**GLADSTONE**
