

Digital youth mental health news, research, resources, and developments.

Issue 11



## Online bullying

Bullying is a mixture of behaviours and impacts; what someone does and the effect that it has on someone else. This can affect a child or young person's ability to feel safe and in control of their life.

Online bullying or 'cyberbullying' is bullying that happens in the digital world. Although many of the behaviours experienced in real life are mirrored in online spaces, they can be just as harmful played out in the virtual world.

## How is it different?

Bullying that takes place online is still bullying - only the geography differs. However, there are some additional aspects to think about. Online bullying can:

- Happen any day, anytime, anywhere, leaving young people with little respite and a sense of no escape from it, whereas face to face bullying tends to happen at school, in the community or at clubs where young people go.
- Be seen/shared with large numbers of people, sometimes creating a 'pile-on' by people not even associated with the situation.
- Be done in a way that can keep the identity of the people bullying others anonymous, leading to insecurity, lack of control, a sense of hopelessness and anxiety that the bullying won't stop.



“Navigating relationships in the online world is difficult, with misunderstandings, lack of tone, emojis, SHOUTY CAPITALS and language all adding complexity and potential for conflict. Learning to pause, breathe, think before reacting can help reset emotions and consider how, if at all, you want to respond.”

Lorraine, respectme

## Types of online bullying

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Spreading rumours
- Excluding someone from online games, activities, or friendship groups
- Sharing embarrassing images or videos
- Creating hate groups on social media or websites
- Shaming someone
- Trolling - sending upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms, or online games.

## Online bullying impacts

Online bullying can have a serious and lasting impact on children and young people, including being associated with:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Suicidal behaviour
- Physical symptoms
- People who have bullied someone else online are more likely to report increased substance use and unlawful and irresponsible behaviours (*source*).

## Resources and Supports

There are a range of resources and information available to help children and young people who have experienced online bullying and those that support them know what to do, where to report it, and where to get support.



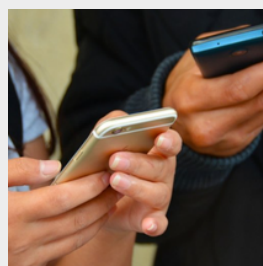
### Cybersmile

Information and support services for people who have been impacted by cyberbullying.



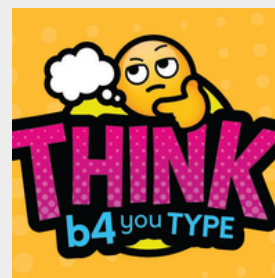
### Bullying on Social Media

Information from Childline for children around what to do if they/someone they know is bullied online.



### Reporting online bullying

An article from SWGfL about how to report online bullying.



### Think B4 You Type

An anti-bullying campaign toolkit for staff from respectme and the NSPCC.

## How big a problem is it?

- In Scotland, **nearly 1 in 5 adolescents (18%)** have experienced bullying
- At ages 13 and 15, Scotland has the **5th highest level** of bullying out of 43 countries in Europe
- **7%** have been bullied online at least 2-3 times a month
- **5%** reported cyberbullying others at least 2-3 times per month recently (*HBSC survey*)