

# Cyberbullying – Protect Your Teen

**Bullying is still a problem for many teens. However, teens are no longer just bullied at home or school. With smart phones, computers and tablets, they are at risk for bullying – 24 hours a day.**

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to hurt others.

Teens:

- Send threatening messages by texts or emails.
- Post embarrassing pictures and videos by phone or through social media sites like Facebook.
- Spread rumors or share personal information online.
- Send hurtful voice mails.

Unlike face-to-face bullying, the cyberbully's identity is often unknown. Teens can bully without anyone knowing. They share hurtful words, pictures or videos *instantly* and *quickly* to thousands.

Cyberbullying can have devastating results. Doctors have found a strong link between PTSD symptoms and cyberbullying. Many teens who are targets often suffer anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. Some become victims of suicide.

Teens suffer the effects of bullying beyond the teen years. Bullied teens are at risk for school failure, drug and alcohol abuse, and problems with employment. They suffer long term mental health issues that affect happiness, physical health and life success.

*Parents can lessen the hurt from bullying.* New skills and support can help teens find positive ways to overcome negative events.



**If you know or suspect that your teen is a target of a cyberbully – you can help.**

- **Talk to her.** Ask how the kids are bullying her. What are some possible reasons for the bullying?
- **Reassure him that he does not have to face the problem alone.** You will help.
- **Take action immediately.** Never wait to see if the bullying will stop.
- **Contact the school.** Ask your teen for a trusted teacher or counselor that will help. All schools have an anti-bullying policy. Ask how they intend to help.
- **Save or copy all threatening emails, pictures, videos, posts and messages.** Keep track of incidents – dates, times, places and details.
- **Report cyberbullying to Internet providers, game networks and social media sites.**
- **Talk to other parents.** Ask if they know of any incidents of cyberbullying. However, *do not* contact the cyberbullies' parents.
- **Encourage positive relationships with trusted friends.** Friendships provide needed support.
- **Seek professional help for other ways to cope.**

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.*



**Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.**

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889  
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
[www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

Revised 2017

