



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Grades 9 -12
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Duration:	1.5 - 2 hours

First, Do No Harm: Being an Active Witness to Cyberbullying



This lesson is part of USE, UNDERSTAND & CREATE: A Digital Literacy Framework for Canadian Schools:
<http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-framework>.

Overview

In this lesson, students consider how difficult and complicated it can sometimes be to do the right thing. Students are asked to consider whether they agree with a number of widely-held moral principles and then are asked to consider a moral dilemma in which a number of moral principles are in conflict, reflecting on how their view of it may change based on the details of the scenario. They then explore the idea of weighing different moral principles against one another and develop their own moral dilemmas. Finally, students learn practical tools for deciding how best to intervene when they witness cyberbullying and apply those tools to moral dilemmas relating to cyberbullying.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Learn the concepts of moral principles and moral dilemmas
- Consider the complexity of moral dilemmas and choose and justify moral positions
- Reflect on what factors influence their moral thinking
- Learn and apply tools for effectively intervening in cyberbullying
- Apply moral thinking towards cyberbullying situations

Preparation and Materials

Photocopy the handouts:

- *First, Do No Harm: How to Be an Active Witness*
- *Cyberbullying Dilemmas*

Read the backgrounder *Cyberbullying Backgrounder*

- Before the lesson, you may wish to photocopy the *Parents' Guide to Cyberbullying* and *What to Do if Someone is Mean to You Online* and send them home with students.



Procedure

Start by asking students to put up their hands if they agree with the following *moral principles*:

- You should stand up for your friends and family.
- People should be punished when they do bad things.
- You should do something when you see someone being bullied.
- It's wrong to do harm to people.
- You shouldn't get involved in things that aren't your business.
- You should always think about how what you're doing might hurt someone before you do it.
- You should help anyone who needs your help.

Most students will probably raise their hands for all or nearly all of these. Now point out to students that it's easy to make a decision when you know what's right and what's wrong: what's harder is when you have to choose between two things that you think are both right. This is called a *moral dilemma* because we have to weigh two moral principles against each other.

Tell the class you're going to give them an example of a moral dilemma and read them the following:

Joe is Sam's friend, and has done many things to help Sam over the years. Sam accidentally learns that Joe robbed a store in their home town. Should Sam tell the police what he knows?

Ask students:

- What moral principles are in conflict?
- What do they think Sam should do? Why?
- Would their answer change if:
 - Sam's family owned the store Joe robbed?
 - Joe shot someone while robbing the store?
 - If Joe goes to prison, his family will have no source of income?
 - Joe will be caught whether Sam informs on him or not?
 - Joe will only be caught if Sam informs on him?
 - Joe will not be caught even if Sam informs on him?
 - Joe will hurt or kill Sam if he finds out Sam informed on him?
 - Instead of robbing a store, Sam finds out that Joe cheated on a test?
 - Instead of robbing a store, Sam finds out that Joe cheated on his girlfriend?
 - Instead of robbing a store, Sam finds out that Joe cheated on his girlfriend, who is Sam's sister?

(Consider each of these changes separately – in each case the scenario is only changed in that one way.)



In each case, if people's opinions change, briefly discuss *why* they changed. When you've finished the discussion of the different scenarios, have the class try to identify the general reasons why the changes to the scenarios changed their views. Make sure the following come up:

- The moral seriousness of the issue (for instance, shooting someone vs. robbing a store vs. cheating on a test)
- The good that can be done or harm avoided by making one choice or another (sending Joe to jail, depriving Joe's family, etc.)?
- The risk to you brought on by one choice or another (risking Sam's life)
- How emotionally close you are to the people involved (Joe vs. the store owner, Joe vs. Sam's sister)

Now write the following pairs of moral principles at opposite ends of the board or the room (with one of each pair at either end):

- You should stand up for your friends / You should help anyone who needs your help
- People should be punished / It's wrong to do harm to people
- You should do something when you see someone being bullied / You should think about how what you're doing might hurt someone

Divide the class into three groups and assign each group one of the pairs. Then have the groups line up along the wall or blackboard based on which of the principles they agree with more strongly. For example, a student who agrees equally strongly with "people should be punished" and "it's wrong to be cruel" would stand midway between the two of them; one who agrees more strongly with "it's wrong to be cruel" would stand closer to that end of the wall or board.

