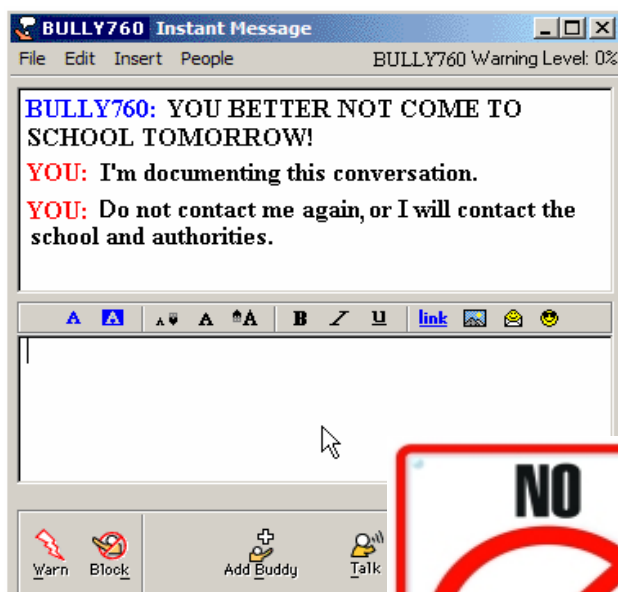


# #12058 REAL PEOPLE: BULLYING, THE INTERNET, AND YOU

SUNBURST VISUAL MEDIA, 2005  
Grade Level: 5–10  
20 Minutes



## CAPTIONED MEDIA PROGRAM RELATED RESOURCES

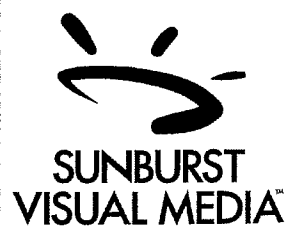
- [#10832 OUT OF THE DANGER ZONE](#)
- [#11375 BULLYING: NOT JUST A GUY THING](#)
- [#11625 THE TEEN FILES FLIPPED: BULLIES, LONERS AND VIOLENCE](#)
- [#12057: WHEN YOU SEE BULLYING HAPPEN: WHAT A BYSTANDER CAN DO](#)

***Teacher's Guide***

***Real People***  
**Bullying,  
the Internet  
and You**  
**Grades 5-9**

health  
character  
respect  
drugs  
career  
harassment  
violence  
bullying  
responsibility  
alcohol  
conflict  
anger

8754



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**Teacher's Guide**

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running time: approximately 22 minutes

We highly recommend that teachers preview  
programs before showing them in the classroom.

# Introduction

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Every day, in schools around the country, distressed teens arrive with fresh wounds from the gossip and torture that passes as chatting on the Internet. Research has shown that adult computer-users are more likely to engage in behavior (language) that they would not normally engage in during direct interpersonal interaction. Teens, not especially known for great impulse control, and falsely believing that their actions are anonymous, behave much the same, or worse.

In many ways the Internet is a parent's worst nightmare, a world totally without adult supervision, where children can encounter just about anything parents can imagine. But parents and educators can help teens by making it clear that they are aware of the problems that exist and by showing their willingness to help without taking control, for it is fear of losing control that prevents teens from reporting harassment online. Teens need to feel they can handle their own lives and going to an adult may make them feel ashamed, first for being the target of online bullying, and second for needing help.

Teens report that one aspect of Internet bullying is that it's difficult to gauge another person's reaction to things being said when the person is not physically present. Although this may explain some milder incidents, it doesn't account for the vicious and persistent attacks that have been directed at some teens by their peers. While some of the things teens do could fall into the category of a prank, much behavior goes far beyond that. Even so, teens themselves may think it's only a joke. Younger teens especially can have a hard time understanding how harmful and hurtful harassing behavior can be. They need to learn that harassment, whether at school, on the street, or online, is bullying and it is wrong. Civil, respectful behavior toward others is not only expected, it is deserved in every situation. Educators can challenge teens to ask themselves one question: "Is this behavior something I would want others, including my parents and teachers, to know about?" If the answer is no, there's a good chance the behavior is wrong.

***Real People Bullying, the Internet and You*** is designed for educators to use with teens in order to empower them to use the Internet without fear, and without resorting to mistreating anyone. By presenting the true stories of real teens who were bullied online, it challenges teens to realize that the person at the other end of the “enter” button is a real human being with the same feelings, hopes and needs as they have.

