

Bullying Prevention: Do's and Don'ts for Parents

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Agenda

- Acknowledgement: Support from AT&T
- What can parents do to support youth who experience victimization
- What can parents teach youth to do
- How to prevent cyberbullying
- How can parents communicate concerns with schools

Bullying or Not?

- Jake says over and over that Mike is dumb.
 - ✓ Yes
- Sam calls Pat a dork and Pat smiles and laughs.
 - X No
- Everyone de-friends Chris on Facebook because Sandy told them to.
 - ✓ Yes

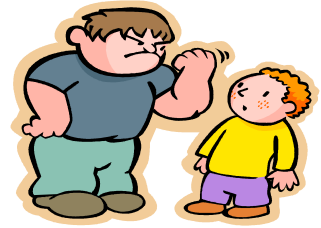


Bullying or Not?

- Katie pushes Amanda into her locker.
 - ~ Maybe
- Brad pushes his girlfriend into a locker every time they fight.
 - ✓ Yes
- Has your child been bullied this year?



What is Bullying?



- Any **unwanted aggressive** behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths that involves an observed or perceived **power imbalance** and is repeated multiple times or is **highly likely to be repeated**.
Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including **physical, psychological, social, or educational harm** (CDC, 2014)

Why is Bullying Important?

- 20-75% students reported bullying.
- Bullying predicts academic and psychosocial/ mental health problem: depression, anxiety, suicide, low self-esteem.
- Bullying at age 14 predicted violent convictions at ages 15- 20, drug use at ages 27-32, & an unsuccessful life at age 48.¹
- Bullying was a factor in 2/3 of the 37 school shootings reviewed by the U.S. Secret Service.

¹(Farrington & Ttofi, 2011)

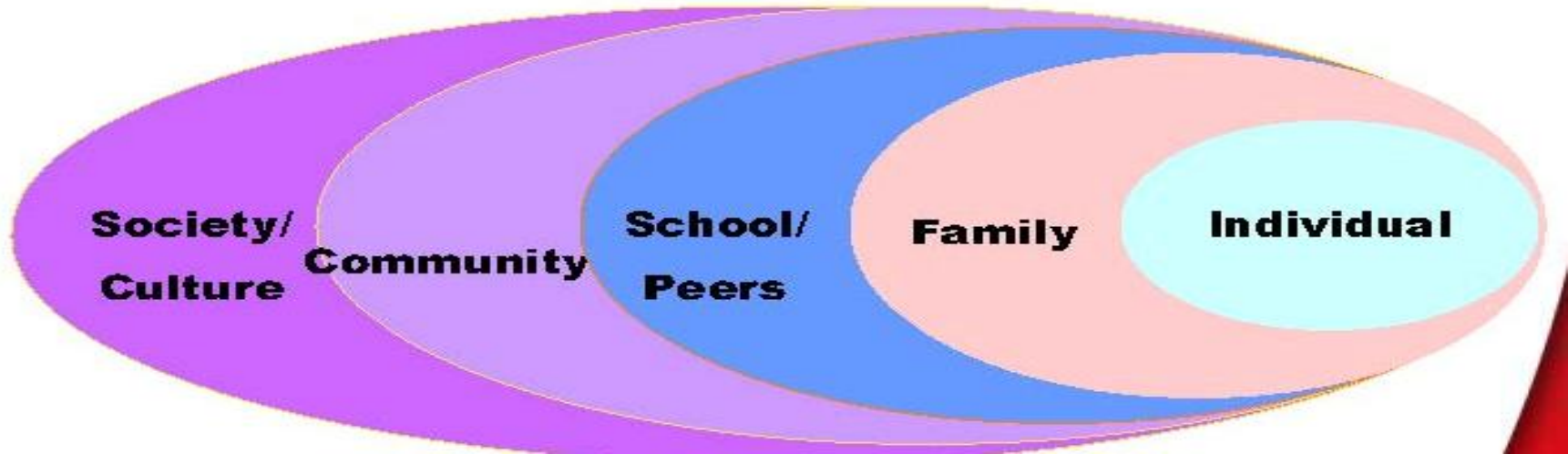
The Challenge

The issue of how to assess the myriad of factors that may cause and maintain bullying behaviors, and to select evidence-based prevention and intervention programs, remains a challenge for many educators.¹

Why are some children involved in bullying?

