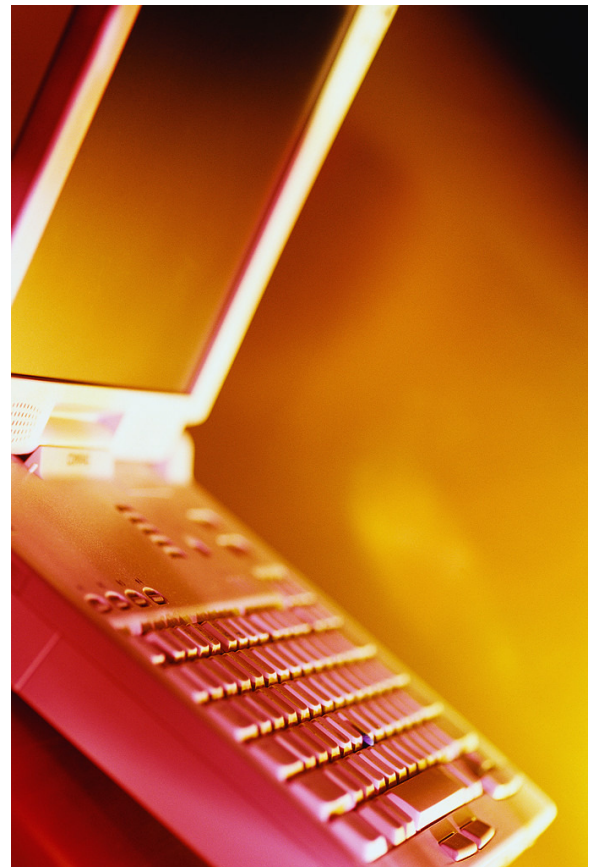


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Cyber-Bullying: ***Our Kids' New Reality***

**A Kids Help Phone Research Study
of Kids Online**



April 2007

Researched and written by:

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Based on the following data:

- Kids Help Phone and Jeunesse, J'écoute online survey conducted December 20, 2006 – January 20, 2007

Key recommendations:

- Donna Hansplant, Vice President, Counselling Services, Kids Help Phone
- Jason Montgomery, Director of Counselling Services (Toronto), Kids Help Phone

Posts in the body of the report have been edited for grammar. Some posts included in the French report have been translated from English.

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Introduction

As technology, including the Internet, has become a more widely-used and accessible tool, kids' social networks have grown and changed in ways that generations of people not raised online are just beginning to understand.

For teens, the Internet is a community. It is no longer a place they visit just to get information or play games. The online world is their world and while it comes with many of the benefits and challenges of the offline world, it also has its own unique set of rules, behaviours and etiquettes that can have both positive and negative effects. One of those negative effects is the introduction of cyber-bullying behaviour.

Bullying used to happen only in the school yard. But now, with computers and cell phones, it happens in cyber-space too. And yet, despite the publicity this issue has received over the past months and years, cyber-bullying is still a relatively new phenomenon. There is still much to learn about why kids bully online, what impact cyber-bullying has on kids, and how we can work together to reduce the cases of cyber-bullying in Canada and worldwide.

One of the first charity sites in Canada, Kids Help Phone was a pioneer in the harnessing of online technology to benefit children. Today our professional counsellors are working to understand how virtual relationships impact face-to-face relationships as well as the emotional and mental health of our young people.

Because kids come to us and trust us with their questions and concerns, Kids Help Phone has a unique and insightful record of what kids are saying when it comes to bullying of all kinds. In 2003, we released *Bullying Trends and Interventions*, a study of callers to Kids Help Phone. Three years later we followed that report with *Make it stop: Kids talk to Kids Help Phone about bullying*, an analysis of contacts about bullying to our phone and online services.

And now, as questions to our service about online bullying continue to increase, we have gone to the kids who access our online service and asked them to share with us their insights into cyber-bullying.

This report is an analysis of responses to an online survey posted to www.kidshelpphone.ca over a four-week period. It tells a compelling story in the words of young people who are looking for ways to deal with the issue of cyber-bullying. The report's main goal is to shed some light on cyber-bullying behaviour and the impact those behaviours can have on Canadian kids. It is our hope that this report will help inform emerging policies, education and programming.



Donna Hansplant
Vice President, Counselling Services
Kids Help Phone

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Cyber-Bullying: Our Kids' New Reality

A Kids Help Phone Research Study of Kids Online

Sometimes, people can get very threatened. Sometimes it's just calling names. Sometimes it just hurts the person inside, but sometimes it's like blackmailing and sometimes it can lead to real violence. Like if someone threatens you, or say that if you don't give them something, this or that will happen to you, and if it really happens, it's no small matter. Cyber-bullying cannot be taken lightly.

(Response to cyber-bullying study online)

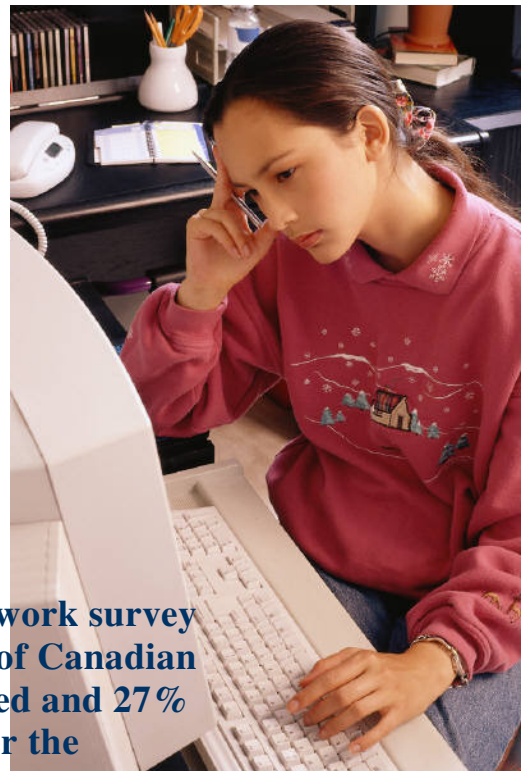


Background

Kids Help Phone is a one-of-a-kind counselling, referral and information service for kids across Canada. Since 1989 it has provided confidential, toll-free telephone service on a 24 hour, 365 day basis. In 1996 Kids Help Phone introduced web-based services and since May 2002, they have offered kids access to anonymous online counselling and support services.

Calls and online contacts to Kids Help Phone about bullying have been growing in recent years. Last year's report, *Make it stop: Kids talk to Kids Help Phone about bullying*, was Kids Help Phone's second on the subject and was based on kids' own stories as told to Kids Help Phone counsellors. The stories left no question as to the serious impacts that bullying can have on kids' lives.

This year's report looks specifically at online bullying in an attempt to better understand kids' experiences and effectively contribute to solutions for kids, schools and parents.



A Media Awareness Network survey in 2005 found that 34% of Canadian students have been bullied and 27% of these were bullied over the Internet.

(www.bewebaware.ca)

What is Cyber-Bullying?

“ Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and defamatory online personal polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others. ”

(Bell Belsey, www.cyberbullying.ca)

Like bullying of all types, cyber-bullying often happens in the context of a peer group and involves several basic elements including:

- Unequal power
- Hurtful actions
- Repetitive behaviours

But as a phenomenon of communication technology, cyber-bullying has its own set of unique attributes, such as:

- Bully can remain anonymous
- Bully can pretend to be another person
- Bullying can happen anywhere, anytime, given that cyber-space is everywhere all of the time
- Bullying can take many forms within the cyber-space environment
- Capacity for instant and limitless dissemination of words and images

The end result is that the cyber-bullying victim can feel even more overwhelmed and powerless than they might in a traditional bullying situation. Cyber-bullying can hit new levels of intimidation and distress.

How does cyber-bullying work?

The main cyber-bullying methods were mentioned above and most people are familiar with the communication potential of e-mail, text messaging (e.g., Windows Live Messenger) and cell phones.

Perhaps less familiar to some is the phenomenon of social networking. Social networking sites create online communities centred around common interests. Members post profiles that provide personal information about themselves and their interests. These sites allow members to connect with one another and interact through direct messaging and/or message boards. New sites are

always emerging and their respective popularity ebbs and flows over time. Sites include MySpace, Facebook and Nexopia. Interactive gaming is another cyber-location where kids, often strangers to one another, can meet. It is important to note, however, that while strangers do post a risk online, when it comes to bullying the main threat is from friends and people the online user knows.

The combinations and permutations of potential cyber-bullying actions using the various available modes are plentiful.

Basis of this report: The Kids Help Phone Cyber-bullying Survey

Name-calling. Threats. Rumours. Harassment. These things used to happen to kids face to face. But now, with computers and cell phones, they happen in cyber-space, too. It's generally known as 'online bullying' or 'cyber-bullying' and basically it means using technology – such as a computer or cell phone – to hurt someone. A few examples include sending mean and hurtful emails or text messages, posting embarrassing photos or spreading rumours in a chat room.

(Kids Help Phone online survey)

Bullying occurs as part of a social relationship. At Kids Help Phone, counsellors hear from kids about bullying behaviours that happen across a wide variety of social settings – at home, at school, through sports teams and online. Because online is just one more place where bullying can occur, the “cyber” portion of cyber-bullying needs to be viewed as a tool of the bully, not as a new or unique problem in and of itself.

Because questions to Kids Help Phone about cyber-bullying have been on the rise over the past few years, and because our counsellors have been increasingly supporting kids through online bullying experiences, Kids Help Phone felt it would be helpful to ask kids specifically about their online behaviours in an effort to gain insight into their experiences specific to cyber-bullying. An online survey was developed and posted in English and French at www.kidshelpphone.ca between December 20, 2006 and January 20, 2007.

