

Cyberbullying

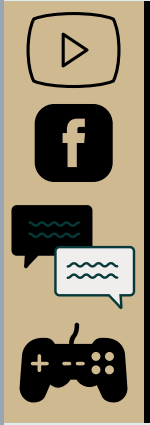
Understanding Cyberbullies

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying involves any **digital** and **electronic harassment** that is overt, unwanted, and repeated acts or gestures. Cyberbullies are offenders that identify an individual or group with the intention to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or cause harm. These egregious acts can be **detrimental** to the targeted person's health, including their mental, physical, emotional, and academic well-being.

Important to Remember

The **anonymity** of cyberbullying can encourage cyberbullying behaviors since it is challenging to identify the perpetrators. Students can engage in cyberbullying as the **targeters** or the **bystanders** (watching it occur without assisting). There is not an excuse for cyberbullying, but school administrators, teachers, and parents should be aware of these concerning reasons why someone is choosing to cyberbully and help them become **upstanders**.



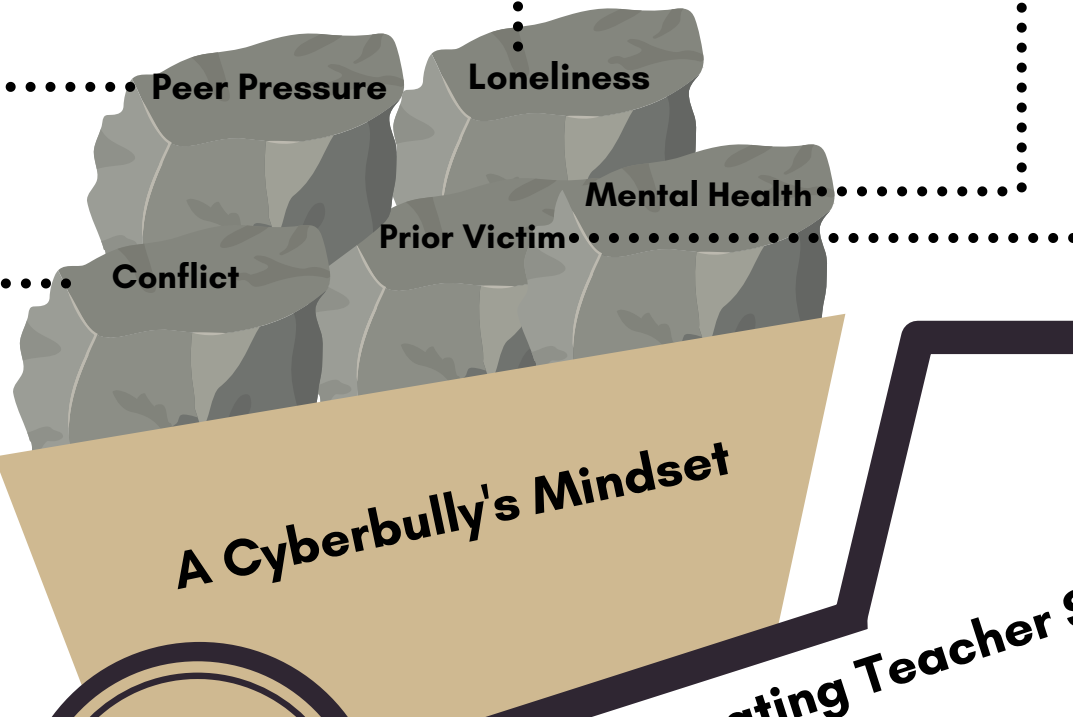
Why are students engaging in cyberbullying?

Students may cave into peer pressure and participate in cyberbullying by contributing and adding more fuel to the fire. They may also engage in bystander behavior.

Students that feel lonely or isolated may engage in these behaviors because few people expect them to and may see it as a way to express their thoughts or anger.

Students may have clouded judgment based on mental health concerns, such as habits of aggression, narcissism, impulsivity, and low empathy.

Students may experience relationship conflict, such as a break-up or conflict with friends. In these cases, they may choose to share personal or embarrassing information to retaliate.



Students that may have been victims of cyberbullying may seek revenge on their offenders or others wanting to lessen their harassment.



An Advocating Teacher Should:

- Convey school policies against cyberbullying and integrate online safety in curricula
- Teach students how to advocate for self and others
- Communicate with school officials and families when cyberbullying is apparent
- Assert that there is no excuse for cyberbullying or being bullied
- Teach how to engage in empathy

References

Cunic, A. (2021, January 03). *The psychology of cyberbullying*. <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-psychology-of-cyberbullying-5086615>
 Stop Bullying (n.d.). *Indiana anti-bullying laws and policies*. <https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/laws/indiana>