



Preventing cyberbullying

A Canadian Bar Association series supporting legal wellness

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Cyberbullying is bullying with technology, including using social media or texting. It can be traumatic for the person bullied, and have legal consequences for the bully. This Legal Health Check gives some basic information about cyberbullying.

Many forms of cyberbullying can be criminal offences. A few examples include:

- Threats of death or serious bodily harm
- Repeated online tormenting that causes the other person to be afraid
- Sharing naked or sexual pictures of another person
- Possessing child pornography; making, possessing or sharing sexual pictures of anyone under 18
- Spreading lies to ridicule and ruin another person's reputation

If you are the cyberbully and between 12 and 17, you can be accused of these crimes and sent to Youth Court. If found guilty, you could serve jail time, probation or both. You could be banned from using social media, a smart phone, or the internet without an adult present. You can also be responsible even if the harm was unintended, but included posting private information about someone online, posting pictures of people online without their consent, discrimination (based on race, ethnic origin, age, religion or language) or saying things that damage reputation, honour or dignity.

If you have been cyberbullied, you can:

- Report it to providers like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Instagram, and block the person
- Keep a record (like a screenshot of the activity)
- Talk to a trusted adult, like a parent, teacher or sibling
- Report it to school employees who must try to prevent the bullying, even if it happens online
- Take civil legal action to stop the bullying and ask for compensation
- Notify your local police department

For more information contact:

Community legal advice clinics

NeedHelpNow.ca

CYBERTIP.CA

Kids Help Phone.ca or 1 800 668-6868

For links and resources, visit cba.org/healthcheck



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Contact or referral info here.