

There's help out there if you need it

CYBER BULLYING HURTS! IT HURTS THOSE WHO ARE BEING BULLIED BUT ALSO, SURPRISINGLY, THOSE WHO ARE DOING THE BULLYING.

If you are being cyber bullied it can have a significant impact on your life. Cyber bullying can have a greater impact than face-to-face bullying because it is often witnessed by a wider audience and can be kept and re-read/re-lived, meaning escaping it can often be difficult.

As with any sort of trauma, cyber bullying will affect people differently. Its impact depends on the intensity and nature of the cyber bullying as well as the support and coping skills available to the person being bullied, but for some it can lead to:

- having trouble sleeping and concentrating;
- withdrawing from family and friends leading to loneliness and/or isolation;
- being moody;
- feeling unwell;
- not wanting to go to school;
- embarrassment;
- stress;
- anger;
- decreased self-confidence.

Cyber bullying can also lead to mental health issues and difficulties like:

- **Depression:** when feelings of sadness last longer than two weeks and make living your day to day life difficult. Depression is treatable, but seeking help early is important.
- **Anxiety:** Anxiety is another word for worry. Worrying is a normal part of everyday life. We all worry about things and feel anxious before big events like exams. Anxiety can become a problem when it becomes more intense, lasts longer, causes distress and interferes with daily life. If your worrying is making it hard for you to keep up in work/uni/school or is causing you to have problems with family/friends/partners it might be a good idea to get some support.
- **Thoughts of suicide:** If you are, or know someone, who is thinking about suicide you need to get help immediately. Talk to someone you trust and arrange to get support from a professional. Thinking about suicide is not uncommon in young people, but any report of suicidal thinking should be taken seriously and needs to be assessed.

These are really serious issues and often they carry on long after the cyber bullying has stopped. It's really important if you are experiencing any of these issues, or if you are being cyber bullied, that you speak to someone about it to get some help and support so you don't feel so alone. Talking to someone is a good starting point, particularly if you are feeling unsafe or



frightened. See www.headspace.org.au to find help and support.

So why do people bully others? Bullies often use aggression and power to get social status. They might also bully

someone to fit in with a particular friendship group. But this also takes an emotional and physical toll on them. Bullies often suffer from social and emotional problems. Research shows that bullies are often unhappy

at school, may not do well at school, get into trouble with police, hurt themselves and are more likely to experience anxiety and depressions and abuse alcohol and substances.

WANT TO HELP OTHERS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING CYBER BULLYING AND DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO?

Send us your stories to encourage and provide hope to others who may be going through a similar situation by sharing what you did and how you sought help. Go to <http://www.headspace.org.au/home/my-headspace/your-stories/>

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CYBER BULLYING
INITIATIVE