

CYBERBULLYING



CONVERSATION GUIDE

... for intentional conversations with students

Students in your LifeGroup can experience bullying not just in person but also through the devices in their pockets and book bags. Cyberbullying is repeated harm or embarrassment through technology and social media platforms, and it's an issue one of your few might deal with. It might be spreading rumors or gossip, repeated harmful words over text or messaging, or threatening comments on a gaming system. Many times, the bully remains anonymous.

You might suspect a student is being cyberbullied because you notice a student in your group quickly switches screens on their device when you walk by, appears nervous when on their phone, or avoids discussions about their online activity. Or the topic might even come up as part of the discussion during LifeGroup.

If you think one of your few is involved in cyberbullying, they might be waiting for you to start the conversation. Remember that this conversation is the first of an ongoing dialogue. We want to help by giving you some words to say and not to say.

WHAT TO SAY:

WHEN THE CHILD IS BEING BULLIED:

- “This isn’t your fault.”
- “Thank you for telling me.”
- “How does this make you feel?”
- “What do you think would help make this situation better?”
- “What kind of personal information have you shared online? What do you think is important to keep private?”
- “What online rules do you have for yourself? Can I help you make a few?”
- “I really care about you, and I need to tell someone who can help us so we can stop this from happening.”

WHEN THEY ARE CYBERBULLYING:

- “Thank you for telling me. This doesn’t change the way I feel about you, and I’d love to help.”
- “Why do you think it’s easy to say words to people online that you wouldn’t say in person?”
- “Being a bully is not who you are, but these are bullying behaviors.”
- “Let’s talk about what we need to do next. We might need to bring other people into the conversation, and I’d love to be able to hold you accountable for being kind to others.”

WHEN THEY HAVE WITNESSED CYBERBULLYING:

- “Why do you think it’s hard for someone to speak up when they’re being cyberbullied?”
- “What’s a thing that you and your friends could do right now to delete digital drama from your life?”

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- “What! I can’t believe this is happening to you! What are we going to do! This is terrible!” (Or any words that insight panic.)
- “I will make sure this never happens again.” (Get other people involved, and don’t make promises you can’t keep.)
- “This will stay between you and me.”

Counselors, teachers, families, and other caregivers need to be informed of bullying.