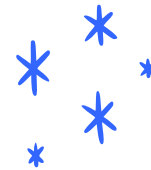# Module 2:
Raising Kind Kids in the Age of Cyberbullying

Learning Objectives:

Parents will be able to…

1. Spot signs of cyberbullying and help kids recognize their role

2. Teach safe ways to respond, support others, and report issues

3. Use open-ended questions to encourage sharing and step in if needed

4. Promote empathy and guide kids in handling conflicts calmly

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Module 2 Outline:

1. Warmup (5 min)
   a. Activity: Spot the Bully A
   b. Review the learning goals

2. What's happening in the world (5 min)
   a. Cyberbulling: Twenty Crucial Stats R
   b. The role of the parent: Recognizing when a child is a victim or participant
   c. Question: Have you or someone close to you ever witnessed or experienced online bullying Q

3. What do we do about cyberbullying (10 min)
   a. Define cyberbullying, including recognizing behaviors, understanding roles, and introducing supportive communication strategies
   b. Forms of Cyberbullying: Harassment, exclusion, impersonation, and cyberstalking. (Resource: The Family Guide to Cyberbullying) R
   c. Roles in bullying situations (Activity: Becoming an Upstander) A
   d. How to create a safe space for open dialogue

4. Roleplay (25 min)
   a. Activity: Practice with the AI A
   b. Question: What did you learn from your conversations? Q
   c. Have a new AI conversation using what you learned
   d. Question: What was challenging and what worked? Q

5. Takeaways (5 min)
   a. Everything discussed in Module 2 is available at givebacks.com/oso
   b. Question: What's something you want to try at home? Q

3

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Module 2 Activities and Resources for OSOs

Spot the Bully Activity

Objective:

Recognize different types of bullying behaviors by identifying how they are represented in well-known TV and movie characters.

Instructions:

Discuss three iconic characters from movies and TV who display different types of bullying behaviors. For each character, write down:

1. The specific bullying behaviors they exhibit
2. How these behaviors might show up in real-life situations

There are no wrong answers + feel free to swap out characters with others that resonate more.

Characters:

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1. Regina George (Mean Girls)
   • Bullying Behaviors:
   • Real-Life Examples

2. Draco Malfoy (Harry Potter)
   • Bullying Behaviors:
   • Real-Life Examples:

3. Johnny Lawrence (The Karate Kid)
   • Bullying Behaviors:
   • Real-Life Examples:

Cyberbullying:
Twenty Crucial Stats

By Aliza Vigderman Senior Editor, Industry Analyst | security.org

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that happens through digital devices such as phones or computers. It often happens over social media, text, email, instant messages, and gaming. Cyberbullying often takes the form of sending or sharing harmful or mean content about someone to embarrass them. Sometimes this content is shared anonymously, making cyberbullying feel even more threatening.

Given the broad definition of cyberbullying, numbers and statistics around it can sometimes vary wildly. There are also different interpretations of what it really is and most studies rely on victims self-reporting instances of bullying committed against them. We were all children once, and we know that a lot of kids don't resort to telling on their bullies in fear of further harm. All those factors create discrepancies in cyberbullying statistics. The bottom line though is that cyberbullying is quickly becoming a major problem in our society.

Here are some statistics to prove that:

Prevalence of Cyberbullying

- According to our cyberbullying research, in which we studied parents of kids between the ages of 10 and 18, 21 percent of parents claimed that their children have been cyberbullied.

- 56 percent of these reports occurred from January to July 2020. We believe this increase correlates with the increased time spent online during COVID-19 lockdowns.

- Cyberbullying affects more than just kids. In a 2020 study, it was found that 44 percent of all internet users in the U.S. have experienced harassment online, which can be considered a type of cyberbullying. The most common type of online harassment was name-calling, making up 37 percent of all harassment

Higher Risk

- Of all the social networks, kids on YouTube are the most likely to be cyberbullied at 79 percent, followed by Snapchat at 69 percent, TikTok at 64 percent, and Facebook at 49 percent.

- We also found that, as a child's age increased, so did the likelihood of cyberbullying. As the child aged in two-year intervals between the ages of 10 and 18, their likelihood of being cyberbullied increased by 2 percent.