# Learning Objectives

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After viewing this program and participating in the activities in this Guide, teens will be better able to:

- Understand that their behavior on the Internet is not anonymous.
- Understand that harassment on the Internet is not a joke.
- Recognize that the same rules of respect and civility apply on the Internet as elsewhere.
- Understand that there can be negative consequences for those who harass someone via the Internet.
- Recognize that online journaling is risky.
- Understand that if they're harassed they should tell their parents or another adult who can help them.

# Program Summary

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The program opens with various teens telling what happens when it comes to bullying online. One student comments that “you think you're going to do your homework or check messages” and you get a message that says “you're a stupid skank.” Another student quotes threats he has received online. A third teen says “I found myself just constantly watching my back.” The scene shifts to a group of teens discussing Internet harassment and bullying. Everyone in the group agrees it's a problem. They give examples of what they've seen and talk about the impact it has on students. One girl says: “Almost every day I come to school and see a lot of people very upset because of Internet bullying. It messes up their whole day.”

The group continues to discuss examples of Internet bullying and the fact that in some cases it leads to physical fights at school. Hilda Quiroz, School Safety Specialist and group facilitator, helps the students define online harassment as the same as the old fashioned in-school kind, but “now the Internet has created a way to do it with greater convenience, greater speed, and greater effect.”

Jordan tells how she was harassed over a long period of time by girls who she had thought of as friends. She tells the audience that something changed when she went away on a vacation and came back and someone had started a rumor that she had said a bad thing about someone. Jordan describes how the bullying intensified and caused her to fear going to school and to actually get sick, lose weight, and be unable to sleep. Eventually, the bullies threatened her life. She began to have suicidal thoughts.

The group discusses why bullies would choose the Internet, and the discussion turns to how some teens think, incorrectly, that what they write on the Internet is untraceable. All communications can be traced, and victims can also save any e-mails they receive as evidence. Ms. Quiroz discusses in an interview how teens might be tempted to engage in “bravado” talk they would normally avoid because of this perceived anonymity.

The group discusses how bullies often want attention. They discuss bystanders who find themselves entertained or uninvolved. But it was a bystander who helped



Jordan, another student who saw what was happening, and got involved by standing up for her. Jordan confesses that this person literally saved her.

Online journaling is described as very risky, especially if you write personal things, or are angry and trying to vent when you write. One girl cautions against posting your phone number as she had because it invites people to bother you. Ms. Quiroz comments that teens may not know these risks and the group agrees that teens can be left with feelings of embarrassment, anger, hurt and even paranoia.

The teens talk about how you can handle Internet bullying by documenting it, and saving threatening e-mails or messages. One boy informs the group that you can examine a computer and see everything—every website the user has been on, and every message sent.

Jordan talks about how she had saved the messages she received and was eventually able to stop her bullies by telling them she was going to take it to the principal if they didn't stop. She adds that if you don't save the material, it's your word against theirs. Ms. Quiroz comments that Internet providers, parents and teachers can all be enlisted to help stop this kind of behavior. Internet providers have rules against harassment and a teen's account could be closed.

The teens discuss some of the reasons that it's hard to turn to adults for help, including a fear of being blamed for anything wrong they may have done themselves. Teens also fear losing access to the computer, or having greater supervision. But Ms. Quiroz cautions, the alternative may be to have the bullying continue. The students also mention that bullies might retaliate.

The students talk about how important it is to get help, and to talk to someone. Jordan shares how important it was for her to talk over her feelings with the friend who stood by her. The teens agree you should never give out your password, and always think twice about what you're writing before you send a message. Ms. Quiroz says that teens can tell the bully not to contact them again or they will be reported to their Internet provider, and adds that sometimes that's all it takes to stop a bully. Jordan adds that she learned how to stand up for herself, and she encourages teens to recognize that they don't deserve to be harassed and that adults can help.

Ms. Quiroz finishes by saying that the Internet can be a wonderful place and you can use it to accomplish many things, but it's important to remember to be respectful and responsible.

# Discussion Questions

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Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) appear on screen in the DVD format.

## **Part One: What is Internet Bullying?**

- (1) What is bullying/harassment? How is it different or the same on the Internet?
- (2) Why is Internet bullying such a big problem lately?
- (3\*) What does the facilitator mean when she says that bullying is “an abuse of personal power over people”?
- (4\*) How much Internet harassment goes on at your school?

