

ACTIVITY 60

Cyberbullying

Purpose: Analyze the Health and Human Services definition of cyberbullying, and discuss the range of responses to cyberbullying and how the choices we make online can impact members of our community.

APPROXIMATE TIME:

2 x 40 minutes

MATERIALS:

HANDOUT

Cyberbullying Scenarios

ADVISOR NOTES:

1. Preparing Materials for This Activity

- **First Advisory Meeting:** This activity uses the US Department of Health and Human Services definition of cyberbullying. The definition is long, so if you can't project it, you can write it on the board or chart paper before the meeting or distribute it on a handout.
- **Second Advisory Meeting:** If your advisory has fewer than 12 advisees, remove one or more of the scenarios or combine your group with another advisory. You need at least two advisees per scenario for the Jigsaw.

2. Your School's Cyberbullying Policy

If your school has a cyberbullying policy in the student handbook, bring a copy to read aloud or project during the first meeting. If your school does not have a cyberbullying policy, consider asking your advisory group to draft one as an extension to this activity. They could draft, revise, and edit their policy and then invite members of the administration to a future meeting where they present and discuss it with them.

3. Recommitting to the Advisory Contract

We recommend that you review your advisory contract in the second meeting before the cyberbullying scenario activity. Because one or more scenarios may feel familiar to your advisees, it is important that they feel safe and can engage in the activity. Remind advisees that they should focus on the discussion questions and not personalize the scenarios with comments like, "Oh! I remember when that happened to _____!"

4. Digging Deeper into Cyberbullying: Extending This Activity

If you would like to spend more time with this topic, you can visit StopBullying.gov to learn about laws and policies that states have adopted to prevent bullying and cyberbullying. If your advisees have access to computers, they can click on, read, and discuss the interactive map and policies for their state in small groups. Alternatively, you can project the map and explore it together. You can also click on your state and then print the information.

PROCEDURE:

First Advisory Meeting

1. Reflect on Cyberbullying in a Journal Response

- To help advisees connect this activity to the ostracism case study, remind them that the ostracism incident took place in December 1996, before it was commonplace for students to have cellphones. A lot has changed since then! While ostracism and bullying are still prevalent in schools, in some ways, they might look and sound different today, when students spend so much of their time interacting with each other online.
- Ask advisees to reflect on the following questions in their journals. Let them know that they will be sharing their responses with a partner.
 - How can people use social media to ostracize or bully others?
 - Have you seen examples of your friends or other students at your school bullying each other online? If so, on which apps do you think cyberbullying occurs the most?
 - What is the difference, if any, between “joking around” online and cyberbullying?
- Have advisees turn and talk with a partner. Let them know that they should focus on their school’s climate rather than individual experiences with cyberbullying. Then see if any volunteers would like to share their responses with the group.

2. Define and Discuss Cyberbullying

- As a group, define *cyberbullying*. Create a web on the board or chart paper with the following question in the center: *What is cyberbullying?* Then have advisees share their ideas and record them on the web.
- After your group has created its web, project or pass out the following definition from the US Department of Health and Human Services:
 - “Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior. The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:
 - Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter
 - SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
 - Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps, and social media messaging features)
 - Email”¹

¹ “What Is Cyberbullying?” StopBullying.gov, accessed June 16, 2018.

- Next, compare the US Department of Health and Human Services definition with your group's cyberbullying web. You might draw a Venn diagram on the board or chart paper to help advisees organize the ideas and discuss the similarities and differences they see.
- If your school has a cyberbullying policy in its student handbook, read it aloud, project it, or hand it out and discuss it as a group by comparing it to the Health and Human Services definition and your advisory's web.
- In pairs, small groups, or in a circle, discuss the following questions:
 - What are the similarities between in-person and online bullying?
 - What are the differences between in-person and online bullying?
 - Why do you think so many people choose to bully others online?

3. Capture Understanding and Questions on an Exit Card

- To get a sense of your group's understanding of cyberbullying, have them complete an **exit card** in which they finish the following sentence starters (visit facinghistory.org/advisory-media to learn about the Exit Cards teaching strategy):
 - After today's cyberbullying activities, I am thinking about . . .
 - A question that I have about cyberbullying is . . .

