

Responding to Cyberbullying

Top Ten Tips for Adults Who Are Being Harassed Online

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Here are a few ideas for what to do when adults are being cyberbullied:

1. DO NOT RETALIATE. Those who cyberbully want you to react. The problem is that if you respond angrily, the one doing the bullying may feed off of that response and continue (and even escalate the severity of) the cyberbullying. Plus there could be consequences for your response.

2. RECORD EVERYTHING. Keep evidence of all content (pictures, texts, emails, tweets, status updates) that the person has sent or posted about you. If the cyberbullying is occurring on a blog or forum, take screenshots of the posts. You can even make screen recordings of Snapchat, Facebook, or Instagram Stories. The evidence will be useful to build a case against the person harassing you, and to work with authorities (such as law enforcement) when needed.



3. TALK TO YOUR EMPLOYER. Let your employer know if the person harassing you is a co-worker, or if the bullying is occurring on a work-related forum or blog. If the harassment prevents you from doing your job, your employer needs to know about it.

4. CONTACT LAW ENFORCEMENT. If threats of physical harm are made, or if the cyberbullying starts to get more dangerous, make a police report. The more evidence you have of the threats, the easier it will be for law enforcement to respond.

5. TALK ABOUT IT. Speaking with trusted friends about what you are going through could be cathartic. They might have gone through similar situations and could be able to give you advice. Talking to someone about what you are going through, even if it is just to vent, can be very therapeutic.



6. CONSULT WITH AN ATTORNEY. If you feel like major damage has been done to your reputation due to cyberbullying, contact a lawyer and see what your options are. You might be able to file a civil suit against the aggressor depending on the nature of the case. Possible legal actions include intentional infliction of emotional distress, defamation of character, presentation in a false light, invasion of privacy, and harassment.

7. REPORT ABUSE. Every reputable website has a "Report" feature that allows you to tell them about behaviors that violate their terms of use. Guilty parties will be banned. Avoid sites that do not provide clear options to report bullying.

8. CUT TIES. Don't befriend those who are mean, or try to get them to warm up to you. If you feel like you need to respond to the person who is mistreating you, do it respectfully. Do not try and rationalize or make friends with anyone who is cruel towards others.

9. BLOCK THE PERSON WHO IS BULLYING YOU. Block the cyberbullying at its source. If you are getting incessant annoying or hurtful emails from someone, use your email program options to prevent that person from contacting you. Use the options within social media sites or apps to do the same. Then, those who want to cause you harm won't be able to see you, search for you, or contact you in any way. Also block through your phone's Contact List features, or your cell phone provider or telephone company as necessary.



10. CHANGE YOUR CONTACT INFO. Change your email, phone number, or online account completely. This would be a last resort because it greatly inconveniences you, but it may be necessary to terminate the problem.

