

Tips to prevent cyberbullying

Don't respond. If someone bullies you, remember that your reaction is usually exactly what the bully wants. It gives him or her power over you. Who wants to empower a bully?

Don't retaliate. Getting back at the bully turns you into one and reinforces the bully's behavior. Help avoid a cycle of aggression.

Save the evidence. The only good news about digital bullying is that the harassing messages can usually be captured, saved and shown to someone who can help. You need to do this even if it's minor stuff, in case things escalate.

Talk to a trusted adult. You deserve backup. It's always good to involve a parent, but if you can't, a school counselor usually knows how to help. Sometimes both are needed. If you're really nervous about saying something, see if there's a way to report the incident anonymously at school.

Block the bully. If the harassment's coming in the form of instant messages, texts or profile comments, do yourself a favor: Use preferences or privacy tools to block the person. If it's in chat, leave the "room."

Be civil. Even if you don't like someone, it's a good idea to be decent and not sink to the other person's level. Also, research shows that gossiping about and trash talking others increases your risk of being bullied. Treat people the way you want to be treated.

Don't be a bully. How would you feel if someone harassed you? You know the old saying about walking a mile in someone's shoes; even a few seconds of thinking about how another person might feel can put a big damper on aggression. That's needed in this world.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying

stompoutbullying.org/how-to-deal-with-bullies

pacer.org/bullying/resources/stats.asp

stompoutbullying.org/bullying-cyberbullying-resources