Second Advisory Meeting

1. Share Some Responses from the Exit Cards

Without revealing the identities of the writers, share some observations about any patterns you noticed in the exit card responses. You might discuss one or two of the questions or save them for the circle discussion at the end of the meeting.

2. Apply the Definition of Cyberbullying to Scenarios

- Now is a good time to revisit your advisory contract. Some advisees in your group might find that one or more of the scenarios feels familiar, and it is important that everyone feels safe and can fully engage in the activity, share their perspective, and feel heard.
- Let your group know that in this activity, they will be reading and discussing scenarios that involve teenagers interacting on social media. Divide your advisory into six groups for a **Jigsaw** (see Advisor Notes for smaller groups and visit facinghistory.org/advisory-media to learn more about the Jigsaw teaching strategy). Pass out one scenario from the handout **Cyberbullying Scenarios** to each "expert" group and explain to advisees that they will read and discuss their scenarios together. Then they will move to a new "teaching" group, where they will share their scenarios with each other and discuss some new questions together.

- After the expert groups have finished discussing their scenarios, “jigsaw” your advisory into “teaching” groups. Each advisee should give a brief summary of their scenario and an overview of their group’s discussion. Then have the “teaching” groups discuss the second set of questions on their handouts.
- Move into a circle to discuss the following questions as a whole group:
 - What solutions do you have that would encourage students to choose to be upstanders when they witness cyberbullying?
 - What responsibility, if any, do the companies who own social media platforms like Instagram or Twitter have to prevent cyberbullying on their sites? What other solutions do you have to prevent cyberbullying?
 - What lessons can you learn from these scenarios about the choices you make online or what you can do if you witness or are a target of cyberbullying?

3. Reflect on Cyberbullying

Ask advisees to respond to the following questions on a **3-2-1 exit card** (visit facinghistory.org/advisory-media to learn about these teaching strategies):

- What are **3** things that you learned about cyberbullying?
- What are **2** questions that you have about cyberbullying?
- What is **1** specific action that you can take if you are the target of cyberbullying or witness cyberbullying online?



Cyberbullying Scenarios

SCENARIO 1

Jasmine and Tanya, friends since seventh grade, are texting about a new boy named Dwayne in their tenth-grade class. What starts as a back-and-forth conversation becomes more heated when they each realize that the other one likes Dwayne and has been talking to him online. Name-calling quickly escalates to put-downs. Then Tanya threatens to send an ugly selfie from Jasmine's Finsta to Dwayne. Jasmine replies with a warning that Tanya had better watch her back after school the next day if she knows what's good for her. Then she signs off with two emojis: an angry face and an ambulance. Tanya tells her mother that she feels too sick to go to school the next day.¹

Read your scenario together and discuss the following questions. You should refer to the Health and Human Services definition of cyberbullying to guide your discussion.

1. What makes or doesn't make this scenario an example of cyberbullying?
2. What role does each student choose in your scenario (perpetrator, bystander, upstander)? What factors motivate their choices?
3. Where do you see students making choices in this scenario? What other choices are available to them?
4. Are there any examples of upstanders in your scenario? If not, what are some ways that an upstander could respond?
5. How might this scenario be resolved?
6. What questions does this scenario raise for you?

After you move into your new group, have each person share a brief summary of their scenario and discussion. Then discuss the following questions together:

1. What patterns, if any, do you notice across multiple scenarios?
2. What factors motivate the students' choices to be perpetrators, bystanders, or upstanders? What solutions do you have that would encourage students to choose to be upstanders when they witness cyberbullying?
3. What responsibility, if any, do the companies who own social media platforms like Instagram or Twitter have to prevent cyberbullying on their sites? What other solutions do you have to prevent cyberbullying?
4. What can you learn from these scenarios about the choices you make online?
5. What can you learn from these scenarios about what to do if you witness or are a target of cyberbullying?

¹ Scenarios 1–4 in this handout have been adapted from scenarios published by the Cyberbullying Research Center as well as accounts of cyberbullying in schools and on the news.

