






# Cyberbullying and harassment

While the internet is a wonderful place for connection, it can unfortunately be used by some to cause distress. Cyberbullying and harassment involve the use of digital technology to upset, threaten, or humiliate someone. Unlike face-to-face bullying, this can feel particularly intrusive because it can reach a person at any time, even within the safety of their own home.

## How it may appear






Cyberbullying can take many different forms, and it is helpful to recognise these behaviours if they occur:

-  **Harassment:** Sending offensive, rude, or insulting messages repeatedly.
-  **Exclusion:** Deliberately leaving someone out of group chats or online communities to make them feel isolated.
-  **Outing:** Sharing someone's private information or personal photos without their consent to cause embarrassment.
-  **Masquerading:** Creating a fake profile to pretend to be someone else in order to damage their reputation.
-  **Cyberstalking:** Monitoring someone's online activity closely or sending threatening messages that cause a person to fear for their safety.

There is a common misconception that cyberbullying only happens in school playgrounds or amongst teenagers. In reality, anyone can experience online harassment, regardless of their age or background. Whether it occurs in a professional setting, within a community group, or on social media, it is important to remember that it is never your fault. There is absolutely no shame in seeking help. Reaching out for support is a sign of strength, and there are many people ready to stand by you.

# Top tips to manage online harassment

If you or someone you know is experiencing cyberbullying or harassment, we have some top tips that you can immediately action.

-  **Avoid Responding Immediately:** Scammers or bullies often seek a reaction. Taking a step back and not replying can sometimes prevent the situation from escalating further.
-  **Keep a Record of Everything:** It is a good idea to take screenshots of any messages, comments, or posts. This provides you with clear evidence should you need to report the behaviour later.
-  **Use the 'Block' and 'Report' Tools:** Most social media platforms and email providers have built-in tools to block individuals and report abusive content. Do not hesitate to use them to protect your peace of mind.
-  **Review Your Privacy Settings:** Ensure your profiles are set to private so that only people you know and trust can contact you or see what you are posting.
-  **Talk to Someone You Trust:** Sharing what you are going through with a friend, family member, or colleague can make a world of difference. You do not have to handle it alone.

## Further support

If you feel you need further assistance, these organisations provide excellent support and guidance:

- [eSafety Commissioner](#): As Australia's independent regulator for online safety, they provide a wealth of resources and a formal pathway to report serious online abuse.
- [Lifeline](#): For anyone feeling overwhelmed or distressed, Lifeline offers a safe space to talk and receive confidential support at any time of the day or night.
- [Better Health Channel](#): This service provides practical advice on the emotional impact of bullying and offers guidance on how to manage your mental wellbeing during difficult times.

If you are a parent or know of a young person that needs help with cyberbullying and harassment, you can take a look at the following resources:

- [eSafety for Parents](#)
- [Supporting your children: bullying online](#)
- [Supporting your children: reporting bullying online](#)