The survey consisted of four main areas of interest:

- Experiences of being bullied online
- Experiences of being an online bully
- Witnessing online bullying, and
- Ideas for solutions to the cyber-bullying problem

Each section included several multiple choice items and a final open-ended question to elicit kids' experiences and ideas in their own words. The survey is attached as Appendix A.

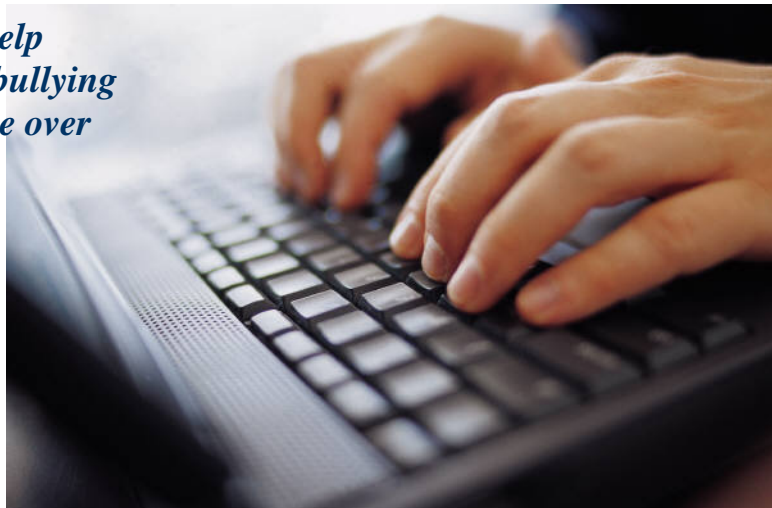
The content of this report is based on the results from the survey and reinforced by counsellor feedback and online posts from Kids Help Phone’s “Ask a Counsellor” online service. The results are treated descriptively and should be viewed as a snapshot. The quotes that comprise the bulk of this report were collected from the open-ended questions in the survey and from “Ask a Counsellor” posts. The key recommendations from Kids Help Phone’s Counselling Services department go beyond the report to include counsellors’ total experience with counselling Canadian kids.

In total, there were 2,474 surveys submitted, including 186 in French. Of these, 76% of respondents were female and 54% indicated that they were between the ages of 13 and 15 years old.

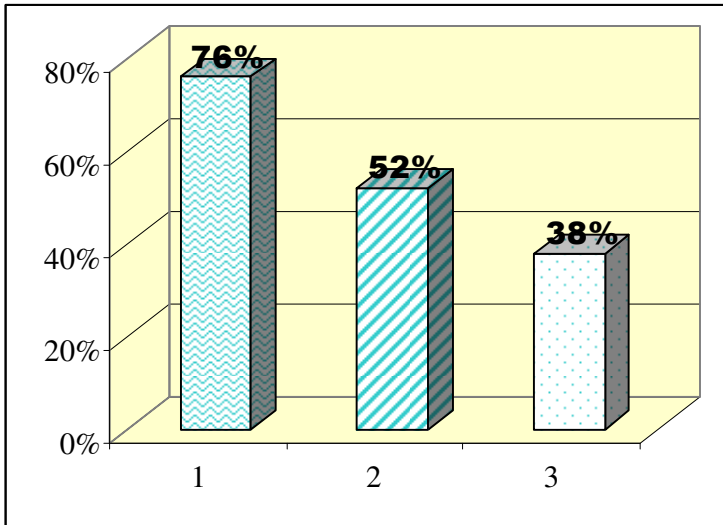
- Over 70% of respondents reported having been bullied online.
- 44% of respondents reported having bullied someone online at least once.

(Note: The survey questions were posed in as neutral a way as possible and allowed respondents great latitude in determining whether or not they had experiences with cyber-bullying.)

Questions to Kids Help Phone about cyber-bullying have been on the rise over the past few years.

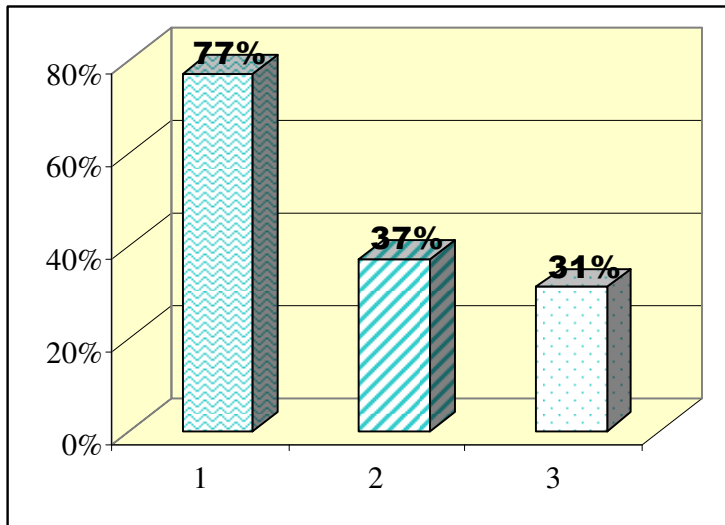


1. When Kids Are Cyber-Bullied



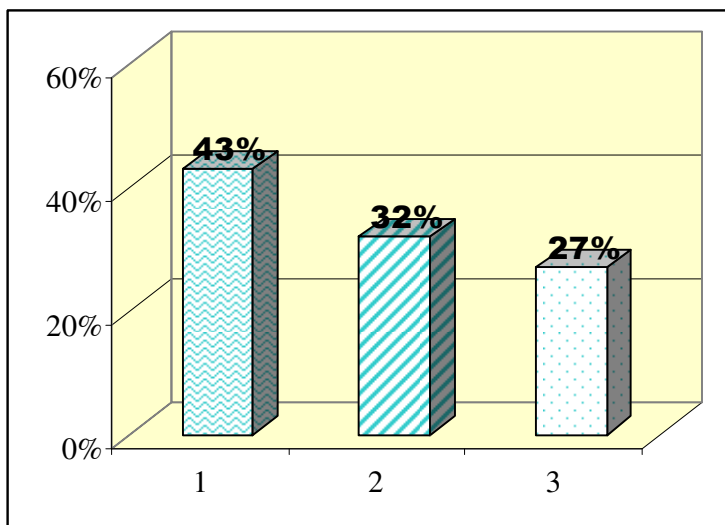
Most frequent online bullying experiences:

1. Being called names/being made to feel bad
2. Having rumours spread about them
3. Being threatened or scared



Most frequent modes of online bullying:

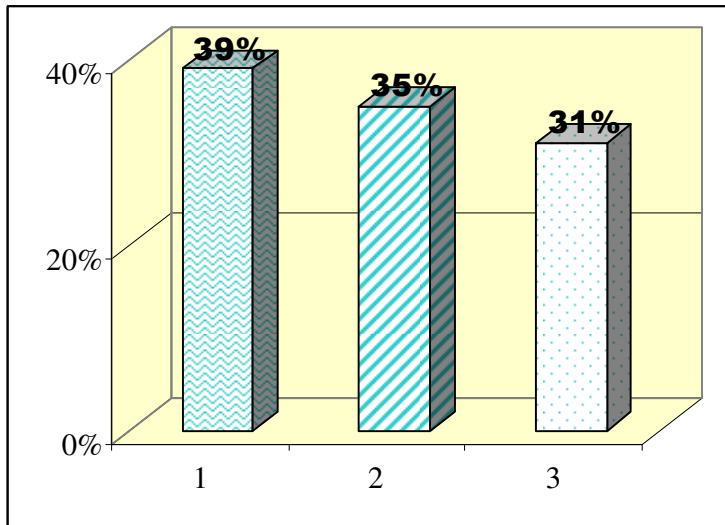
1. Instant messaging (MSN, etc.)
2. E-mail
3. Social networking sites (MySpace, etc.)



Most frequent responses to being bullied online:

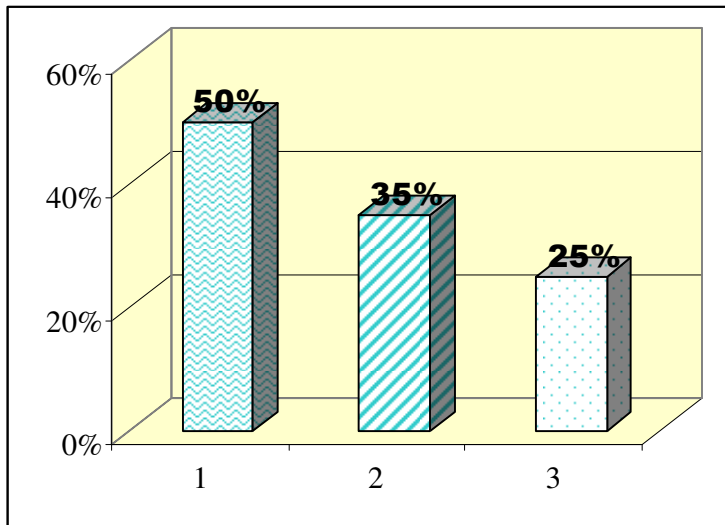
1. Did nothing*
2. Confronted the person who did it
3. Told a friend

* Includes ignoring and blocking



For those who took some action, most frequent outcomes:

1. It helped – made victim feel better
2. It had no impact
3. It stopped the person from doing it again



Most frequent reasons for not telling someone about being cyber-bullied:

1. Didn't think it would help
2. Thought it would get worse
3. Couldn't handle telling anyone

While 70% of survey respondents reported having been cyber bullied at some point in the past, 38% reported having experienced it within the last three months, indicating that like offline bullying, cyber-bullying is not a one-time action. The online behaviours most frequently experienced by kids, based on their responses to a multiple choice question, were name calling, having rumours spread about them and being threatened or scared.