SCENARIO 2

Magda is a new girl at school. She is attractive, outgoing, and instantly popular with the “in” group, and many boys want to ask her out. Sara, a member of the “in” group, is concerned about Magda stealing away her boyfriend. With the help of her friends, Sara creates a “100 Reasons Why We Hate Magda” group chat, and her friends start to fill in the list. Girls include other students at the school on the chat, and soon boys and girls begin to post lies and hurtful messages about Magda. Magda’s grades slip, she becomes depressed, and she asks her parents if she can transfer to a different school at the break.

Read your scenario together and discuss the following questions. You should refer to the Health and Human Services definition of cyberbullying to guide your discussion.

1. What makes or doesn’t make this scenario an example of cyberbullying?
2. What role does each student choose in your scenario (perpetrator, bystander, upstander)? What factors motivate their choices?
3. Where do you see students making choices in this scenario? What other choices are available to them?
4. Are there any examples of upstanders in your scenario? If not, what are some ways that an upstander could respond?
5. How might this scenario be resolved?
6. What questions does this scenario raise for you?

After you move into your new group, have each person share a brief summary of their scenario and discussion. Then discuss the following questions together:

1. What patterns, if any, do you notice across multiple scenarios?
2. What factors motivate the students’ choices to be perpetrators, bystanders, or upstanders? What solutions do you have that would encourage students to choose to be upstanders when they witness cyberbullying?
3. What responsibility, if any, do the companies who own social media platforms like Instagram or Twitter have to prevent cyberbullying on their sites? What other solutions do you have to prevent cyberbullying?
4. What can you learn from these scenarios about the choices you make online?
5. What can you learn from these scenarios about what to do if you witness or are a target of cyberbullying?

SCENARIO 3

Dominic, a tall, skinny teenager, feels embarrassed when he has to change in the boys' locker room at school because he is not very muscular. Other boys notice Dominic's shyness and discomfort. One of the boys secretly takes a picture with his cell phone of Dominic wearing only his boxer shorts and posts it to Snapchat. One of his friends records the image on his brother's phone, adds a face filter, and posts it to his Snapchat story. The picture quickly goes viral and spreads to other members of the student body. Soon enough, boys and girls mock Dominic as he walks down the halls, calling him names and moving away from where he is sitting in class and the cafeteria. Dominic becomes distracted in his classes, fails a French quiz, and starts getting headaches.

Read your scenario together and discuss the following questions. You should refer to the Health and Human Services definition of cyberbullying to guide your discussion.

1. What makes or doesn't make this scenario an example of cyberbullying?
2. What role does each student choose in your scenario (perpetrator, bystander, upstander)? What factors motivate their choices?
3. Where do you see students making choices in this scenario? What other choices are available to them?
4. Are there any examples of upstanders in your scenario? If not, what are some ways that an upstander could respond?
5. How might this scenario be resolved?
6. What questions does this scenario raise for you?

After you move into your new group, have each person share a brief summary of their scenario and discussion. Then discuss the following questions together:

1. What patterns, if any, do you notice across multiple scenarios?
2. What factors motivate the students' choices to be perpetrators, bystanders, or upstanders? What solutions do you have that would encourage students to choose to be upstanders when they witness cyberbullying?
3. What responsibility, if any, do the companies who own social media platforms like Instagram or Twitter have to prevent cyberbullying on their sites? What other solutions do you have to prevent cyberbullying?
4. What can you learn from these scenarios about the choices you make online?
5. What can you learn from these scenarios about what to do if you witness or are a target of cyberbullying?

SCENARIO 4

Felix and Cyrus go to different schools but play on the same soccer team. One afternoon on the bus ride home from a game, they create a list on the back of a napkin of girls they think are hot. Their teammate and friend, Anthony, finds the list and posts it on a private soccer-team Facebook page, titling it "Sluts that Felix and Cyrus Dream About." The list then spreads via social media, and soon students at both schools and even some parents find out about it.

Read your scenario together and discuss the following questions. You should refer to the Health and Human Services definition of cyberbullying to guide your discussion.

1. What makes or doesn't make this scenario an example of cyberbullying?
2. What role does each student choose in your scenario (perpetrator, bystander, upstander)? What factors motivate their choices?
3. What role does language, specifically Anthony's word choice, play in this scenario?
4. Where do you see students making choices in this scenario? What other choices are available to them?
5. Are there any examples of upstanders in your scenario? If not, what are some ways that an upstander could respond?
6. How might this scenario be resolved?
7. What questions does this scenario raise for you?

