

# Cyber Bullying Statistics

Cyber bullying statistics refers to Internet bullying. Cyber bullying is a form of teen violence that can do lasting harm to young people. Bullying statistics show that cyber bullying is a serious problem among teens. By being more aware of cyber bullying, teens and adults can help to fight it.

Cyber bullying affects many adolescents and teens on a daily basis. Cyber bullying involves using technology, like cell phones and the Internet, to bully or harass another person. **Cyber bullying can take many forms:**

- Sending mean messages or threats to a person's email account or cell phone
- Spreading rumors online or through texts
- Posting hurtful or threatening messages on social networking sites or web pages
- Stealing a person's account information to break into their account and send damaging messages
- Pretending to be someone else online to hurt another person
- Taking unflattering pictures of a person and spreading them through cell phones or the Internet
- Sexting, or circulating sexually suggestive pictures or messages about a person

Cyber bullying can be very damaging to adolescents and teens. It can lead to anxiety, depression, and even suicide. Also, once things are circulated on the Internet, they may never disappear, resurfacing at later times to renew the pain of cyber bullying.

Many cyber bullies think that bullying others online is funny. Cyber bullies may not realize the consequences for themselves of cyberbullying. The things teens post online now may reflect badly on them later when they apply for college or a job. Cyber bullies can lose their cell phone or online accounts for cyber bullying. Also, cyber bullies and their parents may face legal charges for cyber bullying, and if the cyber bullying was sexual in nature or involved sexting, the results can include being registered as a sex offender. Teens may think that if they use a fake name they won't get caught, but there are many ways to track someone who is cyber bullying.

**Despite the potential damage of cyber bullying, it is alarmingly common among adolescents and teens. According to Cyber bullying statistics from the i-SAFE foundation:**

- Over half of adolescents and teens have been bullied online, and about the same number have engaged in cyber bullying.
- More than 1 in 3 young people have experienced cyberthreats online.
- Over 25 percent of adolescents and teens have been bullied repeatedly through their cell phones or the Internet.
- Well over half of young people do not tell their parents when cyber bullying occurs.

**The Harford County Examiner reported similarly concerning cyber bullying statistics:**

- Around half of teens have been the victims of cyber bullying
- Only 1 in 10 teens tells a parent if they have been a cyber bully victim
- Fewer than 1 in 5 cyber bullying incidents are reported to law enforcement
- 1 in 10 adolescents or teens have had embarrassing or damaging pictures taken of themselves without their permission, often using cell phone cameras
- About 1 in 5 teens have posted or sent sexually suggestive or nude pictures of themselves to others
- Girls are somewhat more likely than boys to be involved in cyber bullying

**The Cyberbullying Research Center also did a series of surveys that found these cyber bullying statistics:**

- Over 80 percent of teens use a cell phone regularly, making it the most popular form of technology and a common medium for cyber bullying
- About half of young people have experienced some form of cyber bullying, and 10 to 20 percent experience it regularly
- Mean, hurtful comments and spreading rumors are the most common type of cyber bullying
- Girls are at least as likely as boys to be cyber bullies or their victims
- Boys are more likely to be threatened by cyber bullies than girls
- Cyber bullying affects all races
- Cyber bullying victims are more likely to have low self esteem and to consider suicide

**Parents and teens can do some things that help reduce the cyber bullying statistics:**

- Talks to teens about cyber bullying, explaining that it is wrong and can have serious consequences. Make a rule that teens may not send mean or damaging messages, even if someone else started it, or suggestive pictures or messages or they will lose their cell phone and computer privileges for a time.
- Encourage teens to tell an adult if cyber bullying is occurring. Tell them if they are the victims they will not be punished, and reassure them that being bullied is not their fault.
- Teens should keep cyber bullying messages as proof that the cyber bullying is occurring. The teens' parents may want to talk to the parents of the cyber bully, to the bully's Internet or cell phone provider, and/or to the police about the messages, especially if they are threatening or sexual in nature.
- Try blocking the person sending the messages. It may be necessary to get a new phone number or email address and to be more cautious about giving out the new number or address.
- Teens should never tell their password to anyone except a parent, and should not write it down in a place where it could be found by others.
- Teens should not share anything through text or instant messaging on their cell phone or the Internet that they would not want to be made public - remind teens that the person they are talking to in messages or online may not be who they think they are, and that things posted electronically may not be secure.
- Encourage teens never to share personal information online or to meet someone they only know online.
- Keep the computer in a shared space like the family room, and do not allow teens to have Internet access in their own rooms.
- Encourage teens to have times when they turn off the technology, such as at family meals or after a certain time at night.
- Parents may want to wait until high school to allow their teens to have their own email and cell phone accounts, and even then parents should still have access to the accounts.

If teens have been the victims or perpetrators of cyber bullying they may need to talk to a counselor or therapist to overcome depression or other harmful effects of cyber bullying.

Sources:

Richard Webster, Harford County Examiner, "From cyber bullying to sexting: What on your kids' cell?" [online]

i-SAFE Inc., "Cyber Bullying: Statistics and Tips" [online]

Cyberbullying Research Center, "Summary of our cyberbullying research from 2004-2010" [online]

National Crime Prevention Council, "Cyberbullying" [online]