

When you react the right way to cyberbullying, you can turn things around.

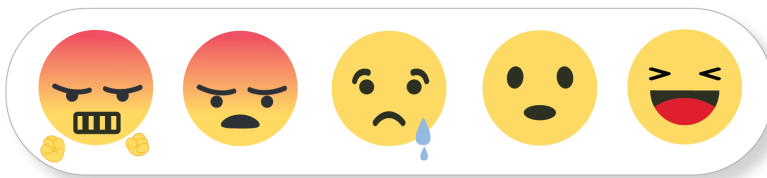
How witnesses react can make a **BIG** difference in stopping cyberbullying and making it hurt less.

Witnesses have tremendous power in turning cyberbullying situations around. But to make this happen, you need to take action.

Ask yourself:

- ***Am I letting things go because I don't think I can do anything to help?*** Actually, what you do is **super important**. What witnesses do about bullying is actually one of the **most** important factors in how much someone is hurt by it and can go a long way in building positive online spaces.
- ***Am I letting things go because I'm worried about becoming a target?*** It's normal to be afraid that someone who's being mean might get mad at you if you do something public to defend the person they're targeting. It can be even worse if it's your friend, because they might be extra mad at you for standing up to them. Don't say anything to the person who's being mean or do anything in public unless you're sure that you're safe.
- ***Am I letting things go because both people involved are friends of mine?*** It can be really hard to take sides when our friends start fighting. But you don't have to! Focus instead on **making sure the target knows you care about them**. Remember, a good friend won't stay mad at you for long.
- ***Am I letting defenders go unrecognized?*** Three-quarters of kids say they'd be more likely to do something when they saw mean posts, comments or pictures online if they thought others would respect them for doing it. When you know somebody else who helped cool down a situation or made a target feel better, make sure you let them know they are appreciated.





If you're not sure that what's happening is cyberbullying, there are still lots of things you can do to make things better without risking making them worse:

- **Comfort the person who is being targeted privately.** One of the worst things about being bullied is feeling that nobody cares about what's happening. Letting someone know you care can be a big help and won't make things worse.
- **Help the target report what's happening or talk about it to their parents or friends.** Kids say that helping them talk to parents or friends or report it to the service provider is one of the best things witnesses can do. It's also important to help them *document* what's happening by keeping copies or making screenshots (see www.take-a-screenshot.org for how to do this) so they have evidence if they decide to report it.
- **Post something nice about the target.** If you want to do something public, stay positive: let people know that you're not on the bully's side by posting something good about the target. You can also say things like "We don't say mean things to people here" or "Bullying isn't what this place is about" to make sure everyone knows this behaviour isn't tolerated in your online community.
- **Talk to the person doing the bullying privately.** If you want to talk to the bully, do it with something like a private message, text or IM so they don't feel embarrassed. If they say they're only joking, remind them that what's a joke to one person can really hurt someone else. If they say they're getting back for something done to them or to a friend, tell them that escalating the drama will only make things worse.
- **If something is happening right now that you have to stop,** try distracting the person who's doing the bullying or giving the target a chance to get out of the situation without being embarrassed.