

7th – 8th Grade

Topic: Cyberbullying (30 min)

Technology resources: Videos, projector, optional computer lab

Materials Needed: Videos – *Feather in the Wind*; *You Can't Take It Back*, *Broken Friendship*

To access videos:

Open your web browser

Type in **video**, hit **enter**

Click on **Asset Library**

Click on **Internet Safety** folder

Click on appropriate video to play (3 Videos listed above)

Lesson Overview: Cyberbullies use various forms of electronic devices to harass or bully students. The focus of this lesson is to help students identify cyberbullying, understand the impact cyberbullying can have, and the ways they can prevent and/or stop it.

1. 'Mingle Activity' can be used as a Quadrant A warm up :

As students enter the room, distribute the words and definitions (Mingle Activity) at random. Direct the students to "mingle" in order to find the match to their word or definition. Once they find their match they may sit down. Review what the vocabulary words mean. *Mingle Activity vocabulary can be found below*

2. Show videos - Feathers in the Wind, Can't Take It Back, Broken Friendship

3. Point out that the video mentioned that cyberbullying can actually be considered a crime (identified legally as stalking, harassment, verbal assault, defamation or character, and forgery among others. Posting personal information about someone without their permission violates US Data Safety laws and can be prosecuted as a federal crime. Additionally, perpetrators can also be held civilly liable and forced to provide compensation for any financial loss suffered by the victim. Additional fines can also be tacked on to compensate for mental and emotional anguish.

4. Hold a class discussion about the positive and negative aspects of the Internet. Divide the board in half; list positives on one side of the board and negatives on the other.

What are some positive aspects of the Internet?

It can be used as a research tool or homework resource; it's an easy way to keep in touch with friends and family; you can access legal multimedia (video and music) and news.

What are some negative aspects of the Internet?

There is no way to know who you're talking to; once you post something online or send an E-mail you can't take it back; anyone can read or see anything you post. Discuss safety issues with putting classmates' pictures and other information online. Some safety issues include that you never know who is looking at this information, why they are visiting the site, or how they might use the information they find. Discuss with students what the boy from "You can't take it back" should have done when his friends asked him to rate the web site. Challenge students to try to think of legitimate responses he could have made that might have made his friends also reconsider their actions. You might want to put students in groups for this part and have them write possible answers on large sheets of paper (which they will then present to their classmates) in order to increase student participation.

What kind of potential effects does cyberbullying have on the victim?

Answers: Loss of friends, isolation, changing schools, embarrassment, loss of opportunities including scholarships and jobs, and suicide.

What actions should a victim of cyberbullying take to stop the action?

Answers: Save or print the evidence, do not respond to inappropriate comments, tell a trusted adult at home or at school.

Mingle Activity

Forms of cyberbullying may include: hacking, flaming, hate mail, tormenting via game sites, posting provocative messages on hate sites, issuing threats, copying or forwarding messages containing threats or hate messages, posing as the victim and using their password to access their websites, spreading lies, sending multiple text messages. Cyberbullying is longer lasting than typical bullying and follows the victim home via their cell phone and computer. It is also very difficult to stop once it has begun. Other students could be unwitting accomplices by forwarding messages about other students.

MINGLE ACTIVITY

Instant Messaging	(IM) Real time communication over the Internet
IM Slang	New word phrase or abbreviation invented for faster online communication
Username	Usually not someone's real name, but the name a person uses in a chat room
Private Message	A message privately sent to a fellow chatroom participant only.
Community Chat	Online chatroom conversation in which all members participate publicly
Petitions	Online surveys about current events or social issues frequently forwarded through

	spamming
Flaming	Sending messages meant to hurt someone's feelings; also typing in all caps to indicate yelling or shouting
Spamming	Sending a message to many email addresses of people you don't know
Cyberstalking	Stalking or harassing someone online
Forward	A message, article or joke sent to you by someone who did not write the original message
Netiquette	Polite, courteous online behavior
Chatrooms	A virtual "room" in which you send messages that appear almost instantly on the computer monitors of the other people who are in the chat or discussion
Texting	A form of IM that typically occurs over a cell phone or PDA

5. Extension Activity: Halligan Court case.doc

Divide students into three groups. Group 1 represents the attorneys and victim in the case of Halligan vs. Martin (attached sheet.) Group 2 represents the attorneys and alleged bully. Group 3 is the jury. Have students conduct a mock trial based on the information given in the case description and the law as described above. (At the end of the trial, you may choose to tell students that this is based on a true case except that the defendant was never prosecuted. The victim, 13 year old Ryan Halligan, committed suicide as a direct result of the bullying.)

The State vs. Martin

Charge: Defamation of Character, Verbal Assault

Victim: Ryan Halligan

Ryan Patrick Halligan was enrolled in a public school located in this state on or about October 7, 2003. Ryan made friends easily and was known for his smile and sense of humor. Ryan suffered from a slight speech impediment and slightly delayed speech and motor skills. He received Special Education services through the fourth grade at which time he was determined to be academically on-level. Ryan and his family moved to a new town during Ryan's fifth grade year. Christopher Martin was enrolled in Ryan's homeroom and began to pick on Ryan... frequently calling him clutz, stupid, and other verbal insults. As time went by the verbal insults grew increasingly hateful and more frequently. Ryan's parents taught him to ignore the insults, walk away, and remember his good friends. The insults tapered off during sixth grade and then picked up again in 7th grade, at which time the insults grew much worse. Ryan's father wanted to report Christopher to the principal but Ryan was horrified, he feared it would make the bullying worse. He asked his father, instead, to teach him how to fight. Ryan began Taebo Kickboxing lessons shortly after Christmas that year.. His father reminded him repeatedly to never start a fight, but that he had permission to defend himself if needed. Ryan and Christopher were involved in their first fist fight during February of that year which was broken up by the principal. A few months later Ryan informed his parents that he and Christopher were now friends. Soon after, Ryan confessed (in a moment of hilarity) to silly incident that once happened when he was 3. Christopher took the information and spread it around as proof that Ryan was gay. Ryan hooked up with a pretty girl online and they "chatted" all summer. When he met her in the fall, in front of her friends she told him he was a "loser" and that she didn't want anything to do with him. She was only joking online as a favor to Christopher. Later Ryan's parents found that she had copied and pasted their IM exchanges onto her MySpace page for her friend's entertainment. Christopher took the same comments and created a webpage to which he added photos he had taken of Ryan over the years. As a result Ryan received scores of emails and text messages over a period of 3 months. His cell phone bill for text messages sent to him soared to over \$700 a month. His parents were forced to change all family phone numbers and move Ryan to another school to stop the harassment. The webpage and MySpace page are still in existence today. The state requests that the plaintiff take down his webpage and use due diligence to make sure that the page is removed from all ISP caches and linked sites. Additionally, the plaintiff is asked to make financial restitution to the victim in the amount of \$5000 (\$2,100 in cell phone bills, \$300 for charges incurred which changing numbers, \$500 for charges incurred in assisting Ryan in changing schools and \$2,100 for emotional trauma and distress.)