When all three groups have lined up, sub-divide each of the groups into two, for a total of six groups. (The division can be arbitrary.) Have each of the sub-groups come up with their own moral dilemma in which the two principles they were assigned would be in conflict: for example, the groups that were assigned the first pair of principles will need to think of a scenario where someone has to make a choice *between* standing up for his or her friends and helping someone who needs their help. Make it clear that the solution to the dilemma should *not* be clear: if everyone in their group agrees with how to resolve it, it's probably not a genuine moral dilemma.

Now have the sub-divided groups reform, share their moral dilemmas and pick one to discuss with the class. Have the three original groups each present their moral dilemma to the class and let the class discuss each one briefly. (Don't feel the need to get a consensus on these – you only need to discuss each one long enough for students to understand the moral difficulties raised.)

Distribute the handout *First, Do No Harm: How to Be an Active Witness* and have students read it and answer the questions. If you wish you can have students submit their answers for marking. Take up the dilemmas in class.

Extension Activity

Have students do a scene (script, skit, video, comic) that explores a moral dilemma of their own creation relating to being a witness to cyberbullying.



First, Do No Harm: How to Be an Active Witness

Did you know? Two-thirds of Canadian students have helped someone who was being picked on online.

When you see or hear bad things happening online, *you* have a lot of power to make things better – or worse. Sometimes it's hard to know the right thing to do, so ask yourself these questions:

Do I know the whole story? Sometimes what you're seeing may not be as clear as it looks. What looks like cyberbullying may actually be someone fighting back against a bully, and what looks like just a joke might really hurt someone's feelings. That doesn't mean you shouldn't do anything, but it does mean you need to think about what the *best* way to help is.

Am I helping, or just helping my friends? We all want to help our friends, and we count on our friends to help us. But before you take your friend's side, ask yourself if you'd do the same thing if he or she *wasn't* your friend. If you're *not* going to help someone, ask yourself if you'd do the same thing if he or she *was* your friend.

Am I making excuses for what's happening? Sometimes we come up with reasons *not* to do something that we know is right. A lot of the time those reasons are based on the *values* of the group we're in. Ask yourself if you're doing any of these:

- Minimizing it ("It's just a joke.")
- Denying it ("That wouldn't hurt my feelings, so she can't really be hurt.")
- Blaming the target ("He deserved it.")
- Avoiding it ("Nobody else is doing anything about it.")

Will this make things better or worse? There are a lot of things you can do to help someone who's being bullied, but some work better than others at different times – and some of them can sometimes make things worse. *Half of Canadian kids have chosen not to do anything about cyberbullying because they thought it would make things worse for the target, and two-thirds have chosen not to do anything because they thought it might make **them** a target.*

Here's a list of things you can do that kids who have been targets of bullying say *usually* make things better, and **won't** make you a target:

- Comfort me in private
- Tell an adult I trust what's happening
- Talk to me about how to handle what's happening
- Post something nice about me
- Report what's happening to the service provider
- Stop communicating with the person who's doing it
- Document what's happening (make a copy or take a screenshot) to support me later



Think carefully before you do one of these things that kids say *sometimes* make things better, but **may** make you a target:

- Try to mediate between me and the person who's doing it
- Confront the person who's doing it in private
- Confront the person who's doing it in person

Make sure you're *not* doing one of these things that kids say usually make things **worse**:

- Tagging people in a post or liking it
- Sharing what's happening with other people (forwarding, upvoting, etc.)
- Laughing at what's happening
- Doing nothing

Am I making it easier for others to stand up? Three-quarters of Canadian kids say that they would be more likely to do something about cyberbullying if they thought others would respect them for doing it. Make sure to recognize and support other kids who are taking a stand to help others.



Cyberbullying Dilemmas

For each of the scenarios below, answer the following questions on separate paper:

- What are the relevant facts of the scenario?
 - What **moral principles** are in conflict?
 - Think of at least one **new detail** that might change how you see things (think back to the changes to the Joe and Sam scenario we discussed in class.)
 - List at least three different things you can do that might make things better.
 - Identify which of those you think is the **best** choice and explain why, giving at least two reasons.
1. Your best friend sends you a link to an online poll that asks “Do you agree that Heather should be forced to wear a bag over her face when she comes to school?” You don’t know Heather but most of your friends have already voted “Yes.” When you don’t vote right away, your friend sends you another message asking when you are going to.
 2. One of your friends sends you a very revealing picture of his girlfriend, who is also one of your friends, and asks you to send it to as many people as you can. He tells you that he just found out that she had been flirting with other boys by sending them sexy pictures and wants to get back at her by sharing the photos she sent him.
 3. You have to go off your social networks for a day because of a family vacation and when you get back you find out that two of your friends are in the middle of a huge fight. Each one is accusing the other of insulting them and most of your friends have taken sides with one or the other. Both of them have already deleted the earliest posts so you don’t have any way of knowing what actually started it.
 4. Today’s most-shared post is a photo of a banner that was made for the school dance where the word “dance” is spelled “dacne” in foot-high letters. One of your friends made the banner and now everybody is sharing the photo and making fun of him. You don’t think it’s fair to make fun of him for this because you know he has dyslexia.
 5. You and one of your friends play for the same team in your favourite online game. When you log on to play, you find that she’s not there and her name isn’t on the team roster anymore. You ask her about it and she tells you the team leader kicked her out for telling other team members to stop when they were insulting members of the other team with sexist and homophobic language.



Cyberbullying Backgrounder

What is Cyberbullying?

For most youth, the Internet is all about socializing and while most of these social interactions are positive, increasing numbers of kids are using the technology to intimidate and harass others – a phenomenon known as cyberbullying.

The term “cyberbullying” can be a bit of a misnomer. Unlike the traditional definition of bullying, which involves a difference in power or strength between the perpetrator and the target, a lot of the activities that adults would label as cyberbullying happen between people of roughly the same status. It’s also sometimes difficult to distinguish clearly between the target and perpetrator in a cyberbullying scenario. Finally, much of the abusive behaviour that takes place within offline relationships may also take place in online spaces or be abetted by digital technology.

How Common is It?

A significant minority of students have experienced both meanness and threats online: just over a third say that someone has said something mean or cruel to them, and just under a third say that someone has threatened them online by saying something like “I’m going to get you” or “You’re going to get it.” Roughly a quarter of students say that they have engaged in online meanness.¹

Roles

Those who are involved in cyberbullying are generally categorized as perpetrators, targets and witnesses. But meanness is fairly often reciprocal, with a significant overlap between students who have engaged in online meanness and those who have experienced it.² Additionally, it’s not at all unusual for both parties in a cyberbullying scenario to see themselves as being the victims.

One of the challenges in dealing with cyberbullying is that the term itself often has little meaning to youth. What adults may consider cyberbullying youth will describe as getting into fights, “starting something” or simply “drama.”³ This includes many of the activities considered forms of cyberbullying, such as spreading rumours or excluding peers from their social circles. Boys similarly refer to what they do – most often online impersonation or posting embarrassing videos – as “punking” or “pranking” rather than bullying.⁴

There is little doubt that cyberbullying can be traumatic: one third of students who were bullied online reported symptoms of depression, a figure which rose to nearly one half for those who experienced both online and offline bullying.⁵ Unfortunately, youth typically underestimate how harmful online bullying can be. Researchers at the University of British Columbia found that while young people believe most of the negative behaviour that happens online is meant

1 Steeves, Valerie. (2014). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Cyberbullying: Dealing with Online Meanness, Cruelty and Threats*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts.

