

Lesson 6: What To Do If You Are Being Cyberbullied

Preparation

Suggested time: 40-60 minutes

Resources and materials

Student Activities 1, 2

Teacher Resource 1

Lesson Goals

Students will demonstrate an understanding of:

- How to avoid becoming a target of cyberbullying.
- Actions to take if you become a target.
- The target is never at fault.

EALRs and GLEs Addressed

You may find the following EALRs and GLEs useful in relating this curriculum to your overall educational goals.

EALRS and GLEs		
Reading	1.3.1	Understands and applies new vocabulary
	1.3.2	Understands and applies content vocabulary critical to the meaning of text
	2.4.6	Analyzes ideas and concepts in multiple texts
	3.1	Read to learn new information
Writing	2.3.1	Uses a variety of forms/genres
	3.1	Develops ideas and organizes writing
	3.1.1	Analyzes ideas, selects a manageable topic and elaborates using specific, relevant details and examples
	3.1.2	Uses appropriate style
	3.2	Uses an effective organizational structure

Communication	1.1	Uses listening and observation skills and strategies to focus attention and interpret information
	1.1.2	Applies a variety of listening and observation skills/strategies to interpret information
	2.2	Uses interpersonal skills and strategies in a multicultural context to work collaboratively, solve problems and perform tasks
	2.2.1	Uses communication skills that demonstrate respect
	3.2	Uses media and other resources to support presentations
	3.3	Uses effective delivery

Vocabulary

General terms

These concepts are introduced in this lesson.

- **Evidence:** Something that provides proof. Evidence of cyberbullying might include a text message, e-mail, or chat transcript.
- **Ally:** Somebody who is on your side and willing to support you.
- **Authorities:** Those in command. In the context of reporting cyberbullying, possible authorities to turn to include your school teacher, counselor and principal, the police, the FBI, contacts at your ISP who can enforce their rules and discipline members, and so on.

Technical Terms

- **Blocking:** To make settings on a device or in an online service that stops specific people or categories of people from contacting you and viewing or posting to your site.

Teacher Background

There is growing public awareness of the scope and viciousness of cyber bullying that is going on among children and teens. This awareness and self-education is a critical step towards finding a solution to the problem, but meanwhile it is important that we provide specific skills to help those being cyberbullied.

The ability to inflict fear, harm, and humiliation onto a target at any time is one of the most damaging aspects of cyberbullying because the target never gets to feel 'safe'. They aren't safe at home, in their room, or even on vacation because they don't know when the next hate note or call will come. They are constantly anxious that they have to check their blog for malicious postings, or search to see if a new Web site has been created to damage their reputation.

Telling kids to just 'turn off the phone' or not to go online is NOT a solution or an option. The online world is their connection to all their peers, and turning these tools off just isolates them further. There are specific actions students can take to prevent cyberbullying, such as not sharing information about their online activities (for example their online gaming name or passwords) with

others. Students should never respond to a bully. They should save messages they receive as evidence of the bullying in case they need to report the bully to authorities or the Web site where bullying is taking place.

When cyberbullying does begin, it helps if those being bullied seek support and friendship. This helps to discourage the cyberbully, who is much more attracted to an isolated victim. Students should report the bullying activity and discuss their experience with their parents.

Finally, remember that targets of cyberbullying are never at fault. They shouldn't be punished for inadvertently sharing information or a password that bullies use to attack them or for not coming forward sooner. Students must feel that those in authority will listen to them and support them.



Lesson: What To Do If You Are Being Cyberbullied

Topic 1: How to avoid becoming a target of cyberbullying

Activity 1: Avoiding being a target

There are several ways that students can best defend themselves against cyberbullying. They should always consider what information they are sharing about themselves and with whom they are sharing that information. Students also need to be aware of online tools that will support them as well as reporting strategies.

Post the following question on the overhead and discuss with students:

From what you know already about cyberbullying, what steps can you take, specifically on the Internet and using your cell phone, and within your school to keep yourself from being bullied?