## **Part Two: Why Do Teens Bully?**

- (1) What kind of role does racial, religious, and gender intolerance play in Internet bullying?
- (2) How much of a role do you think jealousy plays in Internet bullying? Why?
- (3) Do you think it was a coincidence that Jordan's friends started to bully her after she came back from being away from the group? Why, or why not?
- (4) Why do you think Jordan took a long time to take a stand against the bullies?
- (5\*) Do you think jealousy was a factor in why her friends bullied Jordan? Why, or why not?
- (6\*) Is it common for friends to bully friends? Or is it more common for a bully to target an outsider? Which is easier to get away with? Why?

## **Part Three: The Internet Is Not Anonymous**

- (1) Why do many teens think no one can find out what they're saying or doing on the Internet?

- (2) Are teens becoming more aware that their behavior on the Internet is not anonymous?
- (3) Do you think the Internet has created bullies out of kids who wouldn't have bullied anyone in person? Discuss your reasons.
- (4\*) Is it easier to bully on the Internet because no one can start a physical fight? If so, why don't teens think about what might happen the next day in school, and be more cautious?
- (5\*) Discuss how teens could be traced and caught when engaging in Internet harassment.

#### **Part Four: Roles in Internet Bullying**

- (1) Are the roles for bullies, victims and bystanders the same on the Internet as in person? How are they the same? If different, how?
- (2) What do bullies want to get out of bullying someone?
- (3) How do bystanders participate in bullying?
- (4) What could bystanders do to change things?
- (5\*) What can teens do to protect themselves on the Internet?
- (6\*) Why do victims often mistakenly blame themselves for the harassment?

#### **Part Five: Getting Help**

- (1) Discuss why no one should accept being mistreated or harassed on the Internet, or anywhere.
- (2) If you are harassed, and you've tried to stop the bullying unsuccessfully, what can you do then?
- (3) Why do teens dislike reporting bullying, especially on the Internet?
- (4\*) Why is it important to save harassing messages?
- (5\*) Why is it easy to get caught up in something on the Internet that can turn into bullying or harassment? What can teens do to prevent it?

# Suggested Activities

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- (1) Interested students can research and present to the class the facts about how their identities can be traced on the Internet.
- (2) Interested students can research and present to the class how an online journal can have very negative consequences for the person writing it.
- (3) Interested students can research and present to the class the steps a person should take if they are targeted for harassment online.
- (4) Divide the class into small groups and ask them to write a slogan aimed at promoting respect on the Internet. Allow students fifteen minutes, then ask each group to write its slogan on the chalkboard. Ask the class to vote for the one they like the best.
- (5) Students can make posters promoting respect on the Internet using the slogans produced by the class.

# Agree? Disagree?

## Handout 1

Place an A or a D in the space provided depending on whether or not you Agree or Disagree with the statement. Be prepared to discuss your reasons.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Teens who get bullied on the Internet should just ignore it.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ Teens who bully others on the Internet are looking for attention for themselves.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ It's easy to conceal your identity on the Internet.
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ A person who has self-respect will show respect for others in all situations.
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ It's a bad idea to write a personal online journal.
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ The most important thing to remember when Instant Messaging is to think twice about what you say before you hit the Enter button.
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_ I have the right to say whatever I want on the Internet, or anywhere else.
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_ If something isn't against the law then that means it's okay to do it.
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_ When you're excited and writing an IM fast, it's easy to forget that other people have feelings too.
- 10) \_\_\_\_\_ If you don't think twice, you can write something that upsets someone without intending to.
- 11) \_\_\_\_\_ If you upset someone else with something you say or write, the best thing to do is defend what you said and tell the other person not be so sensitive.

Read the following scenarios and decide if the behavior is harassment.  
Explain why or why not.

- 1) Sara and June are online and see that Leslie, a girl they don't like anymore, is also online. They don't respond when she IM's them.

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- 2) Leslie gets mad at Sara and June and calls them brats.

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- 3) Larry finds out June and Sara are mad at Leslie. He finds a picture of a gorilla and using a program he has, he substitutes a picture of Leslie's face on the gorilla. Then he sends the picture to all his friends.

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- 4) Leslie finds out about the gorilla picture and gets her older brother to go online and tell Larry that he's going to get beat up in school the next day.

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- 5) Larry, Sara and June get as many kids as they can to not talk to Leslie, either online or at school.

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## Role of the Bystander



Write an essay describing the role of the bystander in Internet bullying.