- Children from households with annual incomes of under $75,000 were twice as likely to be cyberbullied than kids from houses with annual incomes of over $75,000 (22 versus 11 percent).
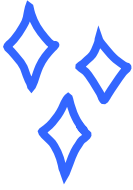
Cyberbullying Impacts

- Cyberbullying can bring up various emotions from the victim, but the most common response is to feel angry. Over half of teens who have experienced cyberbullying felt resentment towards their bully, while about a third felt hurt.

- Cyberbullying also affects how a victim feels about themselves. Two-thirds of cyberbullying victims said that getting bullied online had a negative impact on how they felt about themselves, bringing up feelings of insecurity and low self-worth.

- Lastly, studies show that cyberbullying can have lasting mental, physical, and social impacts. Nearly a third of cyberbullying victims said the incidents affected their friendships.

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Taking Action

- The most effective way to prevent cyberbullying, teens say, is to block the bully, according to the National Crime Prevention Council.

- Out of teenage cyberbullying victims:

  - 36 percent asked the bully to stop cyberbullying them.

  - 34 percent blocked all communication with the bully.

  - 29 percent did nothing.

  - 11 percent talked to their parents about the incidents.

- Almost two-thirds of tweens said that they tried to help someone who was being bullied online, and 30 percent had tried to help multiple times, according to the Cyberbullying Research Center.

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The Family Guide
to Cyberbullying

Brought to you by Aura

Cyberbullying can often take the form of spreading rumors, hurtful name-calling, sending unwanted explicit images, physical threats, harassment, doxing, and "revenge porn".

Bullying and cyberbullying behaviors are intentional, involve an imbalance of power, and happen repeatedly. They are not one-time events, social media posts that might offend others, or disagreements that result from misunderstandings.

Common modes of cyberbullying include email, texting, instant messaging, social media, video games, and direct messaging through other apps.

What is the difference between cyberbullying and bullying?

1. Medium of Interaction

    -   Cyberbullying: Occurs through electronic means like social media, text messages, email, and online platforms.

    -   In-Person Bullying: Happens face-to-face in physical environments such as schools, playgrounds, or public spaces.

2. Accessibility and Reach

    -   Cyberbullying: Can happen anytime and anywhere, as long as the victim has access to the internet or electronic devices, making it pervasive.

    -   In-Person Bullying: Typically restricted to specific locations, such as school or work, and victims often find reprieve at home or away from those environments.

3. Audience Size

    -   Cyberbullying: The audience can be vast and include anyone online who has access to the shared content, significantly amplifying the impact.

    -   In-Person Bullying: Limited to the immediate physical setting, involving fewer witnesses.

4. Anonymity

    -   Cyberbullying: Perpetrators can remain anonymous, making it easier for them to avoid accountability and reducing their ability to feel empathy for the victim.

    -   In-Person Bullying: Perpetrators are usually identifiable and directly face the victim, making anonymity impossible.

5. Persistence

    -   Cyberbullying: Content can remain online indefinitely and be repeatedly shared or viewed, prolonging the victim's distress.

    -   In-Person Bullying: The impact is generally confined to the moment and environment in which the bullying occurs.

6. Physical Presence

- Cyberbullying: Requires no physical interaction, making it easier to plan and execute with little effort or risk of being caught.

- In-Person Bullying: Requires physical proximity, which can deter some actions due to fear of intervention or consequences.

7. Supervision and Authority

- Cyberbullying: Lacks clear oversight; there are no immediate "enforcers," such as teachers, to intervene. Victims are also hesitant to report it, fearing loss of online privileges or being labeled informers.

- In-Person Bullying: Often happens in environments with some form of adult or peer supervision, where authority figures can intervene directly.

8. Emotional Impact on Perpetrators

- Cyberbullying: Perpetrators feel less remorse due to the lack of visible emotional reactions from the victim.

- In-Person Bullying: Seeing the victim's emotional responses can elicit some level of guilt or deter further actions.

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What is the difference between bullies, victims, and bystanders?

- Bullies: Those who engage in repeated harmful behaviors targeting those they see as vulnerable or less powerful.

