

# What is Cyberbullying?

***Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices<sup>1</sup>***

## **Cyberbullying includes:**

- Writing hurtful statements on a social media site or website
- Forwarding rumors and gossip through text messages or emails
- Posting embarrassing pictures of someone online
- Digitally editing and distributing pictures of another person
- Flaming, insulting, or slandering others in a public area online
- Pretending to be another person online
- Setting up fake user accounts to stalk, harass, or embarrass others
- Anytime technology is used to harm another person!

## **The Ophelia Project identifies two main contributors to the hurtful impact of cyberbullying:**

### **1. Empathetic Disconnect:**

This describes the inability to sense the emotions and feelings associated with the receipt of a message. In traditional bullying, an aggressor immediately sees the hurt they have caused the target. The lack of immediate emotional feedback in cyberbullying allows an aggressor to often continue the hurtful behaviors unchecked. Also, due to the ability to maintain anonymity on the Internet, an aggressor and target may never know each other or interact face-to-face.

### **2. The Infinite Bystander Effect:**

In a traditional bullying situation, the number of bystanders is limited to whoever is present at the time of the incident. With cyberbullying, the aggression remains present online and can be viewed by anyone with access to the web.

#### References:

<sup>1</sup>Cyberbullying Research Center. [www.cyberbullying.us](http://www.cyberbullying.us) (accessed: February, 2011)

<sup>2</sup>Patchin, J. W. & Hinduja, S. (2006). Bullies move beyond the schoolyard: A preliminary look at cyberbullying. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 4(2), 123-147.

<sup>3</sup>Ybarra, M.L., & Mitchell, K.J. (2004). Online aggressor/targets, aggressors, and targets: A comparison of associated youth characteristics. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 45(7), 1308-1316

<sup>4</sup>National Crime Prevention Council <http://www.npc.org/cyberbullying> (accessed: March, 2011)

<sup>5</sup>A Thin Line: 2009 AP-MTV Digital Abuse Study. [http://www.athinline.org/MTV-AP\\_Digital\\_Abuse\\_Study\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.athinline.org/MTV-AP_Digital_Abuse_Study_Executive_Summary.pdf)

## **Cyberbullying Fast Facts**

### **According to Cyberbullying Research Center<sup>1</sup>:**

- Estimates on the prevalence of cyberbullying vary from **10-40%** or more.
- **20%** of youth ages 11-18 have been a victim of cyberbullying
- **10%** of youth ages 11-18 have been both a victim and offender

**60%** of targets said that their online experiences as a target of cyberbullying affected them at school, home, and with friends, and reported experiencing feelings of frustration, anger and sadness<sup>2</sup>

**84%** of cyberbullies report to know their target<sup>3</sup>

When teens were asked why they think others cyberbully, **81%** said that cyberbullies think it is funny.<sup>4</sup>

**45%** of young people (ages 14-24) reported that they see people being mean to each other on social networking sites.<sup>5</sup>

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