I was playing on Habbo Hotel and the person (since I'm black) made fun of my race. They called me bad words and names. It made me feel like being black was a curse and that I wasn't important.

Most of the time the people bullying me online were the same people that were bullying me in real life, but used technology to escalate it and make the pictures/rumours spread faster and farther. It's a horrible feeling knowing somebody doesn't like you enough that they'd make stuff up about you to send to the entire world.

In junior high some girls would threaten me on MSN and call me names all the time. I was really uncomfortable going to school and often skipped just so that I wouldn't have to be there. Mostly because I would cry a lot and didn't want to end up crying in my class or during break.

My computer got hacked by an old 'friend'. While they were on it, they talked to people on my MSN, AIM and other instant messaging things. They spread lies and people thought it was me.

These themes are reflective of the posts and questions received regularly at Kids Help Phone:

My best friend sent me a conversation her and my girlfriend had on MSN. In it my girlfriend said she thought I was stupid, ugly, dorky, boring and dull. You wouldn't believe all the things she said. I'm failing a grade and might not pass. People have started bullying me and picking on me. My parents don't understand me. No one cares about me. I think my girlfriend is cheating on me. I don't know what to do.

I get sick of my friends rejecting me. Whenever I'm on MSN I try talking to people and they block me. Why is it that they never get along? I spend nights alone and upset. At school, they hardly know I'm around.

Both Kids Help Phone's counselling site and responses to the online survey indicate that online tools are being used quite effectively to expand on or continue offline bullying activities.

How kids feel about being cyber-bullied

The impacts of online bullying are similar to the impacts of any bullying. But in the case of cyber-bullying, there seems to be a greater sense of powerlessness, frustration and betrayal among victims.

The main types of personal impacts described were:

- exclusion
- exposure
- powerlessness
- betrayal
- fear
- frustration

Many girls make fun of me because I chill and hangout with boys mostly. A lot of people call me names and girls always ignore me and try and block me out. I'm so depressed when it happens.

Well at one point almost everyone in my school hated me because these people spreading false things about me. They tried to get all of my friends to hate me and for the most part they succeeded. It made me feel helpless, alone, and worthless if the people whom I thought I could trust completely turned against me so quickly.

About six months ago my friend or my so called friend had a hate page on her web site and I was on it there were many names that just weren't necessary to say. I felt like she betrayed me I felt angry I couldn't help it, then people started making fun of me at school and I had no self confidences so I started to hurt myself and everyone found out then I was just so scared of what they were going to do to me that I almost committed suicide.

There also seemed to be a sense of surprise among many respondents about the public nature of online spaces – many seemed unaware that cyber-space is not a personal space and that the flow of information may be difficult to control.

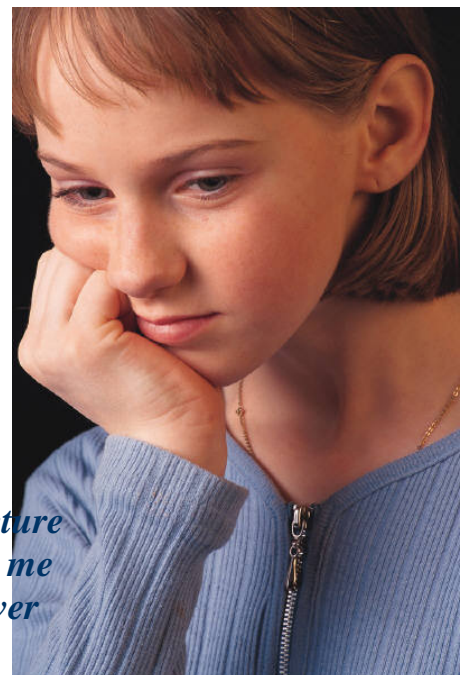
I guess I make a lot of enemies, but its weird because I became used to the fact of people calling me what they do, because its so common, but when people post things that are completely exposed and for anyone to read about me and my personal life, it makes me feel so insecure and how I could so easily be found out (which is one of my very things I don't want happening- the reason why I go on is to be myself yet be anonymous). My name and picture and stories about me were posted all over places, and I felt horrible.

Anything could happen online. It makes people scared and worried that other people that they know will find out and there's usually nothing you can do about it because the person can just threaten you that they will tell other people about your personal secrets or start a rumour.

The idea that many young people either don't understand that "online" means public, or that they don't understand the implications of having information on a public forum that is accessible to everyone and difficult to police also comes up repeatedly in Kids Help Phone's "Ask a Counsellor" section.

I'll show people my body on cam. I don't know why. I guess I like the complements.

This may sound like an incredibly odd question, but how safe are web cams? I mean, I know they can be dangerous if you're randomly going into chat rooms or meeting people over the Internet and doing stuff, but I mean if it's on and I'm just talking to my boyfriend, how safe is that? Is it possible that someone else could be watching?



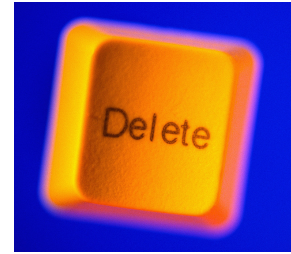
***My name and picture
and stories about me
were posted all over
places, and I felt
horrible.***



What kids do about being bullied online

This question allowed kids to select multiple answers and in many cases those who selected “nothing” also selected responses which would indicate that they view blocking and ignoring strategies as doing nothing.

If someone's giving me a hard time on the Internet or making me feel uncomfortable? I simply just block or ignore them. It's that simple. In real life you can't just block someone out. You HAVE to deal with it.



I was put down, name-called and made fun of. It personally did not affect me, because I know who I am, while they don't. I did not do anything about it, I think I didn't care enough to do so, so I just blocked the person and that was it.

While blocking and ignoring are good decisions and good tools for reducing bullying incidences online, these responses also indicate that kids are not looking at online bullying fully – they are focusing on dealing with the actions and not with the emotional issues that can be caused by these types of behaviours.

Also ranking high on the list of responses to cyber-bullying were confrontation of the bully and telling an adult or a trusted friend.

It really didn't bother me a whole lot... I've just had people call me names and what not over MSN messenger. But the reason it didn't bother me was because I know LOADS of people love me and all that jazz... I just didn't believe what they were saying.

They were threatening me. Saying if I come to school they will hurt me... But I came to school and confronted them. They didn't do it again

Well in the one incident, my 'friends' started threatening to beat me up and stuff like that so I printed out the MSN conversation and gave it to my parents.

A girl in my class was jealous of me hanging out with her friend. She emailed me and called me and my family names and I felt really upset, I then printed the email of and showed it to my teacher at the time and she had the principal deal with it and my mom knew about it as well.

To tell or not to tell

While many kids who responded to the online survey indicated that they would either confront a bully or report bullying behaviour, there remains some debate among young people as to whether or not reporting cyber bullying was the correct course of action and an ultimately helpful response for the victim.

Most kids wont tell people because they are afraid that it will get worse and more then half the time it does!

Telling parents or teachers DOESN'T WORK. Adults always think it stops it but it just makes it worse because then it gives the bully and everyone else something to laugh at you about, or they just get even ANGRIER. It's a stupid idea. you should tell your older friends, or a regular friend, or something like Kids Help Phone.

I was being threatened by someone I knew. she sent me emails saying she was going to beat me up and hurt me really bad, just because we got into an argument. It was a really scary thing and I cried every time I had to go to school because she was there. But I never told anyone. That was probably the biggest mistake I made. If I told someone, they could have stopped it or made me feel better about it. But I was scared they would laugh at me for being scared. But when I finally told my mom, she talked to the school, the girls mom, and the girl, and the whole thing was resolved.

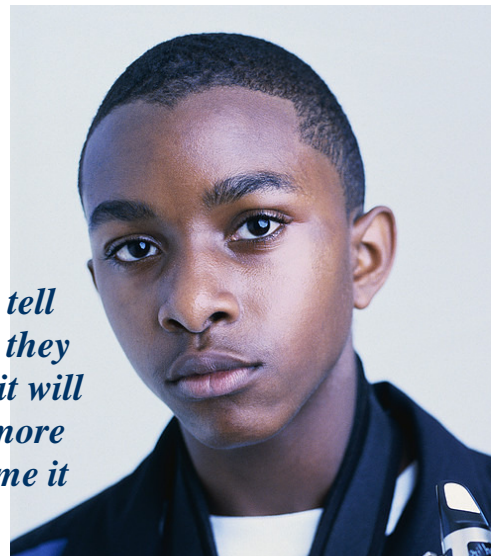
Similar themes are present when examining posts to Kids Help Phone's online counselling service. Like with offline bullying, kids are often targeted more when they report cyber-bullying because the screen of anonymity is gone.

Kids do experience higher rates of success with some reporting methods and, in some instances, this success is a direct result of the bullying behaviour taking place online. For example, some young people report success in reporting bullying when they print out online correspondence and take it with them as evidence of the behaviour. Certainly Kids Help Phone has seen this with kids who access our bullying letter writing tool at kidshelpphone.ca. Having written proof lends credibility to a claim of cyber-bullying.

