



# Girls Inc. Guide

## Cyberbullying Awareness

### What is cyberbullying? How prevalent is cyberbullying?

Estimates of cyberbullying rates vary widely due to differences in definitions and the age of the group being studied. 18.7 percent of Indiana high school students reported being electronically bullied.<sup>1</sup>

***“Cyberbullying is when someone ‘repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through email or text message or when someone posts something online about another person that they don’t like.’<sup>2</sup>***

### How is cyberbullying different from traditional forms of bullying?

Cyberbullying is often more devastating than traditional forms of bullying because:

- Victims sometimes don’t know who the bully is due to online anonymity and pseudonyms.
- The hurtful actions of a cyberbully can easily “go viral”, making the victim feel as if everyone is in on the joke.
- Cyberbullies don’t see the immediate reactions of their victims, meaning that the devastating effects of a bullying act can be ignored or even unknown.
- Adult supervision is often absent due to lack of technology know-how.
- Because most children have daily (if not constant) access to the internet and cell phones, young people are increasingly susceptible to victimization, regardless of location.<sup>3</sup>

### What is the impact of cyberbullying?

- Victims of all types of bullying face a greater risk for emotional problems such as depression and anxiety, as well as poor school adjustment. Those who bully others are at increased risk for substance abuse, academic problems, and violent behavior in adulthood.<sup>4</sup>
- Bullying undermines school success and student achievement in a variety of ways. Severe student victimization has been associated with lower pass rates on standardized tests as well as higher rates of teacher turnover, student dropout, students changing schools, and principals and teachers retiring early.<sup>5</sup>

### How are girls affected by cyberbullying?

- In 2014, 25.5 percent of Indiana’s high school females were cyberbullied.<sup>6</sup>
- While boys often engage in physical bullying, girls tend to bully with hurtful words or intentional social exclusion. This tendency may explain why girls more often report cyberbullying than boys.<sup>7</sup>

## What can adults do about cyberbullying?

- ✓ Facilitate a Girls Inc. Work It Out program to empower girls with the skills necessary to navigate conflict in their lives.
- ✓ Advocate for strong anti-bullying policies that include provisions for cyberbullying in your local schools.
- ✓ Set a good example! Be a positive role model for the girls in your life by treating others with respect, empathy, and fairness, both in person and online.
- ✓ Speak openly with the girls in your life about what they post and view online.

**“To help our daughters be active online in safe and healthy ways, parents should communicate expectations about conduct. Most important are:**

**Be the same person online that you are in real time.**

**If you wouldn’t say it to someone’s face, don’t send it.**

**Do not use the internet to hash out conflicts.**

**Do not post anything online or via text message that you wouldn’t be comfortable seeing on the front page of the newspaper.**

**Never post photos of another person without his or her permission.”**

*Rachel Simmons, Odd Girl Out*

<sup>1</sup> The Indiana Youth Institute. "The KIDS COUNT in Indiana 2015 Data Book." The KIDS COUNT in Indiana 2015 Data Book (2000): 110. Web. 2 Oct. 2015. <<http://www.iyi.org/resources/pdf/KC-DATA-BOOK-IYI-2015.pdf>>.

<sup>2</sup> 2011 White House Conference on Bullying Prevention materials, "Overview of Cyberbullying" by Sameer Hinduja, PhD, Justin W. Patchin, PhD, and the Cyberbullying Research Center

<sup>3</sup> 2011 White House Conference on Bullying Prevention materials, "Overview of Cyberbullying" by Sameer Hinduja, PhD, Justin W. Patchin, PhD, and the Cyberbullying Research Center

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009 Indiana Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results [http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/2009INH\\_Summary\\_Tables.pdf](http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/2009INH_Summary_Tables.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> US Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics) and US Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs (Bureau of Justice Statistics), Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2010, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011002.pdf>

APA Press Release, "Bullying May Contribute to Lower Test Scores", <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2011/08/bullying-test.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> The Indiana Youth Institute. "The KIDS COUNT in Indiana 2015 Data Book." The KIDS COUNT in Indiana 2015 Data Book (2000): 110. Web. 2 Oct. 2015. <<http://www.iyi.org/resources/pdf/KC-DATA-BOOK-IYI-2015.pdf>>.

<sup>7</sup> Indiana Youth Institute, When Push Turns to Shove: Bullying Issue Alert 2009, <http://www.iyi.org/resources/doc/Issue-Alert-BULLYING-April-2009.pdf>