¹ (Wang, Berry, & Swearer, 2013)

A Social-Ecological Model of Bullying



(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Swearer & Espelage, 2004; Swearer, 2013)

Individual Factors in Bullying

(not an exhaustive list)

**MISUNDERSTANDING
DIFFERENCES**

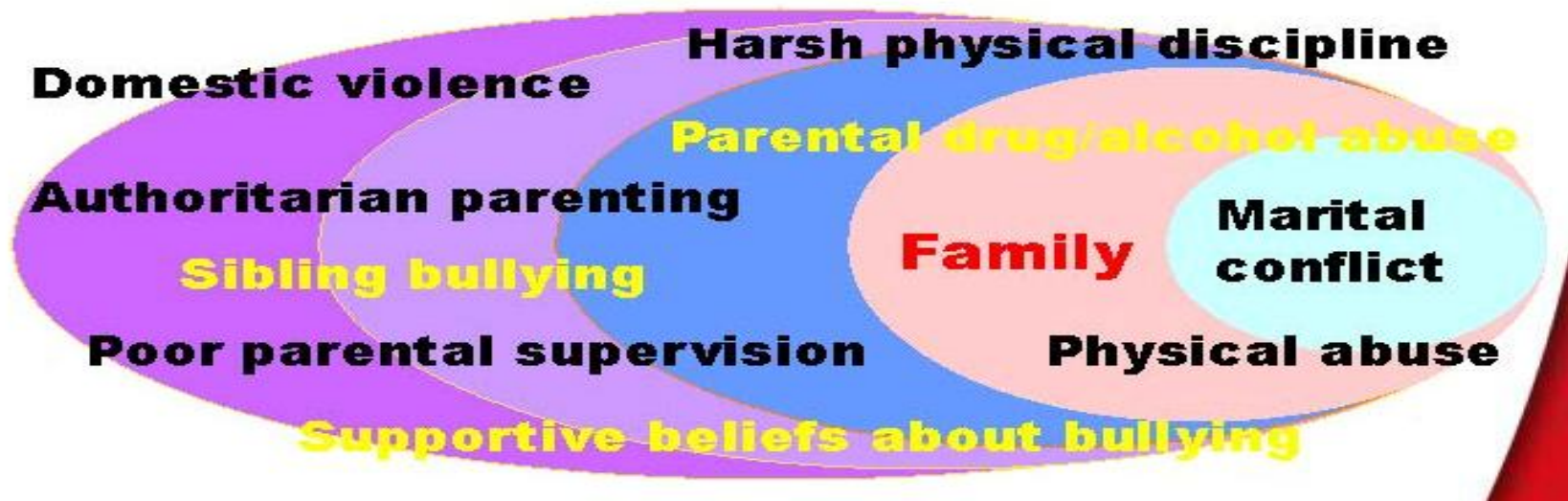
ATTENTION



Family Factors in Bullying

(not an exhaustive list)

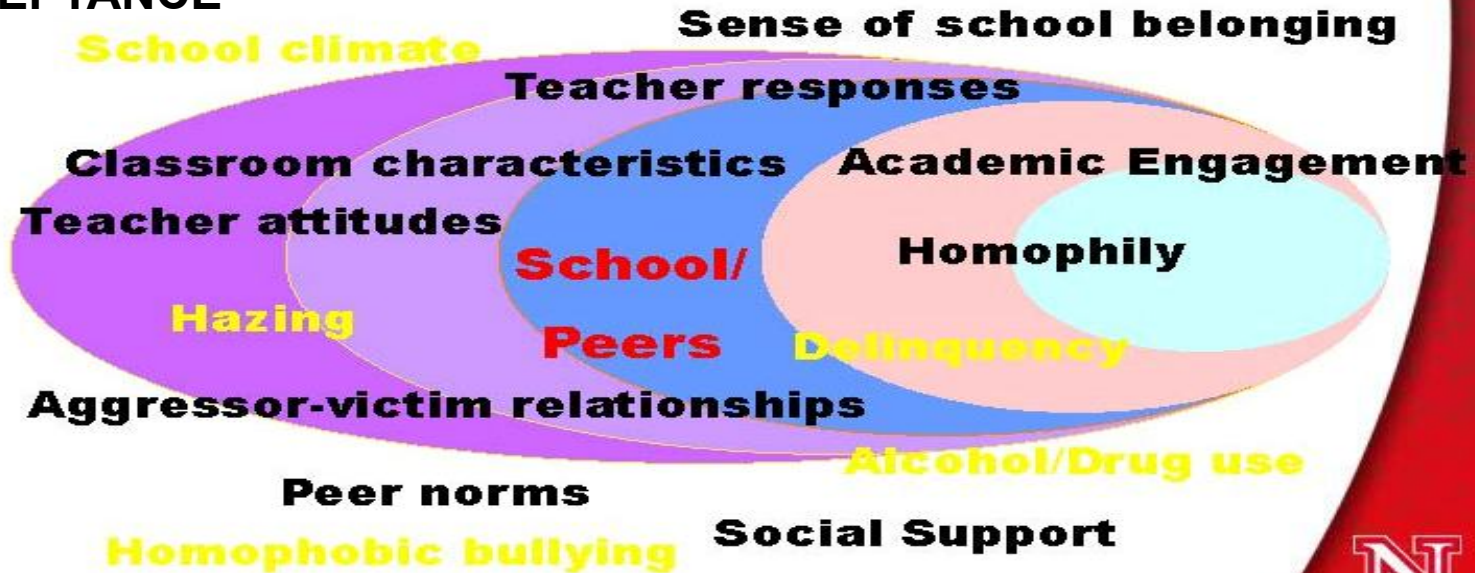
IMITATION



Peer/School Factors in Bullying

(not an exhaustive list)

PEER ACCEPTANCE



Community/Societal Factors in Bullying

(not an exhaustive list)



DON'T: Minimize Feelings

- Do not belittle their feelings

“That wasn’t Bullying.
You are being too
sensitive.”

“What they [the bully]
did was not that bad,
so you don’t need to
make it a big deal.”

- Do not make it a competition – sharing relevant experiences of racism can be helpful, but competition is not.

“Your experience was
nothing compared to
mine...I have experienced
much worse racism.”

DON'T: Defend/ Make Excuses for the Bully

- Do not defend the bully or system (even if subtly)

“They are just kidding. You shouldn’t blame them for jokes like that. You should not be so sensitive.”

“Did you do something to get their attention first?”

“Of course, they treat us differently because we are not born here/ we look different.”

Listen, Acknowledge, and Validate

I'm so sorry to hear about this. This is bullying. It has **NOTHING** to do with you and everything to do with the bullies. How are you feeling?

It is wrong for them to call it "Chinese virus." WHO has advised **against** naming diseases after geographic locations.

That must've been so scary.
That sounds really hard. Thank you for telling me.

I also experienced racism before and I felt angry.
What can we do to make you feel safer?

Do: Read and Discuss Stories with Your Children

- Read books about bullying where there is a healthy resolution to the conflict
- Talk about the characters' actions and choices in resolving conflicts.
- Was the problem something the main character could resolve alone or did he or she need help?
- Have you ever had a similar problem or do you know someone who has? How was it resolved? How would you use strategies to solve a similar problem in the future?



DO: Talk With and Listen to Your Kids Everyday

- Spend a few minutes every day asking open ended questions:
 - who they spend time with at school?
 - what do they do between classes and at recess?
 - what happens on the way to and from school?
- If your children feel comfortable talking to you about their peers *before* they're involved in a bullying event, they'll be much more likely to get you involved *after*.
- Encourage your child to come to you if someone says or does something **online** that makes them uncomfortable.
- **Validate:** These words or actions really hurt.
- **Reframe:** It is not your fault. What they say does not define who you are.