After you move into your new group, have each person share a brief summary of their scenario and discussion. Then discuss the following questions together:

1. What patterns, if any, do you notice across multiple scenarios?
2. What factors motivate the students' choices to be perpetrators, bystanders, or upstanders? What solutions do you have that would encourage students to choose to be upstanders when they witness cyberbullying?
3. What responsibility, if any, do social media companies like Facebook or Twitter have to prevent cyberbullying on their sites? What other solutions do you have to prevent cyberbullying?
4. What can you learn from these scenarios about the choices you make online?
5. What can you learn from these scenarios about what to do if you witness or are a target of cyberbullying?

SCENARIO 5

Richard, Julian, and Nadia are exchanging texts late Friday night. They start to talk about how annoying Mia, a girl in their World History and English classes, is, especially when she raises her hand to volunteer to read and answer every question that the teacher asks. Richard jokes that they should create a fake Twitter account to let her know how annoying she is. Julian sends three “thumbs up” emojis. Five minutes later, Nadia sends a screenshot of an anonymous Twitter account with the following tweet: “@miagram thinks shes all that and more #tryhard #nerd #teacherspet.” Richard responds: “LMAO.” Over the course of the weekend, Nadia posts more mean tweets about Mia, which get retweeted around the school. Richard and Julian don’t retweet Nadia’s posts. The following week, Mia stops raising her hand in class, and when teachers call on her anyway, she says she doesn’t know the answer. After two weeks, one of Mia’s friends shows a counselor the thread on Twitter.

Read your scenario together and discuss the following questions. You should refer to the Health and Human Services definition of cyberbullying to guide your discussion.

1. What makes or doesn’t make this scenario an example of cyberbullying?
2. What role does each student choose in your scenario (perpetrator, bystander, upstander)? What factors motivate their choices?
3. Where do you see students making choices in this scenario? What other choices are available to them?
4. Are there any examples of upstanders in your scenario? If not, what are some ways that an upstander could respond?
5. How might this scenario be resolved?
6. What questions does this scenario raise for you?

After you move into your new group, have each person share a brief summary of their scenario and discussion. Then discuss the following questions together:

1. What patterns, if any, do you notice across multiple scenarios?
2. What factors motivate the students’ choices to be perpetrators, bystanders, or upstanders? What solutions do you have that would encourage students to choose to be upstanders when they witness cyberbullying?
3. What responsibility, if any, do social media companies like Facebook or Twitter have to prevent cyberbullying on their sites? What other solutions do you have to prevent cyberbullying?
4. What can you learn from these scenarios about the choices you make online?
5. What can you learn from these scenarios about what to do if you witness or are a target of cyberbullying?

SCENARIO 6

Jayme, an openly gay senior, is in the student lounge talking about who has asked whom to the upcoming junior/senior prom and who is wearing what. Jayme says that she is bringing her girlfriend, who goes to a different school, and is planning to wear a tux. The next afternoon after lunch, Jayme receives an anonymous message on her Tumblr stating that she will ruin the prom if she shows up in a tux with her girlfriend. Similar comments follow, escalating to include homophobic slurs. Then someone threatens physical harm and posts that they would all be better off if Jayme and her girlfriend were dead. Not wanting to return to what once felt like an open and progressive school, Jayme tells her parents what is happening. The next morning, they bring Jayme's laptop to school and request a meeting with the administration.

Read your scenario together and discuss the following questions. You should refer to the Health and Human Services definition of cyberbullying to guide your discussion.

1. What makes or doesn't make this scenario an example of cyberbullying?
2. What role does each student choose in your scenario (perpetrator, bystander, upstander)? What factors motivate their choices?
3. Where do you see students making choices in this scenario? What other choices are available to them?
4. Are there any examples of upstanders in your scenario? If not, what are some ways that an upstander could respond?
5. How might this scenario be resolved?
6. What questions does this scenario raise for you?

After you move into your new group, have each person share a brief summary of their scenario and discussion. Then discuss the following questions together:

1. What patterns, if any, do you notice across multiple scenarios?
2. What factors motivate the students' choices to be perpetrators, bystanders, or upstanders? What solutions do you have that would encourage students to choose to be upstanders when they witness cyberbullying?
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