

## How to Respond to Cyberbullies

The situation is often made worse by responding to the cyberbully, whether that response is passive, aggressive, or assertive. **SCBT** (Stop, Copy, Block, and Tell a trusted adult.)

- **Stop.** Don't respond.
- **Copy.** Make copies of all messages and pictures, and save cell phone text and voice messages.
- **Block** or filter communications through IM contact list or email.
- **Tell** a trusted adult.

If the cyberbullying is threatening or vicious you may need to do the following as well:

- Change email address, account, username, phone number and/or SIM (subscriber identity module) for cell phone users.
- File a detailed complaint with the school.
- File a complaint with the Website, Internet service provider, or cell phone company.
- Contact the police if the cyberbullying appears to be criminal.
- Contact an attorney. It is possible to seek financial damages from the cyberbully and his or her parents.

### Bystanders

They can be willing or unwitting accomplices to cyberbullies. Bullies can use bystanders to do "cyberbullying by proxy."

### From Bystander to Witness

It is never easy to stand up to a bully or defend a target. But just as there are ways to act courageously in the real world, there are ways to stand up, speak out, and defend a target in the cyberworld.

### Tactics

- Don't contribute to a blog or Webpoll that denigrates or humiliates a target. Sign off or click "end."
- Don't forward or copy-and-paste derogatory, harmful, or hurtful emails, text messages, or pictures to another site.
- Save, copy, and print out such examples of cyberbullying and give them to the target so he or she can be aware of what is happening. Sharing such information in a caring and supportive way will help the target feel less isolated and alone.

- Tell a caring adult you trust who will keep your identity confidential, who will act to support the target, and who will make sure the cyberbully is held to account.
- Tell the cyberbully that you are not comfortable getting involved in the cyberbullying.

Kids have to trust that telling an adult will make a positive difference. Once they have shared information with you, talk with them about what they can do and what you are going to do.

If your child begs you not to get involved, hear them out, and then share your concerns about possible consequences of not acting and the possible actions you both can take.

excerpts from *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, Barbara Coloroso ©  
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