 Discuss how important you think it is and, if possible, give examples you've seen of when a bystander could have changed a situation for the better but did not. Discuss where the bully's power comes from and how it can be reduced. If you've never seen bullying incidents online, create one for the purposes of an essay.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



The following actions can all constitute harassment/bullying, depending on the situation. In most cases harassment is repeated behaviors, not a one-time lapse in judgment. However a single incident, if serious, can constitute harassment. For example: threatening someone's safety, even if done only once, is serious enough to be considered harassment.

1. **Name-calling**
2. **Threats**
3. **Racial or religious slurs**
4. **Spreading negative rumors**
5. **Ostracism (excluding someone deliberately as a group)**
6. **Sending pictures that have been composed that hold the person up for ridicule.**
7. **Sending pornographic pictures or messages**

# Suggested Reading

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## Reading for Educators and Parents

Garbarino, James and Ellen deLara. *And Words Can Hurt Forever: How to Protect Adolescents from Bullying, Harassment, and Emotional Violence*. Free Press, 2002. Some effective strategies educators can use to intervene and prevent bullying.

Harmon, Amy. "Internet Gives Teenage Bullies Weapons to Wound From Afar." *The New York Times*, August 26, 2004. How the technology, so much a feature of adolescent social life, is enabling bullies whose cruelty to victims is ordinarily confined to school hours to pursue their quarry into their own bedrooms.

Roberts, Donald F., et al. *Kids and Media in America*. Cambridge University Press, 2003. This comprehensive picture of young people's media behavior examines the full array of media available to children and adolescents, describes the amount of time they spend with each medium, the kinds of content they choose, and the physical, social and psychological context of much of their exposure.

Simmons, Rachel. "Cliques, Clicks, Bullies and Blogs." *Washington Post*, September 28, 2003, p.B01. How the Internet has transformed the landscape of children's social lives.

Simmons, Rachel. *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls*. Harcourt, 2002. Arguing that girls are socialized to value friendships but not to express the anger that might destroy them. Describes the many kinds of aggression girls act out to one another, provides parents, teachers, and girls themselves clear-cut strategies for resisting them.

Thompson, Michael, et al. *Best Friends, Worst Enemies*. Ballantine Books, 2001. A guide to raising healthy children that explores each stage of development and doesn't shy away from describing negative experiences, including some out-

right cruel acts that can be hard on parents and children but are sometimes necessary for learning about the world.

Wiseman, Rosalind. *Queen Bees and Wannabees: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends and Other Realities of Life*. Three Rivers Press, 2003. A candid and insightful book that helps parents and daughters alike to navigate the crucial teen years.

### **Reading for Grades 5 to 9**

Rothman, Kevin F. *Coping With Dangers in the Internet: A Teen's Guide to Staying Safe Online*. Rosen Publishing Group, 2000. Using plain language and offering good advice, this practical guide lays out Internet basics to help both experienced and inexperienced young people use the Web safely.

Rutledge, Jill Zimmerman. *Dealing With the Stuff That Makes Life Tough: The Ten Things That Stress Teen Girls Out and How to Cope With Them*. McGraw-Hill, 2003. A self-help guide for teen girls that addresses many of the issues, including dealing with bullies, that cause them stress and anxiety; offers realistic solutions.

Seethi, Maneesh. *Web Design for Teens*. Muska & Lipman/Premier-Track, 2004. Informative and accessible, this guide to Web design teaches teens all about the components of a clean Web site, what goes into it, and how to expand it.

Wilhelm, Doug. *The Revealers*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. Tired of being picked on and bullied, three seventh-grade outcasts join forces by creating "The Revealer," an e-mail forum on the school's Intranet in which kids can reveal their backgrounds, interests and experiences of being bullied, with the result that a new and caring school atmosphere begins to emerge.

### **Internet Resources**

#### For Educators and Parents

<http://www.WiredSafety.org>

[http://www.internetsuperheroes.org/cyberbullying/adult/Brittany\\_article.html](http://www.internetsuperheroes.org/cyberbullying/adult/Brittany_article.html)

<http://www.netfamilynews.org/nlo41022.html>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A8020-2003Sep26&notfound=true>

Article: “How to Cyberbully-Proof Your Kids”:

[http://www.macleans.ca/topstories/technology/article.jsp?content=20040524\\_81183\\_81183](http://www.macleans.ca/topstories/technology/article.jsp?content=20040524_81183_81183)

List of sites for identifying cyberbullying:

<http://www.opheliaproject.org/issues/TheOpheliaProject.cyberbullying.shtml>

### **For Grades 5 to 9**

<http://www.WiredSafety.org>

Seven rules for dealing with bullies: <http://www.unban75.org/info/bullying/html>

Internet and Instant Messenger Safety Tips: <http://pta.greeceny.org/atm/cyberbullying.htm>

Article: “Are You Being Bullied?” [http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/bullying/bullying\\_news/index.asp?article=bullying&top=0](http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/bullying/bullying_news/index.asp?article=bullying&top=0)

### **Related Materials from Sunburst Visual Media**

*“Real People* How Not to Be a Victim: Violence Prevention”

26-minute program for Grades 5 to 9

*“Student Workshop* Gossiping, Taunting, Bullying: It’s All Harassment”

24-minute program for Grades 5 to 9

“Guess What I Just Heard...”

22-minute program for Grades 5 to 9

“Bullying: Don’t Stand For It” pamphlet for Grades 5 to 9

“Respect: It Starts With You” pamphlet for Grades 5 to 9

“Rumors and Gossip: It’s Bad News” pamphlet for Grades 5 to 9

“Cliques: Who’s In? Who’s Out?” pamphlet for Grades 5 to 9

# Script

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## JORDAN

When you think you're going to do your homework, or you think you're going to talk to your friends real quick, you get messages like, "You said this about my friend and now I'm going to get you tomorrow." And you get things like, "You're such a stupid skank, I can't believe you did this, this, and this."

## AJ

Online they'll instant message the person, "I'm gonna get back at you, you better watch your back. Sleep with your eyes open or something. I'm going to find out where you live and come get you."

## JACK

I've gotten messages that say, "you dirty Jew."

## ASHLEE

I've seen a lot of people crying over seeing, "oh she's a slut" and stuff. I see them crying and getting into fights. Talking about each other behind their backs.

## ***Real People Bullying, the Internet and You***

## JORDAN

They would sit there and go, oh wow, we got her, she's emotional about that, she doesn't like what we did right there. Okay great, tomorrow, we're doing it ten times more.

I was afraid physically, mentally, emotionally. I was just scared. I was scared of everything. I found myself just constantly watching my back, even when I shouldn't have been.

## HILDA QUIROZ

Welcome to our discussion today about online harassment or Internet bullying. The most important question: is it a problem for middle-school kids?

## ALL

Yes.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Tell me why.

**ZACH**

Because people can bully you through the Internet. In a sense, they can do anything they really want on the Internet. They can send pictures, they can text-message you on your cellphones. They can instant message, email. Just all this stuff that they can do to harass you, bully you, make fun of you, anyway to get you down.

**LANAYE**

Almost every day I come in to school I see a lot of people very upset because of Internet bullying. It messes up their whole day.

**ZACH**

Kids, after school, they go straight home to their computers and they start talking about what happened that previous day.

**ASHLEE**

Kids come to school saying, oh so-and-so said something about me, and that person said something about me, and the persons were crying. And then a fight happens.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Bullying, whether it's done in person or online, is something that is done with the intent of hurting someone. It's something that is done in a way that it abuses a sense of personal power over other people. And finally, something that is done over and over again, or in worse ways as the bullying goes along.

**As many as one out of four teens report they have experienced bullying online**

**HILDA QUIROZ**

How many of you have experienced your own personal online bullying experience?

**ALL**

Yes.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

What happened?

**ASHLEE**

I found out that some girls were writing about me, saying that I think I'm all that because I'm black...

**THERESA**

The people that were trashing me, they were saying that I was a jerk and they were calling me vulgar names because my sister was prom queen. So they thought that I thought that I was cool too, and that I was higher than everyone else.

**JULZ**

I've experienced it by other people IM'ing me and telling me they hate me and calling me cuss words and everything like that.

**ASHLEE**

What they do is, they type in, "Oh, I hate that person" or "I don't like that person because that person's something," and then that person prints it and then it goes around the whole school.

**THERESA**

I've heard of sites that...like particular schools, you click on your school and then it has a whole chat room that people just sit there and trash other people.

**ZACH**

You can have a whole website that's dedicated to hating someone, or there's inappropriate stuff, all these different pictures. And you can scan pictures and put people's bodies. It's crazy.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Understanding bullying on the Internet is the same as understanding bullying person to person. It's the same old hateful messages and hurtful messages, but now the Internet has created a way to do it with greater convenience, greater speed, and greater effect.

