ALL ABOUT BULLYING

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is repeated aggressive behavior using cellphones or the internet. It includes things such as sending hurtful emails and text messages, or posting embarrassing comments or pictures on social networking sites, such as Instagram or Snapchat. Although cyberbullying is often not considered as serious as in-person bullying, it can be just as harmful as it creates the possibility of a very fast, widespread and permanent attack on an individual. The emotional effects of this type of attack can be devastating.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

- **There is a large audience for cyberbullying.**
  - Messages can be shared quickly and easily with a large audience.
  - It's particularly hurtful and overwhelming because other peers become more like bullies when they "like" a mean post or picture.
- **The attacks often cannot be deleted.**
  - It can be difficult to remove or permanently delete messages, posts and pictures from cyberspace, making it hard for the victim to move past the bullying episode.
- **Cyberbullying is under-reported to adults.**
  - Youth are often embarrassed and concerned that parents will make the problem worse, take away their electronic devices, or invade their privacy by monitoring their usage.
- **Cyberbullying is not always limited to cyberspace.**
  - Children who are being cyberbullied are often also experiencing traditional in-person bullying (relational, physical and/or verbal).
- **There are differences between boys and girls.**
  - Girls are more likely to report being cyberbullied.
  - Boys are more likely to experience cyberbullying while playing online games through consoles or the internet.

STRATEGIES TO HANDLE CYBERBULLYING

- Keep lines of communication open between you and your child so they feel comfortable confiding in you.
- Do not threaten to take away their electronic devices.
- Take all instances seriously and remain calm.
- Gather as much information about the cyberbullying as possible, such as any saved text messages, posts, pictures, etc.
- Contact the school even if the cyberbullying did not occur on school grounds.
- Do not contact the bully's parent or the bully, or try to respond for your child online or by text, as these may make the situation worse.
- Encourage your child to delete online accounts where cyberbullying is occurring and block unfriendly peers from gaining access to any new accounts they create.
- Encourage your child to make positive and supportive friendships. Look for out-of-school activities in adult-supervised settings where your child can have positive interactions with peers.

The "All About Bullying" fact sheets are brought to you by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Center for Violence Prevention, a hospital-wide, evidence-based effort to protect youth from violence.

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