

Actions To Take IF You Become a Target

Lesson 6, Student Activity 2

1. **Act immediately.** Don't wait to see if it goes away. Find someone you can trust and who you know will help you with the situation, and who you know will be supportive and not think it is your fault.
2. **Block anyone whose behavior is inappropriate or threatening in any way.** Many services allow you to block access to you—for example stopping certain senders from your instant messaging or moving emails from certain people to a spam folder. Don't block online user names (for example an instant messaging user name of Harley666). Instead, block *specific individuals* (the person who 'owns' a user name) or block contact from anybody you don't know. (Bullies can create new identities in a heartbeat.)
3. **Don't respond to the bully.** Don't answer the text messages or the phone call that you see is from this person. If you have already responded once, don't respond again. Resist the urge to see, read or hear the latest insult, but save the material in case it is needed by authorities as evidence or to take action.
4. **Report bullying.** Ask yourself if the bullying feels serious or dangerous enough to contact your local law enforcement agency. When in doubt, talk to your parents and they can call and explain the situation and let law enforcement guide them. If you feel that you are physically at risk in any way, have your parents call the police immediately.

Report bullying to the service provider whose tools were used to bully – the Internet service provider, social networking site, chat room, e-mail or instant messaging service, and so on. They should respond to you and take measures to prevent further abuse through their service. Many services have moderators for each discussion forum you can contact, or features to report abuse (check the Customer Service or Contact Us features) or ways to help block undesirable people (usually in the service settings).

The idea that 'wimps tattle' needs to be challenged. Those who speak up are people who are not willing to be treated poorly. It is a sign of self respect to get help, and it is critically important that targets of bullying get the support they need.

If a service doesn't provide the support you need, change your service and let them know why you changed. Reputable companies should make it easy to report abuse.

If you know the bully and his or her family, determine whether speaking to the parents is the right course of action. (It may or may not be.) If the cyberbully is another child

attending the same school, report it to the school. If the cyberbullying is done by a student of another school, let that school know.

5. **Acknowledge your pain.** Cyberbullying hurts and that hurt is shown in many forms - anger, embarrassment, betrayal, frustration, confusion, fear. Reactions also differ depending on who is doing the bullying, how pervasive it is, who witnessed it, what the nature of the bullying was, if bystanders lent support or not, and so on. Recognizing your pain and finding someone who can affirm that what happened wasn't fair is important validation.
6. **Assess what additional help you may need.** This help may come from friends, the school, school counselors, or other counseling services.

Dear Parent,

We have asked your son or daughter to teach you about actions to take if you become a cyberbullying target in order for you to become more aware of this important topic. After your "lesson", we would appreciate your signature below and any comments you wish to make.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Comments: _____
