



# Educator guide: Cyberbullying lesson

## **Recommended for grades:**

6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades

## **Time:**

11 minutes

## **National Health Education Standards:**

This lesson aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 1: Use functional health information to support health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 4: Use interpersonal communication skills to support health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 7: Demonstrate practices and behaviors to support health and well-being of self and others.

For more information about the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: [shapeamerica.org](http://shapeamerica.org).

## **Learning objectives:**

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Define cyberbullying.
2. Describe at least three examples of cyberbullying.
3. Describe the impact cyberbullying can have on a victim.
4. Explain the four steps to take if you are being cyberbullied.
5. List two things that a bystander of cyberbullying can do to stop cyberbullying.

## **Lesson description:**

In this video-based lesson, students will learn what cyberbullying is and how to stop it. They will hear from other students their age, including students who have been cyberbullied, to help better understand the effects that cyberbullying has on all involved.



## Pre and post-test questions:

Use the following questions with your students in any way that you see fit (on paper, using a survey tool etc.) You may choose to combine questions from various lessons and activities that your students participate in. Correct answer choices are bolded.

1. What is cyberbullying?
  - a. Texting a friend during class to get him or her in trouble
  - b. Using technology to repeatedly harass, threaten, or embarrass someone**
  - c. Getting into a disagreement with a friend on social media
  
2. Which of the following are examples of cyberbullying? Please choose three.
  - a. Using an inside joke while texting a friend
  - b. Sharing embarrassing photos of someone on social media**
  - c. Sending threatening texts to a classmate**
  - d. Making fun of someone's phone case
  - e. Posting hurtful messages about another player in an online game**
  
3. What are some of the effects cyberbullying can have on the victim? Please choose three.
  - a. Loneliness**
  - b. Headaches or stomachaches**
  - c. Increased popularity
  - d. Sadness**
  - e. There are no effects.
  
4. What are the four steps to take if you are being cyberbullied? Please choose all four steps.
  - a. Respond immediately.
  - b. Discard all evidence.
  - c. Block the person bullying you.**
  - d. Report the cyberbullying.**
  - e. Keep all evidence.**
  - f. Don't respond.**
  
5. What are two ways a bystander can stop cyberbullying?
  - a. Forward messages or texts to friends.
  - b. Tell an adult.**
  - c. Reply to the cyberbullying messages or pictures.
  - d. Offer support to the person being targeted.**



Attitude questions:

1. Do you believe that cyberbullying can have as much of an effect on victims as in-person bullying does?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
2. How often do you feel like there is nothing you can do to stop cyberbullying?
  - a. Never
  - b. Rarely
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Very often
  - e. All the time

**Vocabulary:**

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference for yourself and/or your students as you complete the Cyberbullying lesson. You may choose to use this list in any way that fits your needs.

- Anti-discrimination laws - laws intended to prevent unfair treatment of someone based on their age, sex, race etc.
- Anxiety - a mental health condition when a person worries even though there is nothing serious to worry about, or worries all the time and it affects their daily life negatively
- Bystanders - individuals who witness bullying
- Cyberbullying - bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers and tablets; using technology to repeatedly harass, threaten or embarrass someone
- Depression - a mental health condition that negatively affects how you feel, think and act, causing feelings of sadness and a loss of interest in things you once enjoyed
- Group chat - a group of people using technology to communicate with each other through one message chain
- Harassment laws - laws intended to prevent the continued unwanted actions of a person against someone, including threats, demands, etc.
- Social media - forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, videos etc.



# Supplemental activity: Journaling activity

## Objectives:

After completing this activity students will be able to:

- Journal about how cyberbullying has affected them personally.
- Discuss ways to stop cyberbullying from happening.

## Materials needed:

- Pen/pencil
- Journaling activity worksheet or other paper/blank journal

## Time required:

30 minutes

## Instructions:

One way to get students to reflect on what they learned in the cyberbullying lesson is to have them journal. The questions for this journaling activity can be found on the next page. Or, you may prefer to ask your own questions and students can journal using their own paper. Journaling can be done in class, or assigned as homework, depending on how much time is available.

