Cyberbullying

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CYBERBULLYING

It's not a mystery that being bullied hurts, whatever form of abuse that takes place, whether SMS, message, Instagram, or even comments on a facebook page, **the child suffers.**

Parents also struggle. Even though they want to help their kids, parents aren't always around to moderate their children's social media accounts. The child doesn't always tell their parents that they are being cyberbullied. They do not want to be seen by their peers as running to their parents for help. Children understand that the parent's anger might make the situation worse. A child online would seems like an alternate universe, many parents do not understand this universe.

Parents can be proactive in preventing Cyberbullying and ensuring their children remain safe online:

- Set limits for your child's online use;
- Monitor online accounts and place restrictions according to the age of the child;
- Establish ground rules for social media;
- Encourage children to talk and listen patiently when they do;
- Help your child to build a positive identity and encourage their strengths, this makes them more resilient to cyberbullying;
- Teach your child how to problem solve and calm themselves in stressful situations.

It is important, however, that if your child is being bullied to seek professional counselling.

How do we as parents know whether our children are being cyberbullied or actually the bully? However, not all youngsters who are cyberbullied or who cyberbully others will display these signs, and someone who does not show these signs may have other problems in their lives that should be addressed. Take time to investigate further if you see any red flags:

A child may be a target of cyberbullying if he or she:

- unexpectedly stops using their device(s)
- appears nervous or jumpy when using their device(s)
- appears uneasy about going to school or outside in general
- appears to be angry, depressed or frustrated after going online (including gaming)

- Is oversleeping OR not sleeping at all
- Becomes abnormally withdrawn from friends and family members
- Shows increase or decrease in eating
- Seems regularly depressed
- Makes parting statements about suicide or the meaninglessness of life
- Loses interest in the things that matter most to them
- Avoids discussions about what they are doing online
- Frequently calls or texts from school requesting to go home ill
- Desires to spend much more time with parents rather than peers
- Becomes unusually secretive especially when it comes to online activities

A child may be Cyberbullying others if he or she:

- quickly switches screens or hides their device when you're close by
- uses a device at all hours of the night
- gets unusually upset if they cannot use the device
- laughs excessively while using the device and won't show you what is so funny
- avoids discussions about what they're doing online
- seems to be using multiple online accounts or an account that is not their own
- is dealing with increased behavioural issues or disciplinary actions at school or elsewhere
- appears of you concerned with popularity of continued presence in a particular social circles status
- demonstrates increasing insensitivity or callousness towards other teams
- hangs out with the wrong crowd
- demonstrates violent or aggressive tendencies
- appears overly conceited as to the technological skills and abilities
- is increasingly withdrawn or isolated from the family

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