2 Ibid.

3 Marwick, Dr. Alice, and Dr. danah boyd. *The Drama! Teen Conflict, Gossip, and Bullying in Networked Publics*.

4 Ibid.

5 Kessel Schneider, Shari, Lydia O'Donnell, Ann Stueve, and Robert W. S. Coulter “Cyberbullying, School Bullying, and Psychological Distress: A Regional Census of High School Students,” *American Journal of Public Health* (January 2012) 102:1, 171-177.



as a joke, “students need to be educated that this ‘just joking’ behaviour has serious implications.”⁶ MediaSmarts’ *Young Canadians in a Wired World (YCWW)* research found that the most common reason given for online meanness is “I was just joking around,” followed by “the person said something mean and cruel about me first” and “the person said something mean about my friend first”.⁷

One reason cyberbullying may be more harmful than offline bullying is the potential presence of countless, invisible witnesses and/or collaborators to the cyberbullying, which creates a situation where targets are left unsure of who knows and who to fear. Technology also extends the reach these young people have, enabling them to harass their targets anywhere and at any time. While these situations should be reported, it can be difficult for young people to step forward: how do you report an attack that leaves no physical scars? Will the consequences of telling an adult that you are being cyberbullied be worse than the bullying itself? Adults want to help, but many feel ill-equipped to handle bullying in a digital world.

Research has shown that **witnesses** to bullying can be just as important as targets or perpetrators in affecting how an incident plays out.⁸ Witnesses may also suffer negative effects that are as bad as or worse than those suffered by the target.⁹ MediaSmarts’ *YCWW* research on cyberbullying has revealed both good and bad news on this front. The good news is that many youth who witness bullying do something about it: 65 percent of the 5,436 Canadian students in grades 4 to 11 that were surveyed said that they had done something to help someone who was experiencing online meanness.¹⁰

There’s no question that it’s possible for witnesses to do a great deal of harm, whether it’s by directly joining in the bullying, encouraging the perpetrator or even re-victimizing the target by sharing a bullying post or video. It’s also well-established that when witnesses to bullying stand up and defend the target it can make a tremendous and positive difference – but not in every situation. There may be just as many cases where intervening can do greater harm to the target, the witness or both, and witnesses may have a number of valid reasons for not wanting to intervene:

- Fear of being a target. Saying that anyone who witnesses bullying should confront the perpetrator is not unlike suggesting that everyone who sees a mugging should try to stop it. Standing up to defend a target – especially if you turn out to be the only person who stands up – can easily lead to becoming a target yourself without necessarily having a positive effect on the situation.

6 Bellett, Gerry. “Cyberbullying needs its own treatment strategies.” *The Vancouver Sun*, April 13, 2012.

7 Steeves, Valerie. (2014). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Cyberbullying: Dealing With Online Meanness, Cruelty and Threats*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts.

8 Hawkins, D., Pepler, D. & Craig, W. (2001). Naturalistic observations of peer interventions in bullying. *Social Development*, 10, 512-527.

9 Rivers et al. Observing bullying at school: The mental health implications of witness status. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 24 (4): 211.

10 Steeves, Valerie. (2014). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Cyberbullying: Dealing with Online Meanness, Cruelty and Threats*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts.



- Fear of losing social status. Even if intervening or reporting doesn't lead to the witness becoming a target, it can still have long-term effects on a young person's social status, either by being associated with the target (youth who are marginalized for reasons such as poverty,¹¹ disability,¹² being a member of a visible minority group¹³ and having a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender status¹⁴ are substantially more likely to be targets) or by being labeled a "snitch" – both of which may easily be preludes to being a target of bullying.
- Fear of escalating the situation. Both targets of and witnesses to bullying often fear that standing up to a perpetrator or reporting bullying to a parent or teacher is more likely to make things worse rather than better. Many of the youth who participated in 2012 focus groups for MediaSmarts' YCWW study¹⁵ said that they were reluctant to report bullying to teachers because they felt the situation was likely to get out of control, especially in cases where teachers were bound by "zero tolerance" policies to respond to cyberbullying complaints in a particular way. This reluctance was echoed in the YCWW national survey, which found that while teachers rate highly as a source of information about cyberbullying, youth are extremely reluctant to turn to them for help.¹⁶

A good starting principle for witnesses would be "first, do no harm." As well as not participating in the bullying, young people should be encouraged to think ethically about their responsibilities as witnesses. Instead of automatically following any single rule, young people who witness cyberbullying should think carefully about the possible consequences of the different ways they may react. Instead of telling youth to report and intervene each time they witness cyberbullying, we can teach them to see themselves as active participants in the situation and consider different approaches for different situations, such as:

- *documenting* the bullying and, if it seems that it will do more good than harm, reporting it;
- *comforting* the target and offering help privately (including help in reporting the bullying to authorities: targets of bullying are often reluctant to report it to adults¹⁷);
- *mediating* between the target and perpetrator; or
- *confronting* the perpetrator, either privately or in public. If the perpetrator is a friend, youth can show that they don't approve of their behaviour by not joining in or reinforcing it.¹⁸

11 Cross, E.J., R. Piggin, J. Vonkaenal-Platt and T. Douglas. (2012). *Virtual Violence II: Progress and Challenges in the Fight against Cyberbullying*. London: Beatbullying.