Hold a discussion with the class after they have had an opportunity to journal their thoughts. Possible discussion questions could include:

- How common do you think cyberbullying is in middle school?
- How do you think a person who is being cyberbullied might feel?
- What do you think schools should do about cyberbullying?
- What do you think parents/caregivers should do about cyberbullying?
- When do you think law enforcement should be involved?
- How do you think we can stop cyberbullying from happening?



# Journaling activity worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions. You may use an extra sheet of paper if you prefer.

What specific things do you do to protect yourself from cyberbullying?

Have you ever been cyberbullied? If yes, how did you feel? If no, how do you think you would feel if you were cyberbullied?

What is one thing you and your friends could do to prevent cyberbullying from happening to others?



# Supplemental activity: Spread the word

## Objectives:

After completing this activity students will be able to:

- Create one way to spread the word on how to stop and/or prevent cyberbullying throughout the school or community.

## Materials needed:

- Spread the word handout (on the next page)

## Time required:

30+ minutes

## Instructions:

In this activity, students will think about how they can make a change in their digital world. Students can have the option to work individually or in small groups, whichever you deem appropriate. If you are short on time, students could be assigned this activity as homework, or if time allows, students could work on this project in class throughout the semester. Give each student, or group of students, a copy of the Spread the Word handout to spark ideas. However, students are encouraged to come up with their own ideas too.

Once students have chosen how they would like to spread the word about stopping or preventing cyberbullying, they will need to come up with a plan. Ideally, each plan will be implemented, but it's understandable if some plans are simply too complicated or costly for the school to implement. Therefore, inform students that they should treat this project as if their idea will be implemented, but that all ideas may not end up being implemented due to time and financial constraints. If time allows, students could share their ideas with the class and the class could vote on one or two ideas to implement.

Encourage students to be thoughtful and creative with how they will spread the word about cyberbullying. They could approach this project from a digital civility perspective, or a general kindness perspective, or they could focus on the facts around cyberbullying and how severely it can hurt victims. The options are endless!



# Spread the word activity ideas

- **Bring in a speaker.** Reach out to local or statewide organizations to find an expert who is willing to come and speak to your class or school about cyberbullying.
- **Create informative posters.** Create posters that include valid information on cyberbullying and display them throughout your classroom, school or community. To take it a step further, get others involved too and hold a poster contest at your school.
- **Review your school's policy on bullying and cyberbullying.** Ask your teacher or principal for a copy of the policy and review it carefully. Do you have suggestions on how to improve it? Share your thoughts with teachers and administrators at school.
- **Create a public service announcement.** Get creative and create a public service announcement to educate others about cyberbullying. Share it through school announcements, your own social media or perhaps the school's social media.
- **Start a kindness campaign.** Promote being kind to others in person and online. The sky is the limit with all the creative things you could do throughout the year!
- **Write or call local news stations.** Reach out and express your concerns about cyberbullying. Share how it's affecting students you know and encourage adults to take it seriously.
- **Research the law.** Every state has different laws around cyberbullying. Research the laws in your state and share them with your class. Are they sufficient? Is there anything you would like to see changed?

# Handouts

Included on the following pages are additional resources that you and your students' families may find useful.





# Cyberbullying

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers and tablets. It includes:

- Posting mean, hurtful or embarrassing comments or rumors about someone online
- Threatening to hurt someone or telling them to kill themselves
- Posting a mean or hurtful picture or video
- Pretending to be someone else online in order to get or post personal or false information about someone else
- Posting mean or hateful things online about any race, religion or ethnicity
- Creating a mean or hurtful webpage about someone

How can I stop cyberbullying?

Some teens have learned to stop cyberbullying and keep it from happening. Here's what you can do:

- Do not re-send cyberbullying messages.
- Block contact with cyberbullies.
- Tell your friends to stop cyberbullying.
- Report cyberbullying to a trusted adult.
- Work with other students, teachers and school leaders to create rules against cyberbullying.
- Help your community learn more by holding an assembly or other event.
- Make a contract to be safe online with your parents or caregivers. Come up with the rules together.

# Cyberbullying resources

- Children's Wisconsin, [ParentsActNow.com](https://www.parentsactnow.com)
- Cyberbullying Research Center, [cyberbullying.org](https://www.cyberbullying.org)
- KidsHealth, [kidshealth.org](https://www.kidshealth.org)
- National Crime Prevention Council, [ncpc.org](https://www.ncpc.org)
- Pew Research Center, [pewresearch.org/topics/teens-and-technology/](https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/teens-and-technology/)
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, [stopbullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov)



# Transcript

## Slide 1

Maya: Hi! I'm Maya.