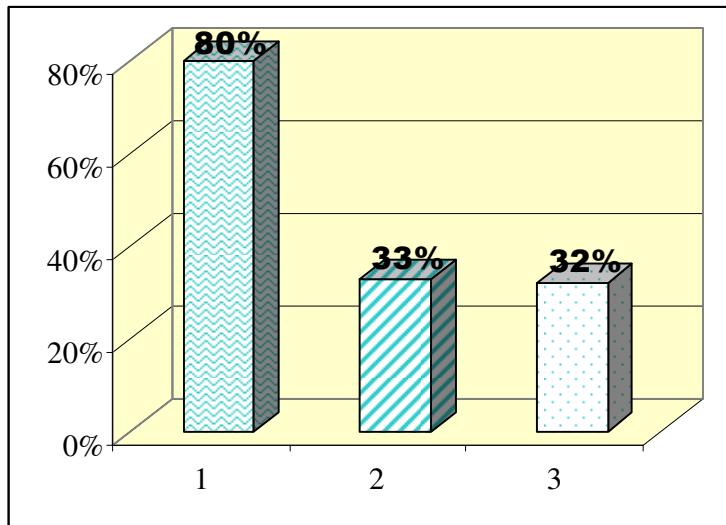
As well, some kids, both through the survey and through "Ask a Counsellor," report success with involving more people in the reporting procedure, for example, discussing situations with school staff, the victim, the bully and the parents or guardians of both victim and bully present.

One positive that comes out of the online bullying experience is that it does give kids an opportunity to stand up for themselves in a way that offline bullying often does not. Blocking, ignoring and reporting may not always be the best solutions to a child's problem and they may not have consistent effectiveness, but they do allow kids to take a measure of control and stand up to the online bully.

Most kids wont tell people because they are afraid that it will get worse and more then half the time it does!

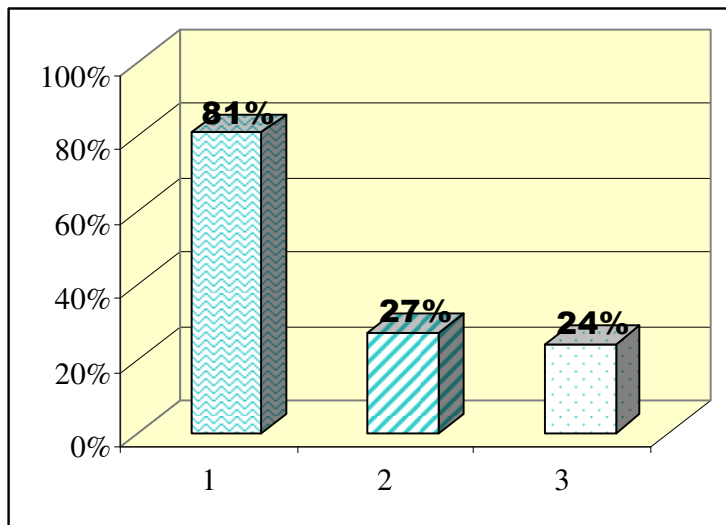


2. When Kids Are Cyber-Bullies



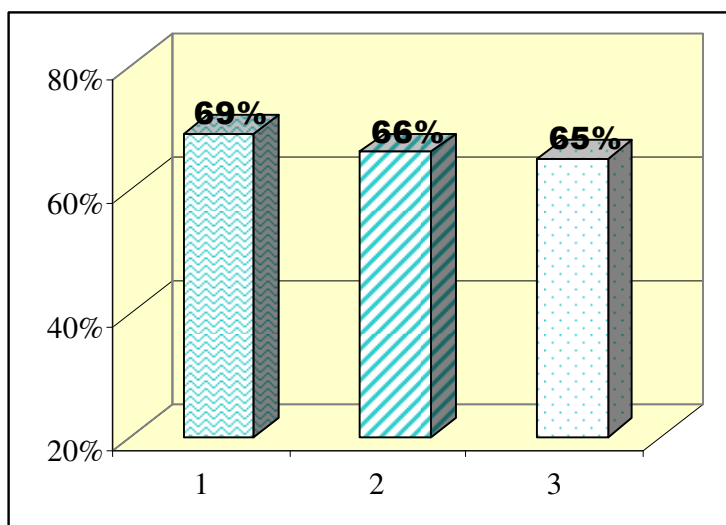
Most frequent cyber-bully behaviours:

1. Called someone names
2. Spread rumours about somebody
3. Pretended to be someone else



Most frequent modes for online bullies:

1. Instant messaging (e.g., MSN)
2. E-mail
3. Social networking sites (e.g., MySpace)



Most frequent reasons for why kids bully online:

1. There's no supervision
2. It can be anonymous
3. It makes revenge easy

When we asked kids if they'd ever bullied someone online, 44% of respondents to the question answered 'yes'.

When kids were asked to tell us more about their experiences as online bullies, their responses tended to describe/elaborate what they'd done, why they did it and how it felt. In these first examples, kids' comments exemplify the response options provided in the survey question on types of cyber-bullying behaviour.

What bullies do online – in their own words

Many of the accounts reflect ongoing, escalating relationship situations that get carried into the cyber-environment, if they haven't indeed started there.

1. Call each other names

Someone was being mean to my friend, so I called that person some mean names. I felt bad after...but it was too late for apologies.

2. Spread rumours

I was really angry at someone, so I spread a rumour that he was a homosexual. He acted like it at school, and had said some things that had made me feel uncomfortable in the past, so I wanted a little revenge. I only did it once, but it made me feel REALLY guilty. I apologized to him, and convince that I lied, and that it was only a rumour.

3. Pretend to be somebody else

Well I felt real bad afterwards, but I pretended to be someone else [one of my friends] to get information on what people thought about me. And I threatened people and intimidated them. I felt guilty afterwards and apologized.

4. Threaten others

The only reason I threatened someone was because they threatened me first! I pretended to be someone else online to try and get some info out of one person...but it didn't work. I got into a fight with one person and started to say shit about them but after about a week or 2 I cleared everything up...now me and that person are fine and I have called someone names, but only when in a online fight. ...really it doesn't get you anywhere...well for me anyways

5. Send personal pictures to others

Because someone at school was making fun of me, I sent incriminating pictures around the school and Internet with them in it.

Why bullies do what they do online

When the question ‘why do kids cyber-bully?’ was put to all of the survey respondents, the reasons most often selected were:

- there’s no supervision
- it’s anonymous
- it allows for easy revenge

Some survey respondents reflected further on the question and tended to suggest that cyber-bullying was generally an act of cowardice. The following comment captures many of the sentiments expressed, including feelings of ambivalence towards the technology.

I think that cyber-bullying happens so often because on the computer, you don't have to face anybody. You can say things that you normally wouldn't have the courage to say to someone's face. This is a good and bad thing. It can help you stand up to someone that you're afraid of and solve problems, but it can also cause the problems. Without facial expressions or tones of voice, you're not able to tell if someone is telling the truth, kidding or lying.

Analysis of the responses to the open-ended question answered only by those who say they’ve bullied others online confirms revenge as a common rationale, along with some additional motivational factors.

It was more of retaliation not a bullying. Someone was a jerk at school so I had to get back at them, but it wasn't that bad at all.

It was wrong, I know. I couldn't tolerate my friend any longer as he was spreading a rumor about me, and soon everyone was making fun of me .. So I sent an email about him, I sent it around a class, and everyone started making fun of him, but in the end... I didn't get the last laugh... That's why I never really did it again... my friend nearly broke down. I kind of felt sorry.

I was mad at an ex so I hacked onto his MSN and talked to this girl I thought he was into. It turns out he was, and so I pretended to be him and told her I hated her, then deleted her. I felt good and not one moment of guilt.

Cyber-bullying allows kids to bully anonymously – they don’t have to see the person they are bullying and they don’t need to engage emotionally with that person in the same way they would if confronting them in person.

It is important to note that many of the survey respondents who listed revenge and retaliation as their reasons for bullying did also indicate a sense of remorse after the fact. This trend is also reflected in posts to “Ask a Counsellor”. Kids know cyber-bullying is wrong, but they need help identifying appropriate outlets for their feelings.

Peer pressure and popularity

Online, kids are rewarded by numbers – number of hits, number of friends, number of links, etc. This is becoming how they define their self-esteem and they are willing to do things online that they would never consider doing offline in an effort to maintain their numbers/popularity.

They are also more susceptible to group pressure because online activities are often group activities – whether that's being part of a group in an online game or being part of a group who are physically together in a room working at one computer.

I only did it because they were bullying me. I also did it because my friends told me to and did it with me. I felt bad but I just did it.

I bullied someone for awhile after I got bullied because I was trying to climb the popularity chain. I did become popular from it but it made me feel really bad. After awhile the person confronted me and I stopped.

In addition to peer pressure, reasons for cyber-bullying that come up throughout the survey results include fun and emotional release.

Bullying someone online is not a right thing to do. I did it for two reasons, that either it was to the person that had bullied me, or my friend(s) was over and I was just going along with it. It was either by anger or just for 'fun'. Now that I think about it, it really isn't a good thing it does, it can really hurt someone.

Sometimes when I'm angry or really bored I just call someone names people I don't know in chat rooms or towns which is the web name gaiaonline.com..... I feel really bad but it released my anger for only a second! Then I feel REALLY bad like 10 times more worst than the way I was feeling previously... which is why I'm not doing that anymore...

How bullies feel about what they do

Respondents who identified as having bullied online were invited via an open-ended survey item to express how they felt about their behaviours. Following are the main themes that emerged.

1. Regretful

I was really mad and not thinking about what I was doing. Afterwards I felt bad about myself.

It made me feel horrible, but I did it to the people that did it to me, so I felt a little like it was revenge, but in the long run, I felt horrible.

2. Positive and Powerful

It made me feel good telling them like it is.

It made me feel powerful, like I was getting back at them.

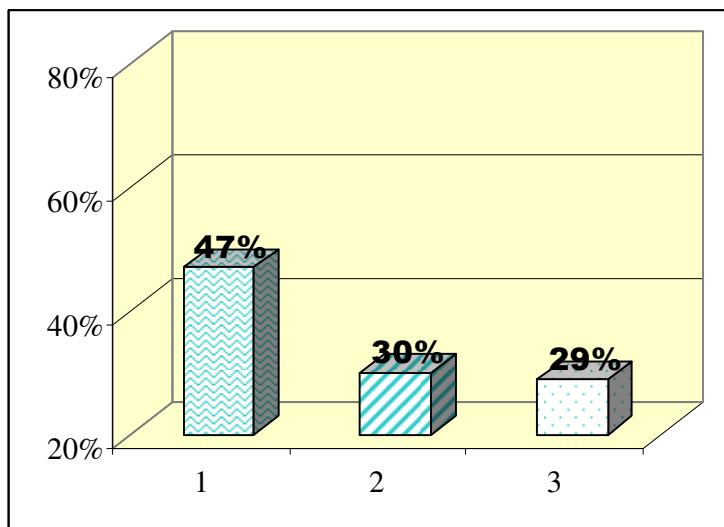
3. Ambivalent

I don't really want to, and I know it's wrong, but I get some kind of joy out of making fun of others and gossiping about them. I also like to pretend to be other people to see what people say about me or to see how they will react to some mean things I can say about the person I am pretending to be.

I didn't really like doing it at first, but then I felt good after because it felt as though, well they're doing it to me, it's only revenge and it's what's coming their way. I hate doing it though, but sometimes I just cant stop.

It is also interesting to note that cyber-bullies have begun using the tools developed to prevent harassment online to bully their victims. One example of this would be the use of blocking and reporting tools to alienate or isolate – hitting the moderator warning button to have the site block the address of their victim.

3. When Kids See Other Kids Being Cyber-Bullied



Most frequent bystander reactions to seeing online bullying:

1. Tried to get the person to stop
2. Watched but didn't participate
3. Objected to the person doing the bullying

Kids were asked whether or not they'd ever seen someone bullied online. More than half (53%) said they had. From the qualitative responses it was apparent that kids had seen others being bullied both while in the online environment themselves and at times while being in the actual presence of the victim.

This one time this girl I know was being unnecessarily mean to my best friend so I tried to defend her and the mean girl started talking bad about both of us! We just blocked her and avoided her for a while and it was all good.

One of my friends was bullying my other friend over MSN while I was at the victims house and I told them to stop.

Friends or strangers – who’s who in cyber-space?

Further analysis of qualitative responses indicated that in cyber-space kids are party to conflicts among friends and strangers in virtually any combination. In other words, kids may find themselves in the presence of a confrontation among others who are all virtual strangers to them. At least in the school yard these ‘strangers’ could be recognized and ‘known’ in some way.

I saw late-teens making fun and swearing at my friends on an online game. I told them to leave us alone but it only made things worse. I didn't really care for what the people had to say so it didn't really affect me.

I was in a Chat Room with all my friends and friends' friends. People were fighting and I invited the victim to another window to talk to them.

I've just seen so many people getting picked on in chat rooms and so at first I tried to ignore it but eventually I told the bullies off and tried to make the victims feel better.

Online, kids have developed a new definition of “knowing” someone. This definition does not involve the physical cues or hard evidence that exists in the offline relationship. For example, knowing someone online may involve having received a photo whereas knowing someone offline involves having met face to face. One allows for verification and one does not.

These themes are also seen often in questions to kidshelpphone.ca:

I used to ho on this thing called Habbo. I'm sure most of you have heard of it or even been on it. If not, it's like an Internet hotel/big chat room. Well, I was always on, making tons of new older friends... I talk to some of the people I met still on MSN. But the thing is, I've been falling in love with this 18 year old boy when I'm only 13! I know, it's sick, but like he is the only person that gets me. And no, I haven't met him in real life yet, but I've known him virtually for years and I've talked to him on the phone before. Is that still dangerous? He wants to come meet me ... but I'm not sure. I trust him TOTALLY! What should I do? I can't just suddenly stop talking to him because he's been the love of my life, the person that makes me happy for years.

What makes kids think they know an online friend? What makes them certain they are safe with these people? How can adults help them analyze these relationships and make decisions about online safety? These are all questions that need to be considered as online communities and teen online activity continues to grow.

Kids' reactions to seeing bullying online

While many of the kids who'd witnessed cyber-bullying took some action to stop it or at least to help the victim, there were also those who reported doing nothing.

The following excerpts illustrate the general range of kids' reactions to observing bullying online.

it seemed like the person who was being bullied knew the bully and I didn't know either so I tried to help but nothing really worked.

Well, my friend was talking to this guy over MSN and he started saying some really mean things. Even though I wasn't participating in the conversation... I encouraged her to say mean things back even though it was wrong.

The 'bully' was saying mean things to one of my friends, we reported 'verbal' [meaning through messages/comments on Nexopia] abuse and their account was disabled along with their e-mail so they would not be able to make another one.

It was really funny at first but when I realized what was happening I just left, cause I know how it feels.

I see it a lot nowadays. One day I saw this girl get bullied online just because she was a little bit different then everyone else. They were calling her stupid, a slut, a whore and a lot of other things too. I felt really bad for her because I got to know her and I knew that she was just the same. I didn't do anything really, I just talked to the girl about it and I told her that I understood.

Why bystanders don't help

When bystanders took no action, it was largely explained in terms of fear of reprisal or loss of friendship. In the online environment even strangers can be bullies, so fear of reprisal is not experienced exclusively between friends.

I didn't really do anything. People always say 'Do something about it, tell someone'. But if you tell someone and the bully finds out, you will become the new victim.

It made me feel kind of restrained because I was afraid if I stuck up for the person being bullied, I would be bullied myself.

And at times, particularly in the context of bullying between strangers, bystander action did not seem appropriate.

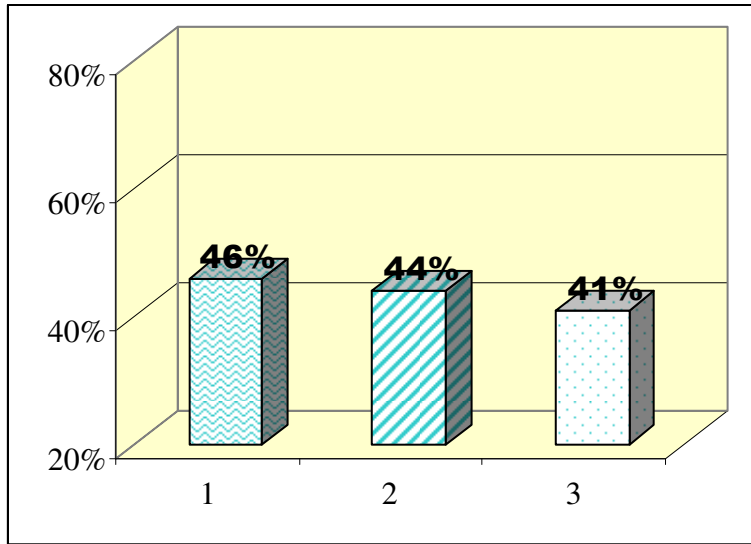
I just saw rude comments on someone's page. I felt sort of bad, but then again I didn't know the person. I didn't do anything at all, its not my business.

I have witnessed cyber-bullying before, such as watching someone send rude or threatening messages to another person, but I usually feel as though it isn't any of my business, and I don't do anything about it.

Every day Kids Help Phone counsellors talk to bystanders – kids who have witnessed their friends, peers, teammates and siblings be bullied online and off. These are kids who do want to help but often feel that it will put them in harm's way. There has been much written and said about ways bystanders can help when witnessing offline bullying. Adults now need to encourage similar action online.

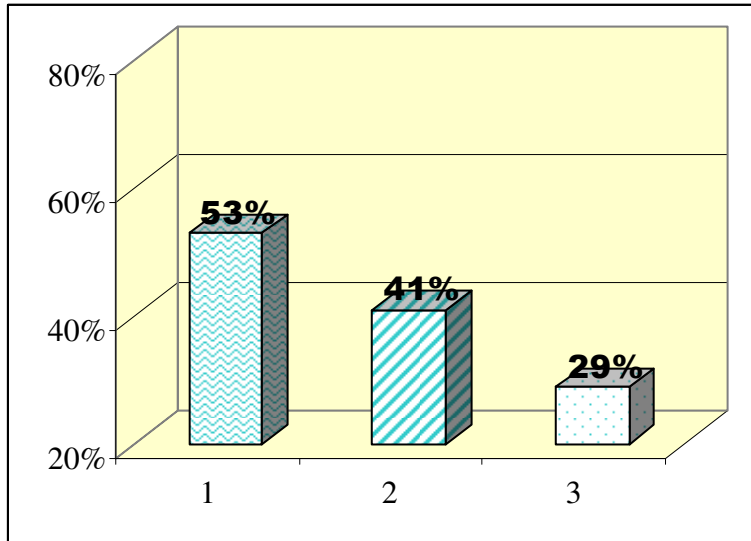
Kids Help Phone suggests kids who witness online bullying tell someone about the situation – a trusted adult, an online moderator, a friend. Counsellors also encourage kids to avoid becoming part of the problem. Kids who see cyber-bullying and who don't feel they are in a position to report it, can leave the environment to send a message that this behaviour is not appropriate.

4. Responses to Online Bullying



Most frequent suggested actions for stopping or preventing cyber-bullying:

1. Anonymous phone line for reporting bullying
2. Zero tolerance at school
3. Punish students who participate in it



Most frequently selected conditions that would make it easier to tell someone about being cyber-bullied:

1. Able to get help anonymously
2. A website that describes what others have done about bullying
3. Someone at school, like a social worker, who could stop the bullying

Adults can offer suggestions for how to deal with cyber-bullying, but in the online world, kids are the experts and they often have workable suggestions for dealing with online behaviours. Survey respondents offered many ideas as to what should be done about online bullying.

What kids can do

1. Know that cyber-space is public space

When my ex-boyfriend and I broke up, I would write about my feelings on a website called Livejournal that all my friends knew about. It was a place to express my sadness and grief without being judged for it. I thought that my ex didn't know about it but he found out and started leaving nasty messages calling me names and telling everyone that what I said about him was a lie. Eventually I got fed up and made my journal Friends Only so that only the people I wanted to read my journal could.

2. Avoid locations that are likely to be problematic

People may be more inclined to 'bully' you if they met you in a chat where you divulged sensitive or private information. Bullying doesn't happen on open forums and discussion boards, or it isn't in the form that we commonly know as bullying, because it is more obvious to posters that what they write is going to stay for many people to see, and it is in a public atmosphere.

I think that they can protect themselves by just not playing video games online. I know for a fact that online games are a BIG factor of online bullying.

3. Ignore the bully

If someone messages you and it's nasty, DON'T reply, just close the conversation and block the person or better yet BLOCK and DELETE them if the situation is really bad. If they send you any emails, don't even read them, just delete them, because it will make you feel sad and worse.

4. Protect personal information

Kids should make sure that they don't give their instant messaging information to anyone who isn't someone they trust, and if something bad happens they should tell someone, so that it can be dealt with.

Don't join any websites such as MySpace, Nexopia, mmt0, or Facebook. If you really do want to join, just don't post your pictures, your email address, your last name, your school.

5. Avoid contact and report the incident

Kids should, obviously, be careful about who they talk to online. They should know how to block disruptive people from talking to them, how to report to a moderator/admin if possible, and learn to completely cut off contact with whoever is bullying online (so, don't even read the messages, it just gets you angry). If the bullying also exists in school, then the cyber-bullying should be mentioned when they report whoever to an adult.

6. Tell a trusted adult

People should tell their parents or someone that they really trust or talk to about it and stand up against the bully with him.

7. Know who your friends are

Kids should not add people to their AIM or MSN if they do not recognize the address.

Well I think that kids should only add people on MSN that they trust and know well enough. If you think you want to add a specific person that you just met in real life to your list, get to know them first.

8. Maintain a life outside of cyberspace

I think that kids need to peel away from the computer and get involved in other activities. we are wasting away behind the monitor and it has now become our lives.

Well, kids today should be more protective of each other and watch each other's back. Stick together all the time and just walk away from anything or anyone that is trying to be a bully. Tell someone who will care and actually do something about it.

Just turn off your computer. Call some friends and go out. That way they can't talk to you unless you see them in person. But because you have your friend with you, both of you can stand up for each other.

What schools and communities can do

1. Create consequences for the bullies

I think schools should let it be known that there is a ZERO-tolerance for bullying. Teachers should look for signs that there is something going on in the classroom; and I completely agree to having punishments for the bullies. Why should they get away for making someone else feel horrible.

Bullies don't usually care that what they are doing is hurting someone, otherwise they wouldn't be doing it in the first place. Simply telling people not to do it won't make a difference. There must be real punishments that are individual to each bully.

2. Provide information

I think that a program which educates kids about cyber-bullying and its effects is best. It should also include something which says, these are the consequences of bullying and here are alternatives. Maybe a program which connects bullies with counsellors to find alternative ways of dealing with programs would be best.

3. Promote student- to-student solutions

Youth should educate youth. Students need anti-bullying committees like I started at my school.

4. Include parents in the solution

Cyber-bullying can hurt and schools and parents are the only people who can do something about it. However, most parents don't know anything about it. Parents need to be informed and kids need to know how much it can hurt. A lot of kids don't come forward because they don't think they will be believed or they think they could get in trouble.

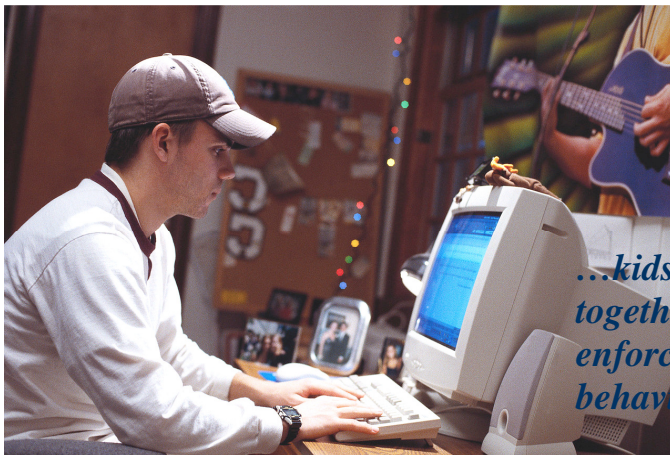
5. Provide an anti-bullying line or promote existing help lines

Have an email where children can report cyber-bullying

I think having a support system for kids, such as a helpline, would be a great idea. Some kids have no one (or feel like they have no one) to talk to about it. It's harder to get through cyber-bullying without support.

No matter what action is taken to help prevent or punish cyber-bullying activity, one theme that clearly emerges both in talking to kids by phone and online, and through responses to the online survey, is that kids and adults need to work together on defining and enforcing acceptable online behaviour and implementing programs to educate and prevent cyber-bullying specifically and bullying as a whole.

Kids Help Phone, in its position as a source of reliable and safe information for kids, will continue working to help kids deal with the emotional impact that bullying of all types can have and we will continue to offer online safety tips through kidshelpphone.ca.



...kids and adults need to work together on defining and enforcing acceptable online behaviour...

Concluding Remarks

This is a unique time in history because children are generally more knowledgeable and immersed the technology than adults. As Internet-available technologies become more accessible to kids, their interactions in cyber-space are increasing at an exponential rate. The power imbalance favours those more technically adept and the perceived anonymity of technology reduces inhibitions – so it should not be surprising that bullying happens in cyber-space.

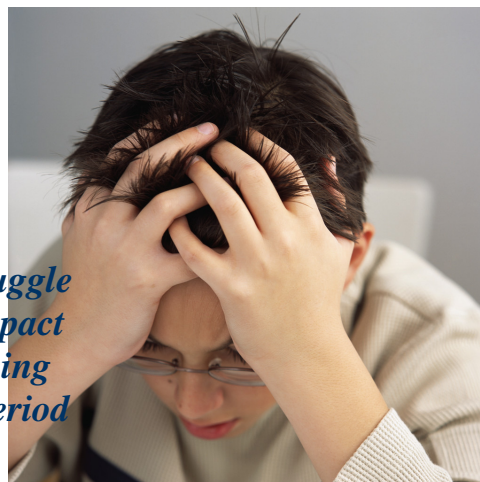
- The social networking site Myspace.com boasts 100 million registered users.
- Online games for the computer and new gaming consoles all have the capability for social interaction amongst the players – who can number in the thousands.
- With the availability of cameras on cell phones normal events that might cause embarrassment now can get immortalized and posted on the Internet – causing notoriety – mostly to the detriment of the victim.

Most kids have the technical expertise to ignore, block or avoid cyber-bullying if they experience it directly. What kids appear to struggle with is the emotional impact that of any kind of bullying causes in a very short period of time. Because technologies are developing at such a rapid pace, the awareness, understanding and coping strategies for the emotional impact of cyber-bullying are in their infancy.

Many kids are very knowledgeable about how to be safe while online – how not to give out personal identifying information to strangers. Where the challenge lies is that their definition of “safe” is different for peers in that even if they are not known that well, they are considered friends online – and “friends” lists are frequently shared and functionally communal.

Kids view these friendships and peer relationships to be as real and valid as relationships they have outside of cyber-space. And for many kids the norm is to be connected to their whole social community through instant messaging, text messaging, email, online games and social networking sites. This includes friends, peers, boyfriends/girlfriends who the child knows in real-life settings as well as those they only know through the Internet.

What kids appear to struggle with is the emotional impact that of any kind of bullying causes in a very short period of time.



This is why the emotional impact is just as salient and powerful as if the bullying was done in person.

One benefit of the perceived anonymity of the online world is that it allows many kids to feel comfortable asserting themselves when they are a victim or witness to cyber-bullying in a way they would not do offline. They can confront the bully or report them to a moderator. Where they often falter is how they confront – which is often through retaliation. The anonymity of the Internet leads to a disconnection in the empathy of the bully and the retaliator. Involving adults is seen as part of a solution by many of the kids – and a key to maintaining safety. However, this is only if adults remain supportive and fair by listening to kids’ concerns and making consequences for the bullies – not the victims. The solution is not to restrict kids from these sites or ban them from computer use. Restricting only leads to feelings of detachment and isolation (at best) or drives the Internet usage underground where there is no possibility for supervision at all (at worst.)

Recommendations

There has already been a lot of thought put into dealing with the problem of cyber-bullying. Initiatives like the Centre for Safe and Responsible Internet Use and Cybertip.ca have developed comprehensive strategies designed to educate kids on being “cyber-safe” and getting parents and schools involved in identifying risk factors and creating policies to address them.