12 Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., Ólafsson, K., with members of the EU Kids Online Network (2011) 'EU Kids Online Final Report'.

13 Cross, E.J., R. Piggin, J. Vonkaenal-Platt and T. Douglas. (2012). *Virtual Violence II: Progress and Challenges in the Fight against Cyberbullying*. London: Beatbullying.

14 Hinduja, S., and Patchin, J. (2011) 'Cyberbullying Research Summary Factsheet: Bullying, Cyberbullying and Sexual Orientation'.

15 Steeves, Valerie. (2012). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Talking to Youth and Parents About Life Online*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts.

16 Ibid.

17 Dinham, Peter. "Kids Reluctant to Speak Up About Bullying, Bad Experiences." iTWire, June 2, 2014.

18 Patchin, Justin W. "Empower Bystanders to Improve School Climate." Online: <<http://cyberbullying.us/empower-bystanders-to-improve-school-climate/>>. Posted July 18, 2014.



Methods of Cyberbullying

There are several ways that young people bully others online. Seventy-eight percent of those students who have done something mean or cruel online say they have called someone a name (18% of the total sample). Self-reporting of other problematic behaviours is much lower. Around six percent of all students report that they have harassed someone in an online game, five percent have spread rumours and four percent have posted an embarrassing photo/video of someone. Three percent say that they have made fun of someone's race, religion or ethnicity and two percent report making fun of someone's sexual orientation. One percent report that they have harassed someone sexually (e.g. said or did something sexual when the person did not want them to).¹⁹

Cyberbullying and the Law

Young people should be aware that some forms of online bullying are considered criminal acts. Under the Criminal Code of Canada, it is a crime to communicate repeatedly with someone if your communication causes them to fear for their own safety or for the safety of others. It's also a crime to publish a "defamatory libel"—writing something that is designed to insult a person or is likely to injure someone's reputation by exposing him or her to hatred, contempt or ridicule.

A cyberbully may also be violating the Canadian Human Rights Act if he or she spreads hate or discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability. A thorough explanation of federal and provincial laws relating to cyberbullying can be found at <http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/digital-issues/cyberbullying/cyberbullying-law>.

The Role of the School

Almost two thirds of students say their school has a rule relating to cyberbullying; of these, three quarters say the rules are "often" or "sometimes" helpful. This does not, however, seem to translate into actual effects on students' behaviour: unlike with household rules, there is almost no correlation between the presence of school rules and whether or not a student has engaged in or experienced either meanness or threats online. Perhaps because of this, students who have personally experienced online threats or meanness are much less likely to feel that school rules are helpful.²⁰

Schools have started to become more proactive about confronting bullying, but too often these efforts fall into stereotypes, emphasize unrealistic worst-case scenarios and are presented as one-time-only interventions. Youth participants in MediaSmarts' YCWW focus groups repeatedly said that they had experienced anti-cyberbullying programs – usually one-time assemblies – that not only failed to resonate with them but made them take the issue less seriously. They were also often reluctant to report bullying because they felt that teachers were likely to escalate a situation into more than what it was, possibly due to teachers being bound by zero-tolerance policies.²¹

19 Steeves, Valerie. (2014). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Cyberbullying: Dealing with Online Meanness, Cruelty and Threats*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts.

20 Ibid.

21 Steeves, Valerie. (2012). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Talking to Youth and Parents*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts.



