



# [ Cyberbullying ]

What you and your child need to know

For caregivers of youth aged 12-17 years old

Catalogue no. PS9-15/5-2021E-PDF  
ISBN 978-0-660-37314-0



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada



## [ What your child needs to know ]

Whether they learn it in school or at home, your child should know about three main topics:

**Cyberbullying**

**Online reputation**

**Sexting and sextortion**

## [ What is cyberbullying? ]

Teenagers spend a lot of time online. Many teens are active on social media, have formed online habits, and may be exploring relationships and sexuality online.

Your child may encounter cyberbullying: being teased, hurt or embarrassed by someone online. You can help by teaching your child to practice online safety, and to understand the consequences of cyberbullying.

nearly  
**[ 3 in 4 ]**  
parents

say cyberbullying stopped  
after they took action

Source: Cyberbullying Public  
Awareness Research,  
EnviroNics Research Group, 2019.



### What is an online reputation?

As your child spends time online, they begin to build an online reputation. Others' opinions of them are shaped by their online behaviour, including the sites and apps they use and what they post or share. While a positive online reputation can benefit your child, a negative one can damage their relationships, open the door to cyberbullying or limit their future opportunities.

### What is sexting?

Sexting is when your child creates, sends or shares sexual messages, images or videos with friends, people they know or even strangers online. They may think it is harmless, especially with their boyfriend or girlfriend, but they should know that once an image is sent it is out of their control. In the wrong hands, these images can end up hurting them or someone else.

### What is sextortion?

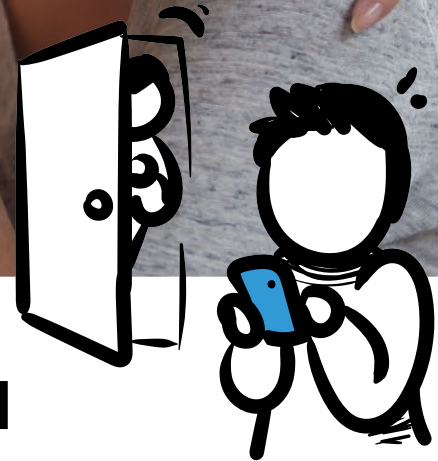
Sextortion (sex extortion) is a type of blackmail where someone threatens to send a sexual image or video of your child to friends, family or other people if they don't pay them, provide more sexual content or do what they ask.

If your child has shared sexual images of themselves online, you can get help removing them from the internet at [NeedHelpNow.ca](http://NeedHelpNow.ca)

**[ 3 in 10 ]**  
youth

say they've been cyberbullied

Source: Cyberbullying Public Awareness Research,  
EnviroNics Research Group, 2019.



## [If you think your child is being cyberbullied]

If you suspect your child is being cyberbullied, there are things you can do to help. Keep communication open, watch for changes in your child's behaviour, and be ready to support them and take action when the situation calls for it.

### What can I look out for?

- Changes in time spent online
- Being more secretive about online activities
- Appearing sad, frustrated, impatient or angry more than usual
- Having trouble sleeping or eating
- Avoiding or performing worse in school, activities and social situations
- In extreme cases, suicidal thoughts and self-harm



## [ What can I do? ]

- Talk with your child about cyberbullying
  - Listen calmly
  - Support and reassure them
  - Learn the extent of the bullying
  - Tell your child not to respond to cyberbullying messages
  - Ask your child to block or break off contact with the bully
- Document the incident
- Report it to your child's school, Internet Service Providers and/or social media sites, and the police as appropriate
- Help them deal with any sexual images posted online at [NeedHelpNow.ca](https://www.needhelpnow.ca)
- Reach out for mental health support



## [ If you think your child is cyberbullying others ]

If you suspect or learn that your child is involved in cyberbullying others, it's important to focus on your child's actions, ensure they understand the seriousness of the issue and be there for them as you deal with it together.

### What can I look out for?

- Many social media accounts on multiple sites
- Insults, snarky remarks or sarcastic laughter while online or texting
- More secretive about online activities
- Spend long hours online, almost obsessively
- Have friends who behave in ways that are mean or uncaring
- Don't seem to care if their words or actions hurt others



## [ What can I do? ]

- Talk with your child about cyberbullying
  - Stay calm and find out what has occurred
  - Reinforce that cyberbullying is unacceptable
  - Try to understand why they are cyberbullying
  - Help them understand the seriousness of their actions and potential consequences including legal repercussions
- Limit and monitor their online time
- Encourage your child to remove bullying content
- Encourage an apology if it would be sincere
- Cooperate with authorities who may become involved and work toward a solution



# [Resources for caregivers]

For more information on cyberbullying, sexting and sextortion, you can access these resources:

## **Kids Help Phone**

Free 24/7 confidential counselling, information, referrals, and support services for young people.

**KidsHelpPhone.ca**

**Text 686868**

**Call 1-800-668-6868**

## **NeedHelpNow.ca**

An online resource designed to help youth remove sexual images of themselves online.

**needhelpnow.ca**

## **CyberTip.ca**

Canada's tipline for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children.

**cybertip.ca**

## **Wellness Together Canada**

For mental health support, text **741741** or visit

**<https://ca.portal.gs/>**



# [#StopCyberbullying]



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada