

CYBER-STALKING/CYBER BULLYING SAFETY TIPS

Stalking can occur anywhere, in all age groups and between coworkers, spouses, friends, classmates or strangers — every type of relationship has the potential for stalking situations. The following are some tips for reducing the potential for cyber-stalking and cyber-bullying.

KEEP PERSONAL INFORMATION PRIVATE

Personal photos, phone numbers, passwords, home addresses, birthdays and other information is frequently used by cyber-stalkers/bullies.

REFRAIN FROM RESPONDING

Refrain from responding to derogatory online communications and harassment, as the bully is likely looking to get a reaction to gain power. However, do not ignore the problem; keep a record of the communications in case they are needed as evidence.

SAVE THE EVIDENCE

Keep copies of all communications, including e-mails (with header information) and text messages. Also, take screen shots of comments and images and note the time and date of the harassment.

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UTILIZE REPORTING OR ABUSE TOOLS

Familiarize yourself with the reporting tools on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat) in order to have offensive content and accounts of cyber-bullies removed. If the abuse includes threats of physical harm, inform parents and contact the police.

REFRAIN FROM RETALIATING

Refrain from retaliating by sending nasty or derogatory e-mails back to the cyber-bully as this reinforces the bully's behaviour and maintains the cycle of bullying.

BLOCK OR BAN

You can block or ban the cyber-bully by utilizing privacy tools on social media, or leave any chat room where cyber-bullying is occurring. Aggressors sometimes get bored and stop the harassment when they receive no reaction.

SEEK HELP

Talk to a friend or trusted adult, such as a parent, school counsellor, teacher, principal or school resource officer.

DO NOT BE A BYSTANDER

Forwarding harassing messages or doing nothing only empowers cyber-bullies. Try to help victims by offering support and assisting them to report the abuse.