Effective intervention programs, on the other hand, have a number of characteristics in common: they include the whole school; they provide support both for targets and perpetrators after an incident; and they work at multiple levels – in the classroom, school-wide and in connection with parents and the surrounding community.²² Zero-tolerance and one-size-fits-all approaches to dealing with online conflict are not only unsuccessful, but can be actively harmful as they prevent students from turning to what should be one of their main sources of help and support. Instead of a greater emphasis on punishment and criminalization, we need to foster empathy in youth; teach them to avoid the “empathy traps” of digital communication; provide them with effective tools for managing their emotions and dealing with online conflict; and promote awareness of the power of parents to teach their children to treat others with respect.

Finally, in order to fight cyberbullying effectively we need to make an effort to change the culture in which it happens. Both at school and at home, we can help kids understand that what may seem like “just a joke” may have a powerful effect on someone else. It’s also important to teach kids that cyberbullying may be less common than they think it is: youth often overestimate how common this sort of bullying actually is, even though most report their own experiences as being positive.²³ This is significant because research indicates that when youth believe that bullying behaviour is the norm, they are more likely to exhibit and tolerate this behaviour – and that when youth are made aware of how uncommon bullying actually is, bullying rates drop.²⁴

22 Craig, Wendy. Testimony before the Senate Committee on Human Rights, December 12, 2011.

23 *Teens, Kindness and Cruelty on Social Network Sites*. Pew Research Institute, November 9, 2011.

24 Craig, David W. and H. Wesley Perkins, *Assessing Bullying in New Jersey Secondary Schools: Applying the Social Norms Model to Adolescent Violence*, Presented at the 2008 National Conference on the Social Norms Approach, July 22, 2008.



Parents' Guide to Cyberbullying

For most youth, the Internet is all about socializing and while most of these social interactions are positive, increasing numbers of kids are using the technology to intimidate and harass others – a phenomenon known as cyberbullying.

The term “cyberbullying” can be a bit misleading. Unlike the traditional definition of bullying, which involves a difference in power or strength between children who bully and the children they target, a lot of the activities that adults might see as cyberbullying happen between children of roughly the same status. It can also be difficult to tell who is bullying whom in a cyberbullying scenario. Finally, much of the abusive behaviour that takes place within offline relationships may also take place online or be enhanced by digital technology.

How Common is It?

Just over a third of Canadian students say that someone has said something mean or cruel to them online, and just under a third say that someone has threatened them online (posting things like “I’m going to get you” or “You’re going to get it”). Roughly a quarter of students say that they have been mean to someone online.

Parents have an important role to play in helping their children and teens learn how to respond to cyberbullying. In fact, parents are the number one group of people that they turn to for help with online meanness.

How Do I Know if my Child is Being Cyberbullied?

Signs that your child is being bullied online can include fear of using the computer or going to school, anxiety and distress, and withdrawal from friends and usual activities.

What Should I do if my Child is Targeted?

- Watch out for signs that your child is being bullied online – a reluctance to use the computer or go to school may be an indication.
- Listen and provide advice if your child asks for it. Make sure to check in regularly to make sure things are going better.
- Report online bullying to your Internet or cell phone service provider. Most companies have Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) that clearly define privileges and guidelines for people who use their services, and the actions that can be taken if those guidelines are violated. They should be able to respond to reports of cyberbullying over their networks or help you track down the appropriate service provider to respond to.

Report incidents of online harassment and physical threats to your local police. Some forms of online bullying are considered criminal acts. For example: under the Criminal Code of Canada, it is a crime to communicate repeatedly with someone if your communication causes them to fear for their own safety or the safety of others.



We also need to teach our kids how to respond to an online bully. Your child has received a handout titled *What to Do if Someone is Mean to You Online*. Go through it together and emphasize the key points:

- Don't fight back
- Save the evidence
- Talk to someone about it
- Report it to the site where it's happening or to police if it's making you feel scared; making it hard for you to go to school or do things you enjoy; if you are being physically threatened; or if someone is threatening to publish something that would hurt or humiliate you.

How Can I Prevent Cyberbullying?

We can reduce the risks associated with Internet use by having open, ongoing conversations with our children about their online activities and by setting up rules that will grow along with them. MediaSmarts' research shows that having family Internet rules on things like treating people with respect can have a positive impact on your children's online behaviour. (This tip sheet can get you started: http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/tipsheet/TipSheet_FamilyOnlineRules.pdf.) Research has also shown that bullying rates drop when kids know that it is against the rules and how to report it.

