

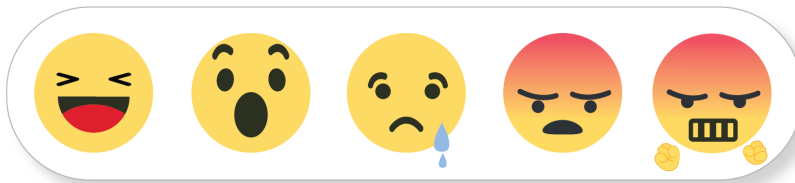
Some reactions hurt more than you think.

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

What you do when you see cyberbullying can make things a lot better – but it can make them worse too.

Before you react, ask yourself:

- ***Am I letting things go because I'm worried about making things worse for the person being targeted?*** Some things we do when we witness cyberbullying – even when we're trying to help – **can** make things worse, so it's always a good idea to step back and think about the situation before jumping in.
- ***Am I letting things go because I don't like the target?*** It can be hard to feel bad for someone we don't like. Remember that **nobody deserves to be bullied**, whether you like them or not.
- ***Am I blaming the target?*** Even if we don't dislike somebody, we may look for reasons why they don't deserve our help. Everybody makes bad choices sometimes, but nobody deserves to be bullied.
- ***Am I letting things go because I think cyberbullying is something that only happens to younger kids?*** Surprise! Students in Grade 11 are actually the most likely to say they were mean to someone online and Grade 10 students are mostly likely to be targets. They may not call it bullying, but it is.
- ***Am I encouraging my friends to reply to things that make them mad?*** We all want to help our friends when they're targets of bullying, but some things can make things worse instead of better. When you help your friends, make sure that you're telling them to do things that will cool things down and end what's happening instead of making the conflict keep on going.



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.