Shaton: And I'm Shaton.

Maya: We're here today to talk about cyberbullying.

Shaton: I think we can all agree that cyberbullying is a problem. We're here to learn exactly what cyberbullying is, why it's so hurtful, and what we can do to stop it.

Maya: We're also going to hear what other teens your age think about all this. But first we need to all agree on a definition.

Shaton: Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers and tablets. It's using technology to repeatedly harass, threaten, or embarrass someone, where the bully has real or perceived power over the victim. Take a look at these real life examples that were sent in to us.

## Slide 2

Amina: I see kids making fun of how others look or dress on social media a lot. It's really stupid. I mean, who cares what someone wears? Who are we to judge?

Braylon: I've seen kids threatening others on social media. It can get pretty intense sometimes. I can't believe some of the things I've seen.

Greta: I've been in group chats that got real ugly real fast and everyone started talking bad about one person. People can be so nasty sometimes!

Brandon: People say things online that they probably wouldn't say to someone's face. Hiding behind their phone or computer makes them feel like there are no consequences to their actions.

Emily: I play a lot of online games and there's always some players who vote to kick someone off their team for no reason. It happens all the time, and they have no idea how hurtful that can be.



### Slide 3

What is cyberbullying?

- a. Making fun of someone's phone (Not quite. Cyberbullying is using technology to repeatedly harass, threaten or embarrass someone.)
- b. Using technology to repeatedly harass, threaten or embarrass someone (That's right! You've been paying attention!)
- c. Stealing someone's computer or tablet (Not quite. Cyberbullying is using technology to repeatedly harass, threaten or embarrass someone.)

### Slide 4

Shaton: Oftentimes someone who is being bullied at school is also being bullied online. So, it feels like they just can't get away from it, even in their own home.

Maya: The stress of being cyberbullied day and night can definitely affect a person's mental health. It can affect a person's mood, energy level, sleep and appetite. It can even lead to anxiety or depression.

Shaton: We're going to hear from two teens who have been cyberbullied and see how it affected them. Click on each of them to hear their story.

### Slide 5

Julius' story: Last year was rough. Kids were always messing with me at school when the teachers weren't looking. Then I started getting threatening texts and things were being said on social media. I didn't know what to do. I felt like I couldn't get away from it. I was dealing with it at school, at home, everywhere.

It got to the point where I could barely get through a day at school, so I did everything I could to not go. And half the time I'd wake up with a stomachache or headache anyway so I'd just stay home. I spent most of my time alone in my room. My mom was always on my case, but I couldn't tell her what was really going on because I knew she'd take away my phone. And that was the only way I had to talk to my friends.

Eventually my school counselor got involved because I was going to school less and less. I ended up telling her everything, and it felt like a weight was lifted off of me. She helped me figure out what steps to take and how to cope. She still checks in with me every once in a while to make sure everything is ok.

I've talked with my mom about everything too, and she was pretty cool about it. She promised she wouldn't take away my phone if I promised to come to her if things got bad again. It really helps knowing there are people who have your back.



Jessica's story: In the summer going into 7th grade I was cyberbullied by some kids who I thought were my friends. They excluded me from our group chat and then made another group chat without me in it, where they said really nasty stuff about me. Some people in the group felt bad and tried to stand up for me, but they really didn't do much. Others told me what was being said. I wasn't invited to anything for the rest of the summer. They even excluded me from going to the fair with them, which had been planned for weeks.

The whole thing made me feel terrible. I felt so lonely that whole summer. I'd cry when I heard about things that they were saying about me. It was hard because these were kids in my neighborhood that I hung out with, but now I couldn't. So, I just stayed in my room alone.

After a while, I began to rely on my other friends, outside of the group, who helped me through it. They let me talk to them about what was happening, and they invited me to go to the fair with them. I also began making more friends through soccer.

I told my mom about everything and she was great. She'd listen and just be there for me. She explained that good friends don't treat each other this way. She really helped me rise above their cruelty and not give them the power to hurt me anymore.

Things weren't perfect when school started back up, but my mom was supportive and talked with the school. The school counselor became my safe person at school that I could go to when things got bad.