Some suggestions for schools and parents highlighted in this report as well as in reports presented by Dr. Faye Mishna of the University of Toronto include:

- Make it a priority to learn about Internet safety and what your school can do to help keep students safe online
- Talk to your kids about online safety on an ongoing basis and make sure they know the risks of posting photographs, videos and other personal information, which can be used by peers to cyber-bully
- Develop clear rules for technology use on school grounds – include all forms of communication technology in these rules so kids know what their boundaries are when it comes to Internet and cell phone use on school grounds
- Educate kids about the impact cyber-bullying can have on themselves and their peers and work with them to identify strategies for preventing cyber-bullying
- Learn to detect signs of cyber-bullying, including changes in a child’s behaviour or personality, loss of interest in social events, changes in the use of the Internet or other technology and reluctance to attend school when this was not previously a problem
- Let kids know that they can talk to you about issues like bullying – whether the problem is occurring online, through another technology, or in person

- Don't discount or minimize your child's situation by suggesting they "ignore it" or that "it will stop on its own"
- Don't overreact in an effort to protect your children (e.g., suspending their computer privileges if they're being cyber-bullied)
- Make sure your kids know that you support them and that you're there to help them find solutions if they're being cyber-bullied

Parents should also recognize that their children will be using this technology. It is important that adults take the time to be familiar with technology, that they cooperatively develop rules and safety strategies with their kids and that kids know that if they break those rules, they can still talk to parents about it without being afraid of being cut off completely.

Kids know much of what it means to be safe on the Internet against strangers. They even know many of the ways to prevent or counteract bullying that occurs from people they know. What they struggle with is the emotions that are elicited when they are involved in a bullying experience – both as victim and as bully. The immediacy of these Internet tools allow for quick retribution which can often lead to guilt and remorse later. Kids need to know how to express all of these feelings, whom they can express them to safely and where they can go to for help.

A more challenging task is to develop a greater sense of empathy that can extend to Internet friends and contacts and which would prevent a lot of bullying from occurring in the first place, and to encourage the witnessing community to challenge bullies more frequently and prevent backlash and revenge acts.

Finally, there needs to be a shift in how children and youth are socialized in a world that includes fast-developing technologies that allow for virtual relationships. The nature of the Internet enhances the feeling of anonymity and also creates a disconnection from the idea that you are in contact with real people. We need to work together to re-establish the sense that online relationships are real relationships with real people and help kids formulate proper behaviours and etiquettes similar to those found offline.

Kids Help Phone's counselling team has been talking to Canadian kids about bullying behaviour including cyber-bullying for a number of years. We will continue to work together with kids to develop new and successful strategies that young people can use to assist them with socializing on the Internet.



Jason Montgomery
Director, Toronto Counselling Centre
Kids Help Phone



Kids Help Phone Cyber-bullying Study

1. Introduction

Kids Help Phone's Cyber-bullying Study... We want to hear from you!

Name-calling. Threats. Rumours. Harassment. These things used to happen to kids face to face. But now, with computers and cell phones, they happen in cyber-space, too. It's generally known as 'online bullying' or 'cyber-bullying' and basically it means using technology – such as a computer or cell phone - to hurt someone. A few examples include sending mean and hurtful emails or text messages, posting embarrassing photos or spreading rumours in a chat room.

Do you have a cyber-bullying story to tell? Maybe you've been a victim of cyber-bullying? Maybe you've acted like a bully in cyber-space? Maybe you've watched it happen sometime? Or maybe you've been in all three of these situations. No matter what your experiences, we want to hear from you.

Between December 20th and January 20th, we invite you to complete a brief survey and tell us about your online bullying experiences, as well as your ideas as to what can be done about it. It's a growing problem and, with your help, Kids Help Phone wants to be part of the solution.

In the spring, on the Kids Help Phone website, we will post a report based on the results of this study. And while your responses are **completely anonymous**, you should be aware that the stories you send us might be quoted in the report.

Thank you! It will only take a few minutes and your participation is much appreciated.

Credit: The questions were adapted from a survey instrument developed by *Mishna, MacFadden, Gadalla, Daciuk, Solomon, and Cook (2006)*. This survey is funded by Bell Canada and will be conducted in 2007 in the Toronto District School Board and the UJA Board of Jewish Education. Kids Help Phone thanks the authors for permission to share in the use of these questions.

2. Demographics

1. Are you female or male?

- Female
- Male

2. How old are you?

- 12 or younger
- 13
- 14
- 15

- 16
- 17
- 18 or older

3. What province do you live in?

Experiences Being Cyber-Bullied

Please note: The information you provide in this survey is anonymous and will be used for the purpose of the cyber-bullying study only. Text excerpts from the stories received, while anonymous, may be quoted in a final report that will be publicly available. Also note that counsellors will **not** be responding to the information provided here. If you want to speak with a counsellor, please call 1-800-668-6868.

These first few questions are about being bullied online. Following are sections about acting like a bully in cyber-space, and witnessing cyber-bullying. A final section asks for your ideas about solving the problem of cyber-bullying.

4. While online, has anyone ever called you names, threatened you, spread rumours about you or sent around pictures or words that made you uncomfortable? (check as many as apply)

- Yes, it's happened to me in the past 3 months
- Yes, in the past 3 to 6 months
- Yes, in the past 6 to 12 months
- Yes, more than a year ago
- No, I've never been bullied online

5. What did they do? (check as many as apply)

- Called me names/made me feel bad
- Threatened or scared me
- Spread rumours about me
- Sent personal pictures of me to others
- Pretended to be me
- Sent me notes or pictures that made me uncomfortable
- Other (please describe)

6. How did they do it? (check as many as apply)

- Pictures or webcam
- MSN Messenger or another form of instant messaging
- Text message by cell phone
- Website
- Social networking sites like MySpace, Nexopia or Piczo
- Email
- Internet game
- Other (please describe)

7. What did you do about it? (check as many as apply)

- Nothing
- Confronted the person who did it
- Told a parent
- Told a teacher
- Told a friend
- Told someone online (like a moderator or web support person)
- Told Kids Help Phone
- Other (please describe)

8. Did it help?

- Yes, it made me feel better
- Yes, it stopped the person from doing it again
- No, it didn't do anything about it
- No, it made it worse

9. Why didn't you tell someone? (check as many as apply)

- I didn't think it would help
- I didn't have any proof
- I didn't know who the bully was
- I thought I wouldn't be allowed to use the computer any more
- I didn't think I could handle telling anyone
- I thought it would get worse
- Other (please describe)

10. What would make it easier to tell someone about cyber-bullying? (check as many as apply)

- If there was someone at school, like a social worker, to stop bullying
- If I could find a website that tells me what I can do or what other kids have done about bullying
- If I could get help without having to say that it's happening to me
- If my parents talked to me about it
- If my teachers talked to me about it
- If a bully expert came to my school to talk about online bullying
- Other (please describe)

11. Please tell us more about your experiences being bullied online. What happened? How did it make you feel? What did you do about it? Remember, your responses are anonymous, but the stories you send us may be quoted in a final report that will be publicly available. Also, we can't provide a counselling response here, but if telling your story brings up feelings that you need to talk about, you can always call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868.

Experiences as a Cyber-Bully

12. Have you ever bullied someone online - for example, called someone names, threatened them, spread rumours about them, or sent pictures or words that made them uncomfortable?

- Yes
- No

13. What did you do? (check as many as apply)

- Sent personal pictures of someone to others
- Spread rumours about someone
- Threatened someone
- Sent notes or pictures to someone that made them uncomfortable
- Pretended to be someone else online
- Called someone names
- Other (please describe)

14. How did you do it? (check as many as apply)

- Social networking sites like MySpace, Nexopia or Piczo
- Pictures or webcam
- Text message by cell phone
- Website
- Internet game
- MSN Messenger or another form of instant messaging
- Email
- Other (please describe)

15. Please tell us more about your experiences bullying someone online. What happened? How did it make you feel? Remember, your responses are anonymous, but the stories you send us may be quoted in a final report that will be publicly available. Also, we can't provide a counselling response here, but if telling your story brings up feelings that you need to talk about, you can always call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868.

Experiences Seeing Someone Cyber-Bullied

16. Have you ever seen someone being bullied online?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

17. What did you do? (check as many as apply)

- I tried to befriend the victim
- I reported the bullying to someone who could help
- I contacted Kids Help Phone
- I left the online environment
- I tried to get the person to stop
- I objected, but not to the person doing the bullying
- I joined in
- I watched but didn't participate
- I objected to the person doing the bullying
- Other (please describe)

18. Please tell us more about your experiences as a person who has seen cyber-bullying happen. What happened? How did it make you feel? What did you do? Remember, your responses are anonymous, but the stories you send us may be quoted in a final report that will be publicly available. Also, we can't provide a counselling response here, but if telling your story brings up feelings that you need to talk about, you can always call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868.

What Can Be Done About Cyber-bullying?

19. Why do you think people cyber-bully? (check all that apply)

- There are always people to bully online
- You can do it without anyone knowing it's you
- There's no supervision
- It's an easy way to get back at people
- It lets the bullying continue after school
- Other (please describe)

20. Below are some suggestions for stopping or preventing cyber-bullying. Please choose the THREE BEST SOLUTIONS (1 – best; 2 – second best; 3 – third best).

- Transfer bullies to another school
- Get parents, students and school staff together to talk about solutions
- Involve parents of bullies and victims
- Punish students who participate in cyber-bullying
- Work out a solution between bully and victim
- Develop programs to teach kids about cyber-bullying and its effects
- Have a zero-tolerance policy toward cyber-bullying
- Expel or suspend the bullies
- Set up an anonymous phone line where kids can report cyber-bullying
- Remove computer and cell phone privileges at home or school
- Call the police to arrest the bullies
- Make it known that schools don't tolerate cyber-bullying

21. Please tell us more about your thoughts on cyber-bullying and your ideas for stopping or preventing it. What can kids do to protect themselves from cyber-bullying? Remember, your responses are anonymous, but the stories you send us may be quoted in a final report that will be publicly available. Also, we can't provide a counselling response here, but if telling your story brings up feelings that you need to talk about, you can always call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868.