- Victims: Those who are harmed by others (in this case, bullies or cyberbullies)

- Bystanders: Those who are not involved in the bullying but who see it happening.

Research shows that many factors can influence whether someone will or will not step in when they see someone being cyberbullied, but having empathy and a school environment where they feel cyberbullying is taken seriously can make a difference for defending and reporting. Some bystanders might engage in negative behaviors, such as forwarding harmful content, taking and sharing screenshots, or adding comments to hurtful online threads. These behaviors spread the message to a wider audience, potentially increasing psychological harm to the victim. In this case, the bystander becomes a bully.

How common is cyberbullying?

Nearly 100% of teens report having access to a smartphone or home computer, and nearly half of teens report that they are online "almost constantly". In the United States, about 16% of high school students report being cyberbullied in 2019; sadly, students identifying as LGBTQ reported a much higher rate of online bullying; almost 27% of students identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual reported cyberbullying. A survey from 2022 found that 46% of U.S teens reported ever experiencing cyberbullying behaviors which included being called offensive names or having rumors spread about them online.

Because the bullying occurs on digital devices and accounts, it can be particularly harmful to the reputations of the bully and the victim and can be more persistent and permanent and harder to notice than more traditional in-person forms of bullying.

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What are the possible effects of cyberbullying?

Traditional bullying and cyberbullying are often closely related: most victims who are cyberbullied also report being bullied offline. The two types of bullying can both have negative effects, the two combined can have a particularly negative impact on the victims.

Cyberbullying can negatively affect the mental and physical health of victims and the bullies themselves. Cyberbullying has been connected with lowered self-esteem, suicidal ideation, loneliness, anxiety, depression, and physical symptoms. Bullying may also have negative effects on the victim's school success, like decreasing academic performance, engagement, and attendance.

Cyberbullying hurts not only the victim, but also the bully. Bullies are more likely to engage in substance use and abuse and early sexual activity, have criminal records in adulthood, be abusive toward family and romantic partners, and drop out of school.

What are the warning signs of cyberbullying?

Children and especially teens may try to hide the bullying from their parents and other adult figures or not report the problem out of embarrassment, a fear that nothing will happen, concern about retaliation from the bully, or even from a fear of losing their internet access or device.

Educators and parents can look for warning signs of cyberbullying in school and at home:

- Victims of cyberbullying may experience an increase in issues within their relationships, reporting feeling lonely, or getting upset more often over issues with friends and others at school.

- Young people experiencing cyberbullying may become withdrawn, seem down or depressed, or lose interest in people and activities they typically enjoy.

- They may show extreme emotional responses to what is happening on their device, or angrily put their device aside without explanation. They may try to hide the device or what's on the screen from adults.

- Cyberbullied children may visit the school nurse more often, with complaints about emotional distress or physical ailments with an unknown cause.

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- They may try to avoid school or start showing decreases in academic performance.

- They may become jumpy, nervous, or angry when they receive a notification of a new text message or social media post.

- Cyberbullying victims may switch their social media accounts frequently.

How can I prevent cyberbullying?

Keep an open line of communication with your child.

- When they get home from school, ask what happened that day that made them happy, proud, sad, and mad.

- If there was some online drama, offer to review it with them, not to be nosy, but to support and protect them.

- Tell them about similar experiences you had as a teen and how you dealt with them.

- Ask your child what they like to do online, and why.

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Teach your child to be an upstander, not a bystander.

- By standing up for those who are bullied in the physical or online world, they are making those worlds safer and kinder for themselves and for others.

Include the reality of cyberbullying in your family's shared media use agreement.

A shared media use agreement (see Module 1) outlines how everyone in the household is expected to behave with devices, games, and social media, including:

- How your child is expected to interact online with respect for themselves and others

- What consequences will be incurred when these expectations are not met.

- How your child can bring you questions, concerns, or fears that arise from their own or others' experiences online.

Reassure your child that you will not take away their phone or device if they report experiencing or witnessing cyberbullying.

- This will help them feel safe to tell you right away if they or someone they know is being victimized online.

Follow or friend your child online so you can see what is happening on their social media feeds.

Engage in social media use together.