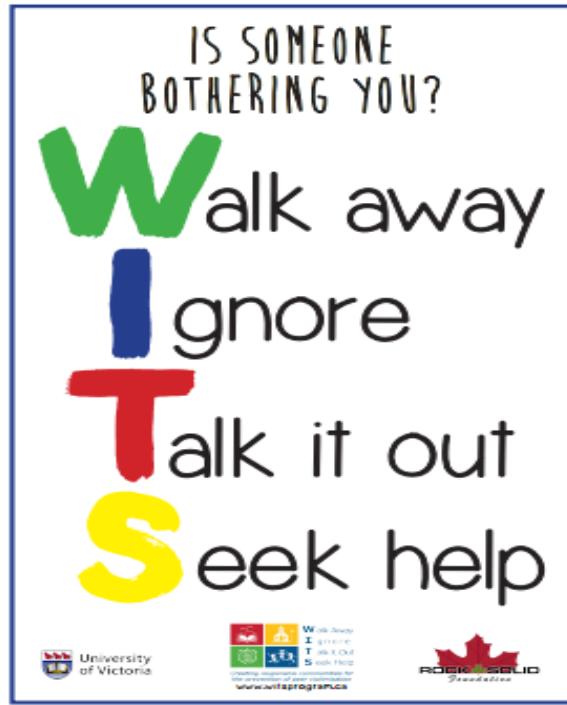
DO: Adopt a Solution-Oriented Approach

- Model healthy conflict resolution skills-with your family, children, teachers, neighbors.
- Model empathy in your own interaction with others
- Listen to your children, show empathy & validate their feelings.
- Let your children know that you hear their concerns and want to help, so that they don't feel that you are ignoring the problem.
- Share information with other parents because there may be other families who are going through a similar situation

Teach Children Social Skills and Coping Strategies!!!

Role play





- Be assertive, but not aggressive
- Do not react or give attention.
- Know the difference between seeking help and tattling
- Use harmless humor to deflect
- Agree/ so what
 - "You have so many freckles."
 - "Yes, I have a lot of freckles."

REFRAMING

- Reframing is changing one's perception about the negative comment; it is turning the teasing into a compliment.
- E.g., a child teases another about her glasses:
 - "Four eyes, four eyes, you have four eyes."
 - "Thanks for noticing my glasses!"

The teaser is usually confused, especially when there is **NOT** a reaction of anger or frustration.

AGREE WITH THE FACTS

- Agreeing with the facts can be one of the easiest ways to handle an insult or tease.
 - "You have so many freckles."
 - "Yes, I have a lot of freckles."
 - "You are such a cry baby. . . ."
 - "I do cry easily."
- Agreeing with facts usually eliminates the feeling of wanting to hide the freckles or the tears.

DO: Know the Signs for Victims

- Complains of headaches or nausea
- Is anxious about attending school or favorite activities
- Has a decline in school achievement
- Has missing or broken possessions
- Has unexplained injuries
- Is unusually quiet, sullen or distracted
- Has unexpected temper tantrums
- Is easily frustrated and argumentative

DO: Know the Signs for Bullies

- Gets into physical or verbal fights often
- Is frequently sent to principal's office or detention
- Has extra possessions or money that cannot be explained
- Is quick to blame others or use negative words to describe them
- Is easily frustrated or argumentative

DON'T: Focus on Problems & Negativity

- Don't model aggressive behaviors—at home, school, neighborhood
 - Model strategies (walk away, ignore, talk it out, seek help) to solve conflict
- Don't blame victims— “she deserves to be picked on because she's so weird”
- Don't punish bullies as the first “intervention— “let me spank my kid so that he learns his lesson.”
 - Harsh physical punishment relate to increased bullying
 - Physical abuse is illegal

DO: Work Collaboratively with Your Child's Teachers & Schools.

- Report bullying to school
- Attend parent-teacher conferences!
- Communicate with your child's teacher—email, phone, volunteer in the classroom/school.
- Brainstorm with teachers about interventions at school and home to prevent future bullying.
- Help create a no-bullying climate in your home and school.
- Establish household rules about bullying.
- Make your child accountable, even if other child “started it.”

DON'T: Blame Teachers & Administrators

- Parents of kids who are victimized say, “The school will do nothing about the problem. My child is being bullied and no one is doing anything.”
- Parents of kids who bully others say, “My child is always unfairly targeted and singled out. The teachers are out to get her.”
- Adversarial relationships end up helping NO ONE

DO: Seek Professional Help

- Talk openly with your children about bullying and mental health
- Counseling helps! Students involved in bullying and victimization are more likely to experience depression and anxiety¹
- Cognitive-behavioral therapy is the front-line treatment for depression and anxiety.
- Free counseling services at school by counselors or school psychologists

¹ (Swearer, Wang, et al., 2011).

DO: Find Helpful Websites about Bullying and Related Issues

- WITS program: www.witsprogram.ca
- Stop Bullying: <http://www.stopbullying.gov>
- Education.com/topic/school-bullying/
- H.E.A.R. <http://project-hear.us/overview>
- Born This Way Foundation: www.bornthiswayfoundation.org
- PACER: <http://www.pacer.org>
- <http://www.schoolclimate.org/bullybust/upstander/video-resources>
- The White House Initiative on Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI): <http://sites.ed.gov/aapi/aapi-bullying/>
- Anti-Cyberbullying Toolkit:
<https://www.common sense media.org/educators/cyberbullying-toolkit>

What Can Parents Do to Help: Cyberbullying

- Keep computers in a shared space in your home
- Teach your children to never post online or send in a text message anything they wouldn't want the entire world to see or read.
- Discuss the importance of treating others with kindness and respect when sending electronic messages, not just in person.

CYBER

BULLYING

ugly

stupid

idiot

loser

hate



What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. It can occur through social media, text message, or email.

Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative and harmful content about others or sharing personal or private information.

Examples of Cyberbullying

- Posting comments or rumors online that are not true
- Threatening to kill someone or telling someone to kill themselves
- Posting an embarrassing photo or video
- Pretending to be someone else (false identity profile)
- Doxing



Why is Cyberbullying a Problem?

- It is persistent, pervasive, and hard to notice
- Form of emotional bullying
- Can cause feelings of fear, isolation, and humiliation
- Puts children at increased risk for mental health problems
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Self-injury
- Can lead to an increased risk of suicide



Warning Signs that a Child is Being Cyberbullied

Emotional

- Appears to be angry, depressed, or frustrated after going online
- Becomes abnormally withdrawn from friends and family members
- Seems regularly depressed
- Appears nervous or jumpy when using their device

Behavioral

- Unexpectedly stops using their device
- Loses interest in the things that mattered to them
- Being secretive about their device use
- Starts to avoid social situations
- Avoids discussion about what they are doing online

Warning Signs that a Child is Cyberbullying Others

Emotional

- Gets unusually upset if they can't use their device
- Demonstrates increasing insensitivity or callousness toward other teens
- Is increasingly withdrawn or isolated from family

Behavioral

- Quickly switches screens or hides their device when you are nearby
- Laughs excessively when using their device or won't show you what is so funny
- Seems to be using multiple accounts or an account that is not their own
- Is dealing with increased behavioral issues or disciplinary actions at school (or elsewhere)
- Appears overly conceited as to their technological skills and abilities

What Parents Can do to Prevent Cyberbullying

BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S ELECTRONIC USE

- Establish rules
- Set up a contract
 - What do you think are some important things to put in a contract?
- Be consistent in implementing the rules
 - If your child/teen breaks one of the rules take away the device for a period of time or say they can't get it back until they show they will use it safely
- Emphasize that you care and it is for their safety
- Consider setting up parental controls:

Example Contract

You finally have your own phone! Let's go over some ground rules and make it official!

I, (child and parent's name) AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. It is our (device name). We bought it for you as a gift.
2. We will always know the password (write password here)
3. Hand the (device name) over to us when asked and always before getting ready for bed.
4. If someone says or does something online that makes you feel even a tiny bit uncomfortable or weird- trust your instincts and **talk to us. We will always be there for you and help.**
5. Do not use (device name) to lie, fool, or trick anyone.
7. Do not text, email, or say anything through this device that you would not say in person.

Example Contract (Continued)

7. Never post online or send in a text message anything you wouldn't want the entire world to see or read. It will NOT disappear and you cannot control where the information goes – EVER. SERIOUSLY. FOREVER.
8. Ask us lots of questions- we love your curiosity and excitement- we are here to help- not to stop your research but to help guide you.
9. Keep your eyes up. Play. Imagine and wonder without always using the internet.
10. Remember that it's okay if you mess up. If you break some of the rules, we will take away your (device name). We will talk about it and start over again. Remember we are on your team and are in this together.

Other Family Rules:

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Did You Know?

- Teens spend up to 9 hours a day on social media, and some may check up to 100 times per day
- Tweens, age 8-12, spend up to six hours on social media platforms



What Parents can do to Prevent Cyberbullying

BE AWARE OF WHAT YOUR KIDS ARE DOING ONLINE

- Monitor a teen's social media sites, apps, and browsing history
- Review or re-set your child's phone location and private settings
- Stay up to date
- Know your child's usernames and passwords



What's that App?

Facebook

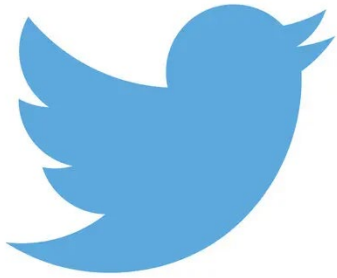


A popular free social networking site that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, and send messages

- One of the most common forms of bullying on Facebook is harsh commenting on users' self-photos (selfies). It's a vicious circle, as teens who post photos are often looking for positive affirmation and end up getting the opposite.
- Information shared is usually publicly visible for all of their friends. Parents can friend or follow their children so that they can be aware of what is shared publicly.

What's that App?

Twitter



An online news and social networking site in which users post and interact with messages known as “tweets”

- Twitter bullying can happen out in the open (i.e. Hey, @user123, nobody likes you) or via a private message, or DM. Only users who reciprocally follow can send DMs to each other, so if your teen is being bullied on Twitter, a simple solution is for him to unfollow the bully.
- A more subtle form of cyberbullying on Twitter is the subtweet, in which a user taunts or harasses another without mentioning the target's name (i.e. The dress you wore today is ugly and nobody likes you).

What's that App?

Kik Messenger

Messaging app that allows users of all ages to contact others anonymously and for free.



- Fast, has no message limits, character limits or fees if only use the basic features
- Teens use this app a lot because they can connect to a Wi-fi hotspot and chat extensively without worrying about going over on cellular minutes or data.
- **Stranger danger is an issue.** Kik allows communication with strangers who share their Kik usernames to find people to chat with
- **It's loaded with covert marketing.** Kik specializes in "promoted chats" -conversations between brands and users. It also offers specially designed apps (accessible only through the main app), many of which offer products for sale.

What's that App?

Instagram- an app that lets users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos, either publicly or within a private network of followers.

Finstagram- also called “finsta” it is a second instagram account that is used for sharing with a smaller circle of followers. It is usually private account and is for close friends only.



- **Teens are on the lookout for "likes."** Teens may measure the "success" of their photos -- even their self-worth -- by the number of likes or comments they receive.
- **Public photos are the default.** Photos and videos shared on Instagram are public unless privacy settings are adjusted.
- **Kids can send private messages.** Instagram Direct is like texting with photos or videos and you can do it with up to 15 mutual friends. These pictures don't show up on their public feeds. Although there's nothing wrong with group chats, kids may be more likely to share inappropriate stuff with their inner circles.

What's that App?

SnapChat

A photo messaging app that allows for sharing pictures and short videos that are intended to be erased shortly after delivery.



- Most teens use the app to share goofy or embarrassing photos without the risk of them going public.
- **It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever.** Data is data: Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. (For example, the person on the receiving end can take a screenshot of the image before it disappears.) Snapchats can even be recovered.
- **It can make sexting seem OK.** The seemingly risk-free messaging might encourage users to share pictures containing sexy images.
- **There's a lot of iffy, clicky content.** The Discover feature has a lot of articles, videos, and quizzes from magazine publishers, TV networks, and online sources mostly about pop culture, celebrities, and relationships.

What's that App?

