PREVENTION PLAYBOOK

Warning Signs a Child Is Being Cyberbullied or Is Cyberbullying

A child may be involved in cyberbullying in several ways. A child can be bullied, bully others, or witness bullying. Parents, teachers, and other adults may not be aware of all the social media platforms and apps that a child is using. The more digital platforms that a child uses, the more opportunities there are for being exposed to potential cyberbullying.

Many of the warning signs that cyberbullying is occurring happen around a child's use of their device. Since children spend a lot of time on their devices, increases or decreases in use may be less noticeable. It is important to pay attention when a child exhibits sudden changes in digital and social behavior.

Some of the warning signs that a child may be involved in cyberbullying are:

- Noticeable, rapid increases or decreases in device use, including texting.

- A child exhibits emotional responses (laughter, anger, upset) to what is happening on their device.

- A child hides their screen or device when others are near and avoids discussion about what they are doing on their device.

- Social media accounts are shut down or new ones appear.

- A child starts to avoid social situations, even those that were enjoyed in the past.

- A child becomes withdrawn or depressed or loses interest in people and activities

PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING CYBERBULLYING

Teachers, school administrators, camp, community, and faith-based staff are in unique positions to use their skills and roles to create safe environments with positive social norms. They are also in positions where they may notice children's behavior changes in group settings, like when a group or cluster of children focuses on another child, or other signs that cyberbullying may be occurring. There are things that you can do in the classroom or other group settings to address or prevent cyberbullying.

- If you think a child is being cyberbullied, speak to them privately to ask about it. They may also have proof on their digital devices.

- If you believe a child is being cyberbullied, speak to a parent about it. Serve as a facilitator between the child, parent, and the school if necessary.

- To understand children's digital behavior and how it relates to cyberbullying, increase your digital awareness.

- Develop activities that encourage self-reflection, asking children to identify and express what they think and feel, and to consider the thoughts and feelings of others. Help children develop emotional intelligence so that they can learn self-awareness and self-regulation skills and learn how to have empathy for others.

- Role model, reinforce and reward positive behavior towards others.

- Encourage peer involvement in prevention strategies.

A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS:
- How to Prevent Cyberbullying: A Guide for Parents, Caregivers, and Youth

More information and resources at: What Is Cyberbullying | StopBullying.gov