- Co-view videos, game together, and ask to see their screens and share your own. Ask questions about what they are doing, what they like about it, and point out things you find interesting, confusing, or concerning.

Help your child to set up privacy and security settings.

- While privacy and security settings won't necessarily block all negative content, they can help to protect your child from negative behaviors online.

Report bullying when you hear about it.

Consider reporting cyberbullying to online service providers. You can also block the bully and access additional support through apps. If your child was doing the bullying, talk to them about it. Ask what was happening for them at the time, how it felt, and what they think they could do to make the situation better for the victim.

> Q "I noticed that you seem pretty angry at your phone lately. Can we talk about what's going on?"

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What do I do if I suspect that my child is being cyberbullied?

If you suspect that your child is being cyberbullied, It's important to address your concerns with them in a way that helps them to speak openly.

Ask your child about their experiences.

> **Q** "I saw a piece on the news yesterday about cyberbullying. Is that something you've experienced?"

> **Q** "Do you know anyone who has been bullied or attacked by haters online?"

> **Q** "I noticed that you seem pretty angry at your phone lately. Can we talk about what's going on?"

Reassure your child that you love and support them and that you want to help them to feel safe and secure at school and online.

> **Q** "I know it might make you uncomfortable to have me asking these questions, but I'm asking because I love you and I want to help you feel safe."

> **Q** "Telling me about this was really brave. I want to make sure we find ways to help that feel right for you. What concerns do you have about how we address this?"

> **Q** "Is there an adult at school who you trust? Let's figure out how to be sure you can talk to him when you need to, so you can feel safe at school."

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Empower your child.

> Q "You have a right to be treated with decency and kindness online, just like in regular life."

> Q "You haven't done anything to deserve this treatment."

> Q "There are things we can do to help this behavior stop. I want to work with you to decide on a solution together."

> Q "This happens to a lot of people – more than half of kids your age report being cyberbullied."

Take actions to make your child safer.

> Q "I know it feels like a big step, but let's go into your account and block the people who are hurting you so they can't send you any more messages."

> Q "I know how tempting it is to write back, but that will just make your bully feel more powerful. How about you text it to me instead? I promise you won't get in trouble for the words you use – it's important to be able to get those feelings out."

Engage external supports.

> Q "That social media company can help us to protect you from this online. Let's go look at their support site."

> Q "Even though it's online, I need to let your school know this is happening. I'd like you to come with me to talk to the principal, so you can be a part of the conversation with her."

> Q "I think that we need to talk to the police about this situation, because you or someone else could be really hurt by this behavior"

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How to Become
an Upstander

Moving from silence to action

Did you know?

Research shows that others speaking out or taking action stops bullying behavior over half the time within seconds!

- ✕ Bystanders contribute to the problem.
- ✓ Upstanders stop the problem.

Bystander

Some bystanders contribute to bullying in different ways. You might be a bystander if you...

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- ✕ Participate in starting the bullying
- ✕ Laugh or give attention to the bullying, encouraging it
- ✕ Join in once the bullying starts
- ✕ Stay silent

Progression from Inaction to Action

It takes courage to be an upstander.

Upstander

Becoming an upstander may not happen overnight. But it begins with:

- ✓ Recognizing bullying behavior
- ✓ Preventing or reducing bullying behavior
- ✓ Helping others feel safe
- ✓ Understanding the harm bullying can cause
- ✓ Feeling a sense of justice and empathy

Ways to Be an Upstander Right Now

- Tell the bully to stop

- Get others to stand up with you

- Help the victim

- Redirect the focus away from the victim

Qualities of Upstanders

- Courageous: Telling a friend to stop bullying is hard but necessary.

- Action-Oriented: Small actions like saying, "That is bullying," can make a big difference.

- Assertive: Use your voice to express how harmful behaviors affect others.

- Compassionate: Recognize hurt and take steps to help.

- Leader: Guide your group to be more supportive and kind.

