Preventing Cyberbullying
Top Ten Tips for Adults Who Are Being Harassed Online

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D.

Here are a few ideas on how to prevent adult online harassment:

I. **STAY UP TO DATE WITH PRIVACY SETTINGS,** Social media sites and programs are modifying and updating their privacy settings frequently. Make sure that you're familiar with the new profile options, and keep as much information as possible restricted to those you trust.

2. **RESTRICT ACCESS TO YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION.** Do not give out your email or phone number to people that you do not know. Also, keep your email and phone number off of social media sites. You never know who might have access to them, and you cannot trust everyone who is a "friend" or "follower."

3. **LEARN INTERNET ETIQUETTE.** To prevent potential problems with other Internet users, learn social conventions related to interaction in cyberspace. For example, DO NOT WRITE IN ALL CAPS. This can be perceived as yelling to some. Also resist using sarcasm online as it can be easily misinterpreted.

4. **DON'T SEND INAPPROPRIATE PICTURES OR VIDEOS.** Remember that today's boyfriend or girlfriend can be tomorrow's scorned lover. You do not want someone with inappropriate pictures or videos of you posting them online and sharing them with the rest of the world. Don't put yourself in the position of having to worry about this.

5. **GOOGLE YOURSELF.** You should always know what is being said about you online. It is often surprising to find information you thought was private show up in public databases, news articles, or on social media pages that have been indexed by search engines.

6. **DO NOT ACCEPT FRIEND REQUESTS FROM STRANGERS.** If you do not know the person who is sending you a friend or follower request, ignore it. Most social media sites and apps also give you the option to block the user if you like.

7. **USE SITE-BASED CONTROLS.** Disable search options on certain social media sites to prevent anyone in the general public from searching for you or messaging you. This allows you to have more control over who you interact with online, as you are the only one who can initiate it.

8. **KEEP YOUR INFORMATION PROTECTED.** If using a public computer, be sure to log off of any site you are on when you walk away from that computer – even for a minute. In fact, do it on your other mobile devices too if there is a chance that someone might come by and use your account to be funny or mischievous. Do not give passwords out to anyone and change your password frequently. Also, make sure your phone and tablet have passcode and are locked down.

9. **BE SKEPTICAL IN ONLINE INTERACTIONS.** Even among people you trust, it is risky to reveal too much information because you never know for sure if the person you think you are communicating with is really there—or if they are alone.

IO. **GUARD AGAINST MEAN PEOPLE.** Remember that some people have a lot of time on their hands and all they want to do is make life miserable for others. Don't let them. Resist putting too much personal or private information online that could be used to harass or humiliate you, and resist interacting with them in any way. As conventional wisdom dictates, "Don't feed the trolls!"

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