**JORDAN'S STORY****JORDAN**

I went on vacation, I came back and a friend of mine had started a rumor about me—that I had said something about someone else, and that's kind of when it started.

It became...you took my boyfriend. He was going to ask me out, but no, you talked him out of it. And I didn't do anything like that. And I think it was the worst in sixth grade because that's when all the phonecalls would come. That's when the death threats were really, really big. And they were always really scary because they did know where I lived. They *did* know where I slept because they spent the night

If it was a weekend and they were all at someone else's house and I was on, they would come on and be like, why are you on? And I'd say, why are you on, I'm just checking my email.

### **JORDAN'S MOM**

She was threatened. She was called names. She pretty much was harassed. I mean, she would be chatting with friends and then, of course, they would come in and start conversations with her. Usually they start out like they want to be her friend and then, in the middle of it, it turns pretty nasty and just real mean and namecalling and stuff like that.

### **JORDAN**

They would sit there and go, "oh wow, we got her, she's emotional about that, she doesn't like what we did right there. Okay great, tomorrow we're doing it ten times more.

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

Typically, this happens so fast and it can almost disintegrate right before your eyes—from message to message, from contact to contact. That someone like Jordan would probably never even be able to imagine how quickly something like that could happen, and how hurtful it can be. Especially when there's no one to talk back to directly. There's just this screen and what's on it and your imagination about how it must be affecting your life among your friends.

Why would a bully choose the Internet?

### **JACK**

They think that it's completely private and that no one will find out—even though that is entirely untrue. And anything you do on the Internet can be traced in thirty seconds.



**HILDA QUIROZ**

Is it possible too that if I bully you in person I can start saying something to you and I can use bad words in person and you might say something back to me. But on the Internet, I can just type forever, no one stops me.

**JUSTIN**

Yeah, when you're up like near someone, they can walk away. But on the Internet and chatting, they don't have that luxury.

**TRACY**

If they're online, they can't really see an expression or how you're trying to say it to them. They can only read it. So it makes it sort of convenient for you to say something harmful to them.

If you're in person bullying somebody, it can get physical, where there's fighting and you can get jumped or something.

**JORDAN**

On the Internet, it was really bad because they could say whatever they wanted and they thought they could get away with it because there was no adults around. And they thought that it's easier. We're not saying it to her, so it's not against the law. We can't really get in trouble for this, we're just kind of writing it.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Bullying online has some kind of special aspect to it. Number 1: kids begin to experience that sense of invisibility because nobody sees me, because they don't see me face to face.

All of a sudden, you might do things that you would never, ever risk doing in person. When it's just you and the screen and your keyboard, there tends to be more of a sense of what sometimes we call "bravado."

And the whole idea that you think that cyberspace is something way out there, where nobody's ever going to track your messages again. There's a mystery about where all this goes, but the most important thing to remember is there's something called cyber footprints, and people can track back to the person, quite often, who did the sending and the creating of those hurtful messages.

**JACK**

Online, there's no way to take it back once you sent it—like, when you're in person. You send it, and once you do, you're done. No way to take it back

**ASHLEE**

The enter button is bad, because it's hard not to push it if it's right in front of you.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Sometimes you've heard people talk about or say to people—think before you speak, think before you act, think before you assume or judge. There is always this thought that your words are going to have some kind of impact and your actions are going to have or have the same power of impact.

Sitting before a keyboard...that just empowers you to do things with so much convenience and so much speed. It's something that can be very tempting. And that whole idea of filling in or creating a message and just with a click of a button... I mean, that impatience to send it and get it out there is some times a temptation.

And now those same old messages have become—Think before you click; Think before you send.

**ONLINE JOURNALS**

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Why do you journal online? What is the appeal?

**GIRL**

Beause it's fun.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

What makes it fun? Who has access to your journal?

**TRACY**

Everyone.

**ZACH**

They usually do it for the attention.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Is it possible someone writes something risky in their own journal just to get it online? Maybe they don't understand the risk of someone getting a hold of it?

**ALL**

Totally, definitely.

**PRESLEY**

If somebody gets hold of something personal and risky that you wrote, they could totally destroy your life .

**HILDA QUIROZ**

This is like the free-est, written expression there is. Nobody's going to grade it. Nobody's going to edit it. It's whatever you say, and whatever you want to put online. The thing is that sometimes kids don't understand that this outpouring of creativity or personal expression is kind of a dangerous thing to do. Kids come to school every day talking to their teachers or talking to their friends, talking about how embarrassed they are or how hurt they are by what happened through this whole process of online journaling.

**IMPACT**

**HILDA QUIROZ**

How could a person feel if they were a target of online bullying?

**AJ**

They could feel like they want to do something to the person that's bullying them.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

A sense of revenge? Wanting to get back?

**GIRL**

Depression.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Depression, why?

**AMY**

Beause they feel sad and you have low self-esteem about yourself and you feel that no one out there could help you, because you don't know who it is. It could be numerous people and you just feel so alone.

**JORDAN**

I mean I really wasn't myself anymore. I was tired because I could never sleep. Every morning, before school, I was begging not to go. I was sick to my stomach.

I remember there was this road and we'd have 15 minutes we have to drive... I remember on the way there we'd get close to school and I'd feel like I was going to throw up. I was constantly tired. I would never eat, I found myself losing a lot of weight.

I had no concentration whatsoever. I was worried about what was going to happen at lunch, I was worried about what was going to happen outside. I couldn't concentrate. I would sit there and be doing the work, but I wasn't concentrating.

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

Once the emotions, the really powerful emotions set in, then the behaviors follow. Someone who would become so consumed by what's happening that they think about nothing else. That maybe after a while it doesn't even matter to eat anymore. It doesn't matter to do school work anymore.

### **JORDAN**

I felt so bad that there were a lot of times where I would just think, well maybe if I wasn't here, maybe if I just killed myself, maybe if I did do what they wanted me to do, you know...

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

There are kids who have even talked about the fact that some online bullying has led to thoughts of suicide. Because at that point, they think there is no other answer. This is never going to stop. This has gotten out of hand. I'm living in a day-to-day almost hell that has been created by other kids, and that's not where I want to be.

## **BYSTANDERS**

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

In bullying situations, we know there is a victim or target, a bully, and we know there are bystanders. What are the different roles of bystanders in online bullying?

### **JUSTIN**

Well, if you're going to say something about someone, you're going to want to get the attention from it. You don't want to just say something and not really get anything out of it.

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

The people who read it and pay attention to it are the bystanders of some sort. What are the different roles they play?

### **JUSTIN**

Well some people, they'll egg people on. You know, like—say it again, say it again. People like to see people flip. There are some times where people tease students in our classes and that student may get to the point where they feel that they need to hurt someone or hurt themselves.

### **JORDAN**

They'll sit there and they'll be able to have a big group around the computer and just be able to say whatever they want. And I think it's kind of a game to them to see if they can make you upset, or see if they can make you afraid, or see if they can threaten you and get away with it.

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

And you might not even have to do anything about it. You're the one who's just entertained by what's happening. You might harbor some feelings...I think that person deserved that. So you kind of step back. Or maybe you're the active bystander who doesn't start the first message, but sure enough falls in and adds to the information or adds to the gossip, and really believes that because I didn't start it, I'm not responsible for it.

### **JORDAN**

My friend in sixth grade, he saw everything that was going on and he just was like, this isn't right, this needs to stop. I'm going to help you. And then he did. He stopped it. I mean, it gives me shivers thinking about it, because he was...he's my angel really, and he saved me.

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

So a bystander who steps in, like in Jordan's case, and makes it clear to Jordan things that she might be suspecting or things that she can't quite bring herself to say, the friend helped her face—this is a problem, this is not right, something has to be done. And, of course, the most important thing that a friend can say—I'll help you.

### **JORDAN**

That's enough for a person that's just constantly being bullied, to have someone say I'm here for you. If you need to talk to anyone, call me. I'm here for you. I'm your friend, I'm here for you.

## **PROOF**

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

How would you go about proving that bullying was happening to you? How would you document that someone was bullying you?

### **JULZ**

You can get a program where you can see every instant message you have. It automatically saves, and so you have records of everything.

### **JORDAN**

People don't understand that. I mean, it's just one little click and you can save it and you can say, Mom this is so-and-so and look what they're saying to me.

I had saved all the emails, so I had all of it and I literally was able to say, "please don't or I will do this. You will not play sports again at school, you will not have this."

You need to do that because if you don't have those conversations where they are threatening you, then you really don't really have anything. I mean, it's just your word against five other people

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

You have to start saving copies of what's there, so that when you talk to an Internet service provider or when you talk to your parents, or it's an issue that you have to take back to the school, or something that you have to talk about to the phone company—you have to have as much proof of the message or the writing as you can possibly have. So documenting is a really important part of this.