21

Source: Together Against Bullying

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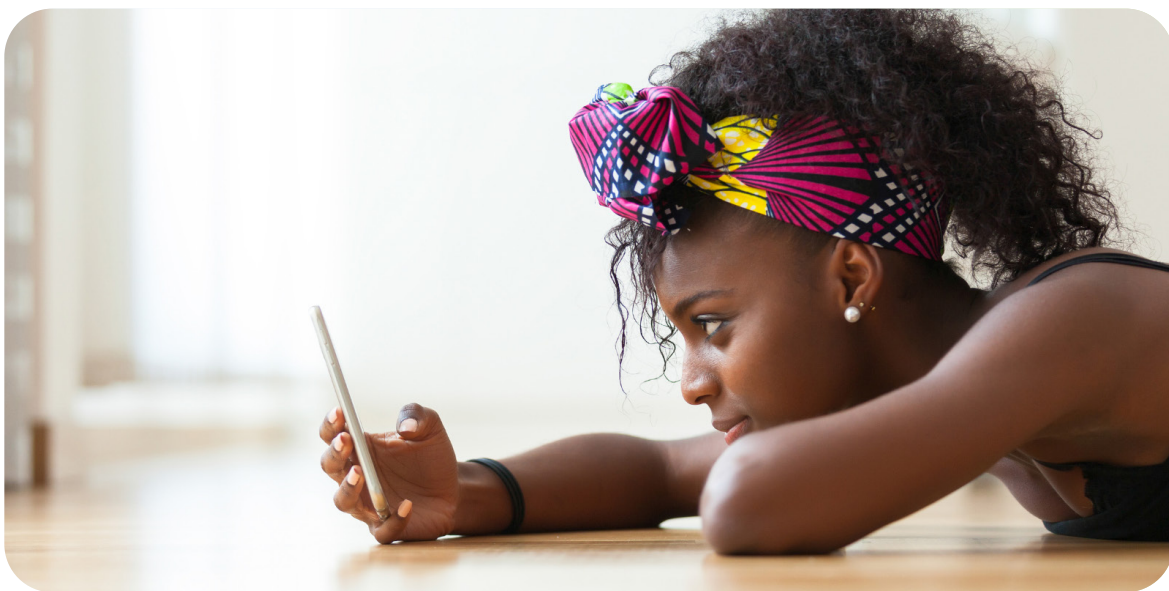
AI Practice

Meet Chatbot kids – Mike, June, David, and Jessa — designed to mimic conversations between caregivers and children about bullying. Each Chatbot represents a child with unique behaviors — two children are being bullied, while the other two are showing signs of being a bully themselves. In these scenarios, you are playing the parent.

Mike

Mike is a thoughtful and emotional kid, and navigating the challenges of middle school hasn't been easy for him. Lately, something seems to be bothering him more than usual—he's been moody and keeps anxiously checking his phone.

Breaking through his grumpy shell isn't easy, but it might be time to gently find out what's going on

Goals:

- Be empathetic and validating
- Encourage open dialogue
- Guide toward reflection and solutions

Talk to Mike: https://talkbetterlab.vercel.app/tbl/scenario/overview/18

June

June is a sensitive kid, but she's been excited about the new friends she's made this year. Yesterday, something seemed off, and tonight, she said she's not hungry and won't join the family for dinner.

That's not like her. It's time to check in, see what's going on, and offer your support.

Goals:

- Be empathetic and validating
- Encourage open dialogue
- Guide toward reflection and solutions

Talk to June: https://talkbetterlab.vercel.app/tbl/scenario/overview/19

David

David has always been a "nice" kid who cares about what others think of him, which has sometimes been challenging. This year, he's found a new group of friends and seems excited about them.

Today, you noticed him laughing with Max while looking at Max's phone. Something about his laugh feels off. It might be a good moment to check in with him.

Goals:
- Be empathetic and validating
- Encourage open dialogue
- Guide toward reflection and solutions

Talk to David: https://talkbetterlab.vercel.app/tbl/scenario/overview/20

Jessa

You've been so relieved—Jessa finally seems to have found her social footing at school. But something feels off.

You noticed her looking at her friend's phone and laughing in a way that didn't feel quite right. Something's up.

Goals:
- Be empathetic and validating
- Encourage open dialogue
- Guide toward reflection and solutions

Talk to Jessa: https://talkbetterlab.vercel.app/tbl/scenario/overview/21