Tell your children to come to you right away if they feel uncomfortable or threatened online. Don't take it for granted that your child will do this: only eight percent of teens who have been bullied online have told their parents.

Encourage your children to take action when they witness someone being bullied. This doesn't necessarily mean confronting the bully: they need to consider what they can do that is most likely to help the person being bullied and least likely to make the situation worse. This may include:

- *recording* the bullying by taking screenshots (see take-a-screenshot.org for tips on how to do this) and, if it seems that it will do more good than harm, reporting it;
- *helping the person who is being bullied feel better* and offering help privately (including help in reporting the bullying to authorities: young people who are being bullied are often reluctant to tell adults);
- *trying to help* both the person being bullied and person who is doing the bullying make up; or
- *confronting* the person who is doing the bullying, either privately or in public. If this is a friend, the best way to show that you don't approve of their behaviour is by not joining in or encouraging it.

In order to fight cyberbullying effectively we need to change the culture in which it happens, starting with helping kids understand that what may seem like "just a joke" can have a powerful effect on someone else. It's also important to teach them that cyberbullying may be less common than they think it is: young people often overestimate how common bullying actually is, even though most report their own experiences as being positive. Knowing the facts is important because research shows that when young people believe that bullying behaviour is the norm, they are more likely to engage in and tolerate this sort of behaviour – and that when they understand how *uncommon* bullying actually is, bullying rates drop.



What Should I Avoid Doing if my Child is Being Cyberbullied?

It can be difficult for a young person to come forward when they are being bullied; even to mom or dad. To build trust, try not to overreact. Don't forbid your child to use the Internet in the hope of eliminating the source of the problem: for your child, this is equal to social death and will leave her or him feeling even more victimized (not to mention the fact that an extreme reaction such as this will probably cause your child to avoid confiding in you again when feeling threatened).

Other things to avoid:

- Telling them to stop "tattling" or "snitching"
- Telling them they should solve the problem themselves
- Blaming them for being a target
- Minimizing or ignoring the situation

How Can I Learn More?

As much as possible, show an interest in your child's online life: where does he or she go online? What does he or she do? What is it about these online experiences that are so absorbing? If you're in the habit of sharing your own online experiences with your child, she or he will be more likely to talk to you when having a negative experience.

If you want to better understand your child's online experience, check out MediaSmarts' resources at: <http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/digital-issues/cyberbullying>.



What to Do if Someone is Mean to You Online

Don't fight back.

A lot of times a bully is looking to get a rise out of you, and fighting back just gives them what they want. Sometimes they're hoping that you'll fight back so that they can get **you** in trouble!

A lot of times people don't realize when they have hurt your feelings online. If you're not sure that somebody was being mean to you on purpose, start by talking to them in person – where you can see and hear each other – and see if you can work things out.

When something happens that gets you upset, take some time to let the first rush of anger or fear fade away. It's hard to make good decisions when you're mad, scared or embarrassed. If your heart is racing or you're feeling tense, it's time to get offline for a while. Sometimes it can be useful to go outside and do something active to help you get it out of your system.

Save the evidence.

If somebody is being mean to you online, make sure that you have a record of it. If it's something that was sent directly to you, make sure to save it. If it's something that can be deleted (a tweet, a status update, etc.) get a screenshot (<http://www.take-a-screenshot.org/>).

If it happens more than once, start a journal that records what's happening. Include as many details as you can: where and when it happened, everything you know about the person doing it, anything you did (or didn't do) and how it made you feel.

Talk to somebody.

If someone is being mean to you online it's okay to talk to your friends or someone in your family about it. Kids who've been bullied say what other people did that helped the most was just to spend time with them and listen to them. If there's no one you can talk to offline, you can contact Kids Help Phone (<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca>) and talk to one of their trained counselors.