## **PARENTS**

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

Did you tell your parents about the online bullying?

### **PRESLEY**

It's also rough, because at first you may think, okay, I really need to tell this because then maybe they can help me out and help me feel better because my self-esteem is going down low. But then later on, you're like, wait, maybe they'll get mad at me for ever being on that.

### **KELSEY**

I don't think people would want to tell their parents or an adult or whatever. Because you feel...oh yeah, I'll talk to them about it. Then they're going to be more mad at me or now they're going to do it even more. That's probably the main reason why people don't like to tell adults.

### **JORDAN**

I think that a lot of people are embarrassed because it's like I don't want to tell my parents that I'm having trouble in school. It's like when you get a bad grade and you don't want to tell your parents.

I mean, there's a lot of rumors that they say. There's rumors about you and a guy, you know, sexually. There's rumors about you and a bunch of different partners. There's rumors about you being just so mean. And you don't want your parent to think that. You don't want your parent to go, well, is it true?

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

Maybe you're even going to have to fess up to some things you did. Maybe the bully brought you down to his or her level and you played their game for a while. And even when we talk about documenting what happened, they're going to see what you did. And maybe that worries you.

Telling is a tough thing to do, but telling is the smart thing to do. Especially if you need the help from someone to get this thing under control.

## **GETTING HELP**

### **HILDA QUIROZ**

Sometimes kids have a trusted teacher or someone at school that even as you work through how am I going to tell my parents that this is happening to me. Sometimes those conversations at school with a counselor that you trust or really like or get along with, or a teacher, just that adult that you trust, who can sit down and talk these things through with you.

Let's become problem solvers. If you had to follow rules to keep you safe on the Internet, what would your suggestions be to kids on the Internet?

### **JULZ**

Don't give out your password.

**ZACH**

Think twice before you send. Just think twice before everything because that's probably the most valuable thing you can learn in life.

**JUSTIN**

If something happens to me on the Internet, I kind of tell my parents. It's not because I'm a tattletale, it's more the fact that I don't want it to happen anymore. And sometimes your parents have the skills you may not know, but they have the skills to fix a problem and right other people's wrongs.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Maybe we don't know what they know and we don't take the time to ask.

**PRESLEY**

Even though some people when they get threatened may not want to talk to their parents, but because my dad is a really big computer tech and he can help me if I have any problems. And there's some kids that may not know that. And their mom or dad could be really good at computers.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

Don't sell them short. What about rules for online journaling?

**KELSEY**

Don't write something that you're going to regret. Don't write something just because you're mad about it, because it will come back to you and it will really hurt you.

**JULZ**

This is for both things. On journals, a lot of people put their phone numbers on there and then on away messages. They put the phone number, call me or text message me or whatever. You should not do that because I've done that before.

**HILDA QUIROZ**

It's important to know that if you're a target of bullying, you're not completely powerless. There are things that you can do. Number one: you can go back online and simply communicate the message—do not contact me again. You can go a step further and say, I will be contacting the authorities and showing them this message. And for some bullies, that's enough to keep them at bay. Because one of the bully's greatest fears is discovery.



## **JORDAN**

I've learned how to stand up for myself. And I know that it's not going to work my way for everybody. But everybody's way of getting the information is the same. And I think you just have to get the information that you need, document everything.

I know it's probably terrible to keep that in there. And you're thinking in your head, why am I saving this? But you're saving it for the long run, you're saving it for when you have enough information that you can go—"okay, don't. I have this email that you sent me where you're threatening to kill me."

## **JORDAN'S MOM**

What teens should realize is that they don't have to put up with it. It's not normal for them to have to go to school day in and day out and be harassed. It's wrong and they need to get help. And they deserve help and they shouldn't be afraid to ask for it.

## **HILDA QUIROZ**

The most important thing about being on the Internet is to know that, number one: it is a great place to be and there are all kinds of wonderful things that you're going to be able to accomplish on the Internet. But also to remember to be respectful and to be responsible, to manage or even look at your own sense of self-respect—am I proud of what I'm doing? the words that I'm using? the messages that I'm sending? Or would I be embarrassed if somebody found out what I was doing? Also, to recognize in that area of respect when something becomes disrespectful on someone else's part.

And the second thing is to be responsible, to know that when it does go to this point, something has to be done. Even if it feels uncomfortable to ask for that help, or take that step, that a responsible person would do it anyway.

## **THE END**