Record their ideas on the overhead.

Student Activity 1 (Lesson 6 SA1.doc): How to avoid being a target.

Hand out Student Activity 1. Discuss as a class each of the 6 points covered. Have students notice how many of their ideas from the previous discussion are covered in SA1. As you cover each topic, ask a student volunteer to restate the topic idea in their own words to expand the understanding of the concept.

Ask students to take SA1 home and discuss/teach the concepts with their parents, and return the next day with their parent's signature.

Journal Activity

After the discussion, ask students to take the next 15 minutes to write a journal entry that explains in 1-2 paragraphs what they have learned about avoiding being a target and especially focus on which points they feel would work particularly well for them.



If you want to break this lesson up into smaller modules now might be a good time to take a break!

Topic 2: Actions to take if you become a target

Activity 2: Exploring actions to take if you are targeted by a cyberbully

Bullies attack those who are in some way isolated from others. Targets should make an effort to gather others around them who understand their situation and will not tolerate the bullying. Furthermore, if a student becomes aware of a friend being targeted, they need to defend that person. Students need to understand that if they are being bullied, they are not alone.

Read this scenario to the class and ask them to visualize having this happen to them:

For the last two days, you have gotten text messages on your cell phone from someone you don't know who is asking you weird questions, like 'you don't know me but I know we could have some fun together', 'will you be home alone tonight so we can talk in private', 'are your parents really strict?' They haven't said anything really bad, but it is making you nervous. You responded to the first message, asking them who they are and how they got your cell phone number. They responded they know a lot of your friends, which means that one of your friends might have given this stranger your cell phone number.

Ask students the following question and allow them to give as many ideas as they can think of. Post their ideas on the overhead.

What are some possible ways for you to deal with this situation?

Answers students may give:

- ignore it and hope they go away,
- call them back and find out who they really are,
- ask your friends if they know who it might be,
- go to your school counselor and see if they think this is a problem and what you should do about it,
- talk to your parents and see what they think.

Student Activity 2 (Lesson 6 SA2.doc) Actions to Take If You Become a Target

Hand out Student Activity 2, introducing it as some "tried and true" actions to take if you are cyberbullied.

Divide students into small groups and assign each group one of the six Actions—you may wish to divide #4 into two sections so you have seven groups. Ask each group to take five minutes to read and understand together their Action. Then, ask students to come back to the whole class and summarize in their own words the meaning and importance of their Action.

As each group explains their action, ask them:

Does this action feel like something you would be comfortable doing and do you think it would work for you? Why or why not?

Then, ask students:

Which items on their original list on the overhead would not be the best way to react if they were a target?

For example, if they said they would keep calling the bully back to try to get that person to stop calling them, this is not a wise course of action.

Topic 3: The Target Is Never At Fault

Activity 3: Exploring the idea that the target is never at fault

Teacher Resource 1 (Lesson 6 TR1.doc): The Target Is Never At Fault

The teacher may wish to use Teacher Resource 1 for additional information about Topic 3.

Post the following question on the overhead and discuss with students:

What are some reasons why a target might feel being bullied is their fault?

Possible answers: they feel unpopular, they are embarrassed about how they look, their family situation might cause them discomfort or shame (divorce, or no Dad, etc.), they are uncomfortable about how they have to dress.

List their reasons on the over head, and discuss why feeling this way can cause more problems for both the target and the people who would want to support the target.

Journal activity: List the second and third topic of this lesson on the overhead, as follows

- Actions to take if you become a target
- The target is never at fault

Ask students to write a 4-7 sentence paragraph for each of these two topics explaining what they have learned about that topic and why this information is important.

Homework assignment: Students are to take Student Activity1 and Student Activity 2 home and “teach” their parents about those two topics. Parents will need to sign at the bottom, indicating they have learned about this topic from their student.

Debrief their parent’s responses the next day in class.