Whisper

A “confession app” where they allow users to post text and photos anonymously to anyone within a general location or group



- Attracts teens who want to share secrets or confess their feelings without worrying about someone finding them out.
- **Whispers are often sexual in nature.** Some users use the app to try to hook up with people nearby, while others post "confessions" of desire.
- **Content can be dark.** Common Whisper topics include insecurity, depression, substance abuse, and various lies told to employers and teachers.
- **Although it's anonymous to start, it may not stay that way.** The app encourages users to exchange personal information in the "Meet Up" section.

What's that App?

Ask.fm



A social networking site that allows users to ask other people questions, often anonymously

- This program links in with each user's Facebook or Twitter account and will show questions and answers from other unknown users who are in their social networks.
- This service can turn into cyberbullying when a group of teens repeatedly pick on someone with rude questions, insults or threats. Since it is tied into popular media sites, it becomes even more hurtful knowing that it could be the ones closest to you who are doing the most harm.

What's that App?

TikTok



A video sharing platform that allow users to create, share, and react to short videos that play over a soundtrack

- Lip-syncing and dancing videos are the most popular genres on the platform
- It's interactive and allows you to connect with friends, comment on videos, and follow other people
- ✗ When signing up, the account is “public” by default. This means anyone can view videos that your children upload, send direct messages to them and access their location information.
- Popular TikTok uploads emphasize today's top music which means that some of the lyrics may contain swearing and sexual content that is not appropriate for children.

What Parents Can do to Prevent Cyberbullying

Educate your child or teen

- Teach your child how to be safe
- Teach your child what cyberbullying is and the consequences of cyberbullying
 - **It's against the law**
 - Grace's Law 2.0- allows parents to press charges even if child doesn't die by suicide
 - Penalty is 3 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine, 10 years if victim pushed to suicide
- Tell your child to think twice before posting something they might later regret
- Encourage your child to tell an adult if they suspect cyberbullying or harassment
 - Report using text

Talk to your Child about what is Appropriate Digital Behavior and Content

- Set clear expectations about digital behavior
- Set a certain amount of time they are allowed online or on their devices
- Be clear about what content can be viewed or shared
- Model positive digital behavior
- Listen to your child's concerns
- Check in with your child

What to do When Cyberbullying Happens

- Notice
 - Be on the look out for warning signs
- Talk
 - Ask questions about what is going on
- Document
 - Keep a record of what is happening and where
- Report
 - To the app/social media platform, to the school, or to the police
- Support
 - Let your child/teen know that he/she is not alone

How to Report Cyberbullying

- When you find that cyberbullying is occurring:
 - Don't respond to or forward cyberbullying messages
 - Keep evidence
 - Block the person who is cyberbullying
- Report to Online Service Providers
- Report to Law Enforcement
- Report to Schools

Report Bullying

If your child experiences cyberbullying or bullying:

- StopBullying! App
 - Available through Web Link -
<http://stopbullying.pgcps.org>: or App/Google Play Store by searching under 'PGCPS Bullying'

OR Go here: <https://offices.pgcps.org/antibullying/>

At the bottom of the website, click “Reporting Form”

- Complete the **Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form**



Resources

Websites:

- Common Sense Media
- Stopbullying.gov
- Cyberbullying Resource Center:
<https://cyberbullying.org/trauma-bullying-cyberbullying>

Books:

- For teens:
 - *Backlash* by Sarah Darer Littman
 - *#Scandal* by Sarah Ockler
- For children:
 - *Bully* by Patricia Polacco
 - *The Technology Tail* by Julia Cook

Additional Helpful Websites about Bullying & Related Issues

- Yoko by Rosemary Wells
- Bullying B.E.A.N.S.
- Say something
- www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying
- www.operationrespect.org
- Video-resources with discussion questions:
 - <http://www.schoolclimate.org/bullybust/upstander/video-resources>
- Talking to kids about discrimination
 - <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/kids-discrimination.aspx>
 - <https://psychologybenefits.org/2014/09/18/redefining-race-relations-it-begins-at-home/>
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-race-good-health/201708/race-in-america-tips-talking-children-about-racism>
 - <http://www.apa.org/pi/res/parent-tips.pdf>
 - <https://www.counseling.org/resources/library/Selected%20Topics/Bullying/Teasing.htm>