

## ***The Target Is Never At Fault***

### **Lesson 6, Teacher Resource 1**

Unfortunately, research indicates that at least 40 percent of teen targets don't tell anyone about cyberbullying. This may be because they may feel that something they have done has brought on the bullying.

Think about it: targets already feel vulnerable and isolated. Unless they can feel confident that telling an adult about the bullying is going to help, they are unlikely to feel safe in coming forward. This is a legitimate concern as bungled responses to cyberbullying often result in more harm to the target.

Parents and educators must be prepared to correctly and consistently respond in ways that protect and help targets. The first thing targets and adults should understand is that the target is never at fault. Many kids avoid reporting harassment online because they are afraid to hear a parent say "Why would you be so dumb as to let that kid know your online name (or cell phone number, or whatever piece of information might have been used by the bully against him)?"

Worse, many parents respond by shutting down the child's Internet access. Having their online rights taken away punishes the target, though it may be meant to close up a channel of attack.

Encourage students to have a talk with their parents about cyberbullying before it happens to them so they have a sense of how their parents would respond if they came to them for help.