingnoway.com.au

www.cybersmart.gov.au/cybernetrix

www.cybersmart.gov.au/wiseuptoit



end

kidshelp.com.au
1800 55 1800