It sucks that all this happened, but I think I'm a better person because of it, and I'm definitely a better judge of what it means to be a true friend.

### Slide 6

What are some ways a victim can overcome cyberbullying? Choose all that apply.

- a. Talk to a trusted adult.
- b. Rely on a true friend.
- c. Fight back on social media.
- d. Isolate yourself from everyone.

(Correct A and B remediation): That's right! Those are two ways a victim can overcome cyberbullying.

(Incorrect remediation): Not quite. Two ways a victim can overcome bullying is to talk to an adult and rely on their true friends.



### Slide 7

What are some of the effects cyberbullying can have on the victim? Choose all that apply.

- a. Loneliness
- b. Headaches or stomachaches
- c. Increased popularity
- d. Sadness
- e. There are no effects.

(A, B, D correct remediation): Great job. You're right!

(Incorrect remediation): Sorry, but victims of cyberbullying can experience loneliness, sadness, headaches or stomachaches, among other things.

### Slide 8

Maya: Wow, that really shows us how much of an effect cyberbullying can have on people. All right, it looks like we have a couple questions that came in. The first one, from Zachary, asks what can happen to kids who are cyberbullying others? Are there any consequences for them?

Shaton: That's a great question. Someone who is cyberbullying others can face consequences at school, like being suspended from sports, extracurricular activities, or school altogether. And some types of cyberbullying may break anti-discrimination or harassment laws. So they may face serious legal trouble too.

Maya: Let's take another question. Jenaya wants to know what can you do if you are being cyberbullied? How can you stop it?

Shaton: Another important question. There are some steps you should take right away. First of all, don't respond to cyberbullying messages. Responding when you're upset, or at all, can make things worse.

Maya: Always make sure to save evidence of the bullying if you can. Print out social media posts, save texts, and capture screen shots when cyberbullying occurs. Share this evidence with a trusted adult and they can help you.

Shaton: You should also block the bully. Most apps and gaming platforms allow you to block certain users from messaging you or even being able to "see" you online. Most phones can block certain numbers too.



Maya: Lastly, you should report the cyberbullying. Most social media sites and gaming platforms take cyberbullying seriously, and they can block the bully from using the site in the future. It's also very important to talk with a trusted adult about what's going on so they can support you. If bullying is affecting you at school you should talk with a counselor, social worker, or school administrator. And, if you feel your safety is in danger, you should call your local police immediately.

Shaton: If you are a bystander who is witnessing cyberbullying, there are a few things you can do too. First of all, tell a trusted adult what you are seeing. That could be an adult at school, or at home. Never participate in another person's cyberbullying attempts by forwarding or replying to messages or pictures. That will just encourage them.

### Slide 9

If you are being cyberbullied, it's best to respond right away so the person bullying you knows exactly how you feel.

- a. True (Actually, responding right away, or at all, can make things worse.)
- b. False (That's right. Responding right away, or at all, can actually make things worse.)

### Slide 10

Always make sure to save evidence of cyberbullying if you can.

- a. True (Absolutely! Print out social media posts, save texts, and capture screen shots when cyberbullying occurs. Then share it with a trusted adult who can help you.)
- b. False (Sorry, but it's really important to save any evidence of cyberbullying and share it with a trusted adult who can help you.)

### Slide 11

Shaton: I think a lot of times teens feel helpless when they see cyberbullying, but as we learned today, you can do something about it.

Maya: And remember that you're never in this alone. There are always adults who are willing to help you. Cyberbullying is a serious issue and should never be ignored. Together, we can create a positive culture both online and off.



# Acknowledgements

Children's Wisconsin would like to acknowledge the following individuals for serving as subject matter experts during the development of our 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade cyberbullying content:

Stephanie Hamann, MA, LPC, Children's Wisconsin

Beth Herman, MSE, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Nicole Hosni, School District of Waukesha

Jon Jagermann, Milwaukee Public Schools

Ashley Jors, Germantown School District

Tim Riffel, MS, LPC, Children's Wisconsin

A special thank you to New Berlin West High School for allowing us to film our lesson video at their school.







Contact us:

**Children's Wisconsin  
E-Learning Center**

(866) 228-5670

[healthykids@childrenswi.org](mailto:healthykids@childrenswi.org)

