



## (U//FOUO) VFC Highlight #18-04: Cyberbullying

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"Nearly **43%** of kids have been bullied online. **1 in 4** has had it happen more than once." ([dosomething.org](http://dosomething.org))



### (U) Key Points

- (U) Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets with the most common platforms being social media, text messaging, instant messaging, and email.
- (U) Cyberbullies may send threats, mean comments, post embarrassing photos, or share private information about someone online.
- (U) Girls are about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying.
- (U) The majority of victims do not tell their parents about the cyberbullying.
- (U) 81% of young people think that bullying online is easier to get away with than bullying in person.
- (U) 64% of teens that have been cyberbullied, report being bullied through Facebook.

### (U) Cyberbullying vs. Traditional Bullying

- (U) Traditional or "schoolyard" bullying has an end point such as the end of the school day, whereas the internet is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - (U) Advising victims to ignore their digital devices is not a realistic solution. Programmers refer to a phenomenon known as brain hacking where the apps, smartphones, and other devices are designed to get users addicted to the point where it causes anxiety to turn the device off.
- (U) Cyberbullies can mask their identities by creating fake accounts so the victim may not know who is bullying him or her as opposed to the in-person confrontations associated with traditional bullying.
- (U) Cyberbullies reach massive amounts of people in a matter of seconds while traditional bullying tends to take place on a smaller scale such as a gym class.
- (U) Cyberbullying is permanent. Online posts and conversations are difficult to erase which can affect your child's online reputation.
  - (U) Your child's online reputation could affect future college and employment opportunities. It is important to resolve any instances of cyberbullying as soon as possible.

### (U) Tips

- (U) Not all cyberbullying reaches the threshold of being considered a crime; however, it is recommended to reach out to local law enforcement.
- (U) If you believe your child is being cyberbullied, do not hesitate to speak to your child's school guidance counselor.
- (U) Pay attention to your child's internet activity and know which social media platforms they use.
- (U) Make sure your child knows they can talk to you about being bullied.
- (U) Document any evidence of cyberbullying.
- (U) Block cyberbullies from your child's social media accounts as well as their cell phone numbers.

### (U) Cyberbullying resources

- (U) [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)
- (U) [18 Cyberbullying Tips](#)
- (U) [nobullying.com](http://nobullying.com)
- (U) [kidshealth.org](http://kidshealth.org)
- (U) [pacerteensagainstbullying.org](http://pacerteensagainstbullying.org)

### (U) Online safety resources

- (U) [netsmartz.org](http://netsmartz.org)
- (U) [fbi.gov: safe online surfing](http://fbi.gov: safe online surfing)

### (U) Additional information on brain hacking:

- (U) [Brain Hacking - 60 Minutes—Anderson Cooper - Part 1](#)
- (U) [Brain Hacking - 60 Minutes—Anderson Cooper - Part 2](#)
- (U) [Brain Hacking - 60 Minutes—Anderson Cooper - Part 3](#)

(U) Please report any information pertaining to cyberbullying to the VFC at [VFC@vsp.virginia.gov](mailto:VFC@vsp.virginia.gov).