Teen Talk on Cyberbullying: Classroom Discussion Guide

Share this five-minute video with your middle and high school students so they can experience the authentic insight and perspective from peers on how they view issues related to cyberbullying. As an additional exercise, encourage students to brainstorm their own thoughts and responses to each of the topics addressed in the video. As a helpful reference, each question from the video is provided below, along with related information and a link to a web-based resource.

1. What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is when someone uses technology to send mean, threatening, or embarrassing messages to or about another person.

It might be in a text, email, message, or in a post online. Cyberbullying isn't better or worse than traditional bullying, but there are certain things that make it unique. It can happen at any time, day or night. It's public, so an incident can instantly be seen by hundreds of people. It can also be anonymous — this can induce greater fear for the target of bullying.

Learn more about the definition of cyberbullying PACERteensagainstbullying.org/advocacy-for-self/cyberbullying.

2. What is your first reaction when you see negativity directed toward someone else or when it's directed at you?

There are many different reactions students may have when they see or experience cyberbullying. Students who experience cyberbullying may:

- Feel ashamed, angry, or sad
- Not know how to respond
- Think it's their fault
- Be unsure about telling an adult, worrying that the technology will be taken away
- Think that if they tell, it will be considered "snitching"

It's important to know you have options! Read more on how teens feel about bullying PACERteensagainstbullying.org/advocacy-for-self/reasons-teens-dont-tell.

3. How does online bullying impact what happens at school?

Cyberbullying impacts a student's education and well-being, just as other forms of bullying. Those who are cyberbullied are also likely to be bullied offline. This can result in school avoidance and less school achievement, as well as emotional problems such as anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, and stress.

Read more about how cyberbullying impacts students PACER.org/bullying/info/cyberbullying.

4. What ideas do you have to help someone else who has experienced online bullying?

If you see someone being bullied online, there is a lot you can do.

- Don't "like" or share posts that are bullying someone.
- Although you may feel pressure to join in if a lot of other people are, you can make your own choice not to contribute to the situation.
- Report it. Even if content isn't targeting you, be sure to report it to the site or any trusted adult .
- If you feel comfortable, and if it's safe for you, post a comment showing solidarity with the target. Imagine what a difference one nice comment among a bunch of mean ones could make.
- You could send the person being bullied a private message letting them know that you don't agree with what's happening, that they don't deserve to be treated like that, and that they're not alone.

Learn more about what you can do PACERteensagainstbullying.org/advocacy-for-self/cyberbullying.

5. If you see the person who is being bullied online at school, what can you do?

Show support for the student being bullied! You can do this by:

- Talking to them
- Telling them that what happened to them isn't OK
- Inviting them to join you in an activity

By reminding this student that he or she isn't alone, you can make a huge difference. Bystanders can also help by telling an adult, since the student who is being bullied might not feel ready to do it themselves.

Research shows that most bullying situations will stop when a peer intervenes. This doesn't always mean directly confronting the student who's bullying. You can show support for the target in a lot of different ways, but it's important to let them know that they aren't alone.

Learn more about taking action PACERteensagainstbullying.org/advocacy-for-others.