Thank You!

Thanks for helping us with our cyber-bullying study!

If you need to talk to someone about a bullying situation that you've experienced or witnessed, please call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 and talk to one of our counsellors.

Remember, all of the information you shared with us is totally anonymous. But some of the stories you shared could be included, word-for-word, in the study Kids Help Phone is publishing and releasing in the spring.

Thanks again!
Kids Help Phone

About Kids Help Phone

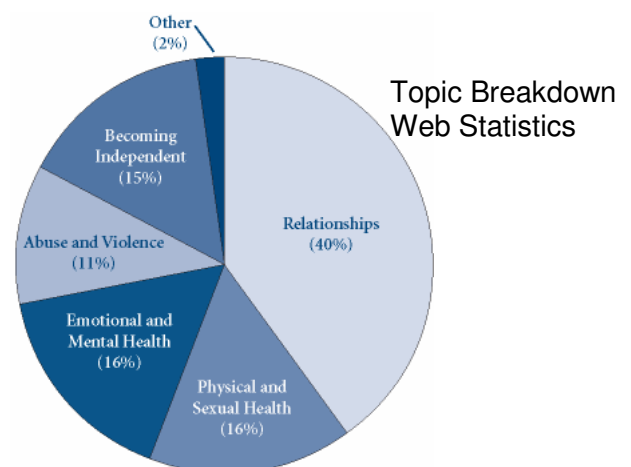
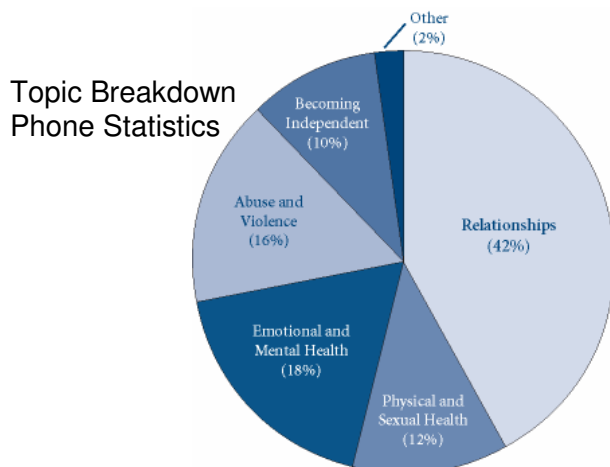
Last year Kids Help Phone helped young people in need from almost 3,000 Canadian communities more than 1.5 million times by providing counselling, referral and information on the phone and online.

More than two-thirds of young people who reach out to Kids Help Phone every day are well-functioning kids dealing with the everyday pressures of growing up or who are faced with a problem they don't know how to handle. The other third are kids at risk who don't have the confidence or the skills to approach the challenges of growing up and who are at risk of turning to potentially dangerous solutions because they lack the supports necessary to deal with their problems.

We help Canadian kids in many ways:

- **Counselling** – Our professional counsellors provide caring, compassionate and respectful counselling on the phone and on the web.
- **Referral** – Each Kids Help Phone counsellor has access to a database of more than 36,000 community and social service resources located across Canada, so kids can be connected to help right in their own community.
- **Information** – Young people can access our “Help Yourself” services online at kidshelpphone.ca. These include reading questions from other kids in the “Ask a Counsellor” section and benefiting from the counsellors’ responses to those questions; entries to the “Express Yourself” section; and visits to the informational topic library. Information is also provided on the phone.

No matter what the problem or concern, when Canadian kids reach out for help, we are there for them with the immediate, caring, professional support and information they need – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.





Bullying Tips from kidshelpphone.ca

Do You Target Others?

Here are some things to try and some things to remember if you harass others and you're ready to stop.

SOME THINGS TO TRY

Talk to someone you trust, like your parents, a friend, a teacher, a counsellor or coach. They can offer support and help you find ways of getting along with others better.

Put yourself in other teens' shoes... think about what it must feel like to be beat up, threatened or excluded. Would you want to be treated that way?

Make an excuse and walk away from situations where you might bully.

Resist peer pressure to bully... do what's right.

Find ways to use your power and influence in a positive rather than a negative way.

Avoid situations where you've bullied others in the past.

Apologize to the people you've hurt... even if it means sending an anonymous note.

Hang out with friends who will help keep you in check.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

Take responsibility for what you've done and the students you have hurt.

Remember that everyone is unique and different... different doesn't mean worse or better than you.

Know that just because others watch and laugh, it doesn't mean they like it when you target others.

Avoid using stereotypes and labels. See people as individuals, not as sexist, racist and other stereotypes.

It's okay to ask for help.

You don't have to do this on your own... it's hard to change.

Suitable For
Ages 13 & Up

1 800 668 6868
Kids Help Phone
kidshelpphone.ca

**FREE ANONYMOUS COUNSELLING
24/7 BY PHONE OR BY WEB.**

Do You Feel Targeted?

Here are some things to try and some things to remember if you're being harassed and want it to stop.

SOME THINGS TO TRY

Talk to someone you trust, like your parents, a friend, a teacher, a counsellor or coach. They can offer support and help develop a plan to end the harassment.

Think about how your behavior may be making the problem bigger or smaller.

Ignore the bullying and walk away... make them think you just don't care.

Laugh it off... humour shows you're not bothered.

Stay close to students you can count on to stick up for you.

Stay away from areas where bullying tends to happen.

Act confident... hold your head up, make eye contact, and walk confidently.

Make the time to do things that help you feel good about yourself.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

You're not alone... lots of teens struggle with bullying and harassment.

Do what's right... carrying a weapon might get you in trouble.

Keep your cool and walk away, even though you might be upset.

Share your feelings with people you trust... you don't have to struggle alone.

It's not your fault... no one deserves to be bullied.

Be assertive, not aggressive... fighting back can make things worse.

It's okay to ask for help... you don't have to solve this problem on your own.

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Do You Watch Other Youth Being Targeted?

Here are some things to try and some things to remember if you see others being harassed and you want to make it stop.

SOME THINGS TO TRY

Talk to someone you trust, like your parents, a friend, a teacher, a counsellor or coach. It's their job to intervene and make the bullying stop.

Walk away and get help... if you stay and watch you're part of the problem. If you get help, you're part of the solution.

Be assertive, not aggressive... speaking out helps, fighting and insulting others doesn't.

Ask for help from friends in speaking out against harassment... there's strength in numbers.

Make an anonymous report to school staff if it's too hard to speak out publicly.

Invite the student being harassed to leave the situation with you.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

Be aware... wouldn't you want someone to step in if you were being harassed?

Avoid encouraging the harassment by watching and laughing... send the message that you don't like what's going on. Turn away, don't watch.

It only takes one person to take a stand before others will follow their lead. Have the courage to be that person.

Stand up for others who are targeted... they may not be able to do it for themselves.

Stay safe... if speaking out doesn't make the bullying stop; get help from someone who can safely intervene.

Violence and harassment is everyone's problem and we all have to get involved if it's going to stop.

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Words of Thanks from the Kids Help Phone Survey

I've been treated uncomfortably through out various activities on the net. the worst experiences happen online on MSN messenger because its people you know and who know you. Other activities through the net like chat rooms are actually LESS WORSE because people on the other end of the computer don't actually KNOW YOU. I talk to Kids Help Phone about my problems because they don't judge your for whatever and its nice to let your feelings out THANK YOU! =)



I told KIDS HELP PHONE. It helped me, but I still left my school. I appreciated the efforts made by the counsellors, but I still didn't feel safe because more people were turning against me. Now, though, I encourage more Canadian kids to use KIDS HELP PHONE, because in the country I used to live in, we don't have it.



Well, First, I was just talking to my friend and then some other MSN bubble just popped out of nowhere then, someone just kept insulting me and calling me names. so I went to Kids Help Phone.ca and that helped a lot so thanks for making this site.



a bully at school was bullying my friend but thank to Kids Help Phone the bully was the nicest person in school instead of the meanest.



Well, I was talking to my boyfriend C on MSN and then I told him that his friend A has been talking behind his back and being really mean. So C added A in the conversation and C started saying really mean things to A and he started swearing and they started arguing and trying to get me to join their side of the argument. So I just left the conversation because I didn't like seeing my boyfriend and my guy friend yelling and being mean to each other and I didn't like watching C spread more rumors about A and I didn't like watching A spread rumors about C... So I tried to stay out of it but then I got really annoyed by it so I contacted Kids Help Phone and they gave me some advice on how to help them. So I took the advice and now I'm friends with C and A again but they still don't want to be friends in the end. It made me feel kind of guilty since their friendship has been ruined by me trying to help them, but I did my best.



I wished there was some way I could of helped her deal with it but then I recommended Kids Help Phone.



Well when I talked to Kids Help Phone they told me that the girl that was bullying me could be charged! I think if you raise lawful awareness kids will listen more.



I enjoy talking to my friends on MSN and catching up on the latest news, so I don't think it should be banned. I think there should be a phone line, just like Kids Help Phone. Too many people are on Kids Help Phone and I can't get through... there should be another.



...block the person if they are making you uncomfortable, I no it is hard to talk to your parents but that's why we have Kids Help Phone because in reality you cant trust your parents or your friends so at least you have someone to talk to that wont judge you...and if you don't want to call type you emotions in the message board on khp.com maybe if there was a chat between counsellor and person that would be good.



I think its best to call Kids Help Phone because the people there always make things right.

I talk to Kids Help Phone about my problems because they don't judge your for whatever and its nice to let your feelings out...





1 800 668 6868

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kidshelpphone.ca

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