Remind yourself that it's not your fault. Nothing you can do makes it okay for people to be mean to you. Nothing about you gives people a reason to be mean to you. **If someone is mean to you, that's their problem – not yours.**

You should also **report** what's happening if:

- it's making you feel scared
- it's making you not want to go to school or do things you enjoy (like playing your favourite game because someone is being mean to you there)
- you can't stop thinking about it
- if the person has said they're going to hurt you or publish something that would hurt or humiliate you



You can report it to the people who run the place where it's happening (use the reporting tools on Facebook [<https://www.facebook.com/help/420576171311103/>], YouTube [https://support.google.com/youtube/topic/2803138?hl=en&ref_topic=2676378] or Twitter [<https://support.twitter.com/articles/15789#>].) Here [<http://cyberbullying.us/report/>] is a more complete, updated list of how you can report cyberbullying on popular sites and apps.

You can also talk to your parents, to a teacher, or to another adult you trust.

If you can't talk to an adult for any reason and the person is threatening to hurt you physically or is blackmailing you (threatening to do something like post embarrassing photos if you don't do what they say) you can also go straight to your local police.



Task Evaluation Rubric: Moral Dilemma Scene

	Learning Expectations	Achievement
<p>Use</p> <p>Skills and competencies that fall under “use” range from basic technical know-how – using computer programs such as word processors, web browsers, email and other communication tools – to the more sophisticated abilities for accessing and using knowledge resources such as search engines and online databases and emerging technologies such as cloud computing.</p>	<p><i>Ethics and Empathy</i></p> <p>use digital media to promote ethical and responsible behaviour</p> <p><i>Community Engagement:</i></p> <p>use digital media to be part of a community</p> <p>exhibit leadership as a digital citizen</p> <p><i>Making and Remixing:</i></p> <p>communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats</p>	<p>Insufficient (R)</p> <p>Beginning (1)</p> <p>Developing (2)</p> <p>Competent (3)</p> <p>Confident (4)</p>
<p>Understand</p> <p>“Understand” includes recognizing how networked technology affects our behaviour and our perceptions, beliefs and feelings about the world around us.</p> <p>“Understand” also prepares us for a knowledge economy as we develop information management skills for finding, evaluating and effectively using information to communicate, collaborate and solve problems.</p>	<p><i>Ethics and Empathy:</i></p> <p>show understanding of the concepts of ethical behaviour and online ethics</p> <p>understand the dynamics of online conflict, in particular the role of witnesses, and how it affects all of the people involved</p> <p>practice perspective-taking with respect to a complex issue</p> <p>demonstrate an understanding of moral thinking at an age-appropriate level</p> <p><i>Community Engagement:</i></p> <p>show awareness of the discourse on the balance of rights and responsibilities in relation to digital media and cyberbullying</p> <p>show an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in relation to cyberbullying</p> <p>show an understanding of how to promote positive values online and empower witnesses to bullying</p> <p><i>Making and Remixing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select and use applications effectively and productively (e.g. chooses the most appropriate technologies according to the task) • show an understanding of the forms and techniques of the medium and genre: • the chosen topic, issue and solution were clear • the product displayed an insight into a topic and opinion 	<p>Insufficient (R)</p> <p>Beginning (1)</p> <p>Developing (2)</p> <p>Competent (3)</p> <p>Confident (4)</p>

	Learning Expectations	Achievement
<p>Create</p> <p>“Create” is the ability to produce content and effectively communicate through a variety of digital media tools. It includes being able to adapt what we produce for various contexts and audiences; to create and communicate using rich media such as images, video and sound; and to effectively and responsibly engage with user-generated content such as blogs and discussion forums, video and photo sharing, social gaming and other forms of social media.</p> <p>The ability to create using digital media ensures that Canadians are active contributors to digital society.</p>	<p><i>Ethics and Empathy:</i></p> <p>Create a work that clearly communicates their understanding and expresses their understanding of the moral issues around cyberbullying</p> <p>Create a work that demonstrates their ability to understand another person's point of view</p> <p><i>Community Engagement:</i></p> <p>identify and participate responsibly in online networks that foster positive community</p> <p>show an understanding of the interrelationship between rights and responsibilities online</p> <p><i>Making and Remixing:</i></p> <p>contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems</p> <p>interact, collaborate, co-construct content and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media</p> <p>effectively apply the forms and techniques of the medium and genre</p>	<p>Insufficient (R)</p> <p>Beginning (1)</p> <p>Developing (2)</p> <p>Competent (3)</p> <p>Confident (4)</p>