

## A word about ...

# Cyberbullying



- **Cyber bullying** is bullying through email, instant messaging, in a chat room, on a Web site, or through digital messages or images that are sent to a cellular phone or personal digital assistant (PDA) (Kowalski et al., 2008).
- **Cyber bullying**, like traditional bullying, involves a repeated, intentional negative action that involves an imbalance of power.
- The power imbalance in **Cyber bullying** simply happens because an individual is able to instantly share negative comments or photographs with a multitude of people via email, instant messaging, text messaging, or through Web site posts. There is no defense for the victim – in fact the victim may not know that they have been targeted.

# Prevention

- Keep your home computer in a visible place and periodically check the web browser history (even though it can be easily cleared). Consider parental controls – but know they are not foolproof and can be breached.
- Know your child's friends and also their online friends. Stress the importance of never sharing internet passwords – not even to the closest of friends. Talk about protecting online privacy so they will not share personal information including name, school, birthday, etc.
- Talk to your child about bullying, cyberbullying or other behaviors that may threaten, concern or make them feel uncomfortable. Explain that there are consequences for this is harmful and unacceptable behavior. Have clear rules about internet and cell phone use.
- Encourage your children to tell you immediately if they or anyone they know is being victimized by these negative behaviors.
- Talk to children about etiquette and that they must never put something up on the internet that they would not say in person. Remind them that once it is out there on the internet, it cannot be recalled.
- Although parents should respect privacy with their children and youth, the internet is a public vehicle. Tell your child that you will review online communications, particularly if you think there a reason for concern.
- Stay Connected – keep up with the technology that is in your home and do not allow use of electronics that you do not understand!

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