



Not reacting to cyberbullying can hurt as much as cyberbullying.

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

It can be hard speaking out when cyberbullying happens for a whole pile of reasons, but what you say and do is really important.

Ask yourself:

- ***Am I hoping that someone else will do something so I don't have to?*** A lot of people are reluctant to take action, but did you know that almost three-quarters of kids who've witnessed cyberbullying did something about it? If that surprises you, it may be because a lot of the things we can do to help – like speaking privately to the person who's being mean, or letting the person who's being targeted know you care about them – don't happen in public.
- ***Am I picking sides because one person is my friend?*** Could be! Defending a friend is actually the third most common reason why kids are mean online. Before you do anything, though, take a minute to make sure that what you're going to do will really help.
- ***Am I letting things go because I don't know the target very well?*** Most of us want to step up to help people we know, like our friends and families. Make sure to remember that **nobody deserves to be bullied**, whether you know them or not.
- ***Am I doing anything that looks like I'm supporting the bullying?*** Sometimes little things, like liking or upvoting a comment, can make it look like we're joining in on the bullying. Think about how the target might feel before you react to something mean. Even doing nothing can look like you're on the bully's side.



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.