Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention: Strategies and Resources for Parents & Educators
1. The Research
Data from the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) showed that, in 2017
A majority of teens have been the target of cyberbullying, with name-calling and rumor-spreading being the most common forms of harassment.

-Pew Research Center, 2018
Teen boys and girls are equally likely to be bullied online, but girls are more likely to endure false rumors, receive explicit images they didn’t ask for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of U.S. teens who say they have experienced ___ online or on their cellphone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any type of cyberbullying listed below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive name-calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spreading of false rumors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receiving explicit images they didn’t ask for</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant asking of where they are, what they’re doing, who they’re with, by someone other than a parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical threats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having explicit images of them shared without their consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents were allowed to select multiple options. Those who did not give an answer or give other response are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted March 7–April 10, 2018.
“Majority of Teens Have Experienced Some Form of Cyberbullying”
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
A 5,000 person study found that higher social media use correlated with self-reported declines in mental and physical health and life satisfaction.

American Journal of Epidemiology, 2017

Persuasive design techniques like push notifications and the endless scroll of your newsfeed have created a feedback loop that keeps us glued to our devices.
A recent longitudinal study in Canada following more than 600 students in grades 6–8 and 1,100 undergraduate students over two years also found associations among girls only (Heffer et al., 2019). However, the data suggested that depressive symptoms predict social media use, but not the other way around. That is, earlier social media use did not predict later depressive symptoms, but (among females only) earlier depressive symptoms predicted later social media use. This finding was stronger among the younger adolescents versus the older college-age students.
The *unprecedented shock* of 2020 threatens the mental health and future of this generation of adolescents. Digital media can and should be a social safety net right now.

-Common Sense Research, 2020
By and large, extant research has found that youth use social media in the service of critical adolescent developmental tasks, such as identity development, aspirational development, and peer engagement.

Uhls et. al., PEDIATRICS, AAP
In contrast to early online applications, which were seen as refuges from real life, today’s online environments reflect, complement, and reinforce offline relationships, practices, and processes.

Uhls et. al., PEDIATRICS, AAP
2. Bullying and Cyberbullying Defined
Bullying

- During contact time
- Known and named
- Isolated to incidents

Cyberbullying

- Any day, place, time
- Named or anonymous
- Easily spread, “go viral”

- Anyone can be a bully, a witness, or a target.
- Roles are changeable and based on social power.
- Repeatedly targeted at the same person.
Cyberbullying: Harmful words and actions that utilize digital means, including:

- Sending mean messages
- Making up and / or spreading untrue stories
- Sharing embarrassing pictures
- Telling others to ignore or intentionally excluding
The adolescent word for bullying and cyberbullying.
3. Prevention for Parents & Educators
For adolescents, strong connections to school and family have long-lasting positive effects well into adulthood, including decreases in:

- Physical Violence
- Multiple Sex Partners
- Rx Misuse
- Emotional Distress
- STD Infection
- Illicit Drug Use
Tips to increase a child’s connection to school

Help with homework
Read school newsletters and attend parent-teacher conferences
Ask teachers if your child can join parent-teacher conferences

More tips!
cdc.gov/healthyyouth
Parents are a powerful influence in the lives of their teens.

Research shows that teens who believe their parents disapprove of risky behaviors are less likely to choose those behaviors.
Grow Your Family’s Digital Wellness

- Requires daily care and feeding.
- Exposure to sunlight and fresh air is important.
Grow Your Family’s Digital Wellness

🎯 What does compassion look like online?
🎯 Share your feed and your decision-making as a model.
🎯 Media diet:
  - nutrition v. dessert
  - portion control
4. What if it happens?
Listen. Let them tell you what has happened and how it has made them feel. Ask questions without being alarmist, but rather to encourage communication.
**Approach B**

**Comfort.** Tell your child it is not their fault and that you will be supporting and loving through this, as you always are.
Advise. Suggest that responding or retaliating will likely escalate the circumstance. Often, this will embolden someone who has bullied. It is OK to tell the person to STOP.
Use the Tools. Save the evidence by screenshotting it. Report the bullying behavior using the reporting tool on the platform.
Approach

E

Plan. Find out what, if anything, your child would like you to do. Honor your child and their choices.