

ONLINE MEANNESS AND CRUELTY

Phase IV of Young Canadians in a Wireless World
Canada's most comprehensive study on young people's digital lives



This data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic amidst lockdowns and shifts between in-person and at-home learning. It's important to consider this context when reading these findings.

METHODOLOGY

1,058

Canadian youth respondents across two surveys, one for Grades 4 to 6 and one from Grades 7 to 11, conducted from September-December 2021.

DEMOGRAPHICS



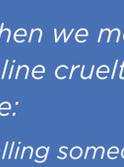
Grades 4-6
Grades 7-11



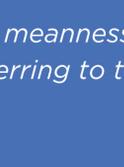
White
Racialized



LGBTQ+
Heterosexual



No identified disability
Identified disability



Boys
Girls
Gender diverse & questioning



When we mention online meanness or online cruelty, we are referring to things like:

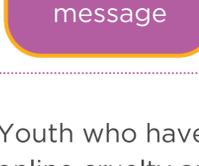
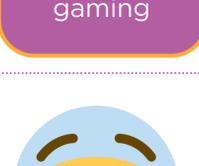
- Calling someone a name
- Threatening to physically hurt someone
- Spreading rumours
- Posting or sharing an embarrassing photo or video of someone
- Making fun of someone's race, religion, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation

EXPERIENCING MEANNESS AND CRUELTY

32%

 of youth have personally experienced meanness and cruelty online

Where do they experience it?



Youth who have **experienced** online cruelty are **more likely** to say that they've also **seen racist or sexist content** online

Youth who have **experienced** online meanness and cruelty are more likely to worry they spend too much time online

In our 2015 study, girls were nearly a **third more likely** to experience online meanness and cruelty than boys

This time, both boys and girls report experiencing online meanness or cruelty at the same rate



WITNESSING MEANNESS AND CRUELTY

49%

 of youth say they've witnessed some form of online meanness or cruelty

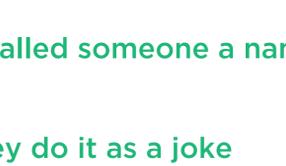
Youth with high levels of **weekday screen time** are most likely to **witness** online meanness and cruelty frequently

ENGAGING IN MEANNESS AND CRUELTY

Only 2 in 10 youth admit to engaging in online meanness or cruelty

...and they say they don't engage in it often

Where do they engage in it?



How do they engage in it?

74% have called someone a name

51% say they do it as a joke

35% say they do it in response to someone who hurt them first

Youth who **engage in online cruelty** are **more likely** to worry that they are spending too much time online



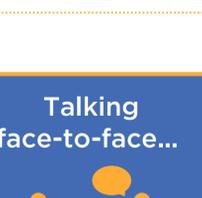
Youth who **experience** online meanness or cruelty are also more likely to **engage in it**

RESPONDING TO MEANNESS AND CRUELTY

64%

 say they have responded after witnessing online meanness or cruelty

Youth are more likely to respond if they witness **someone else** experiencing meanness and cruelty than if they experience it themselves



How do they respond?

Communicating privately online...



with the person who was being hurt (33%)

with the person who engaged (27%)

Talking face-to-face...

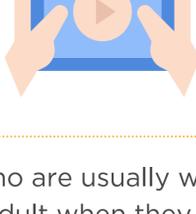


with the person who engaged (31%)

with the person who was hurt (26%)

ADULT INVOLVEMENT

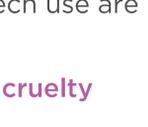
When screen time is managed with **technology** youth are **more likely** to **experience, witness** or **engage** in online meanness and cruelty



Youth who are usually with an adult when they go online are **less likely** to **experience, witness** and **engage** in online meanness or cruelty

HOUSEHOLD RULES

46% of youth say they have a household rule for treating people online with respect



Youth with household rules around tech use are **less likely to...**

- **engage in online meanness and cruelty**
- **say they were 'just joking around' as motivation for engaging in online meanness and cruelty**

and more likely to...

- **respond when they witness online meanness and cruelty**
- **ask parents or guardians for help in situations of online meanness and cruelty**

SCHOOL RULES AND POLICIES

70% of youth say their school has rules about cyberbullying

84% find these rules helpful

At school, youth typically learn about the rules and policies on cyberbullying through...



lessons in the classroom (45%)

school assemblies (21%)

handouts they take home (17%)

LEARNING ABOUT DEALING WITH ONLINE MEANNESS AND CRUELTY

25%

 of youth want to learn more about how to deal with online meanness and cruelty

Youth indicated that they learn how to deal with it from....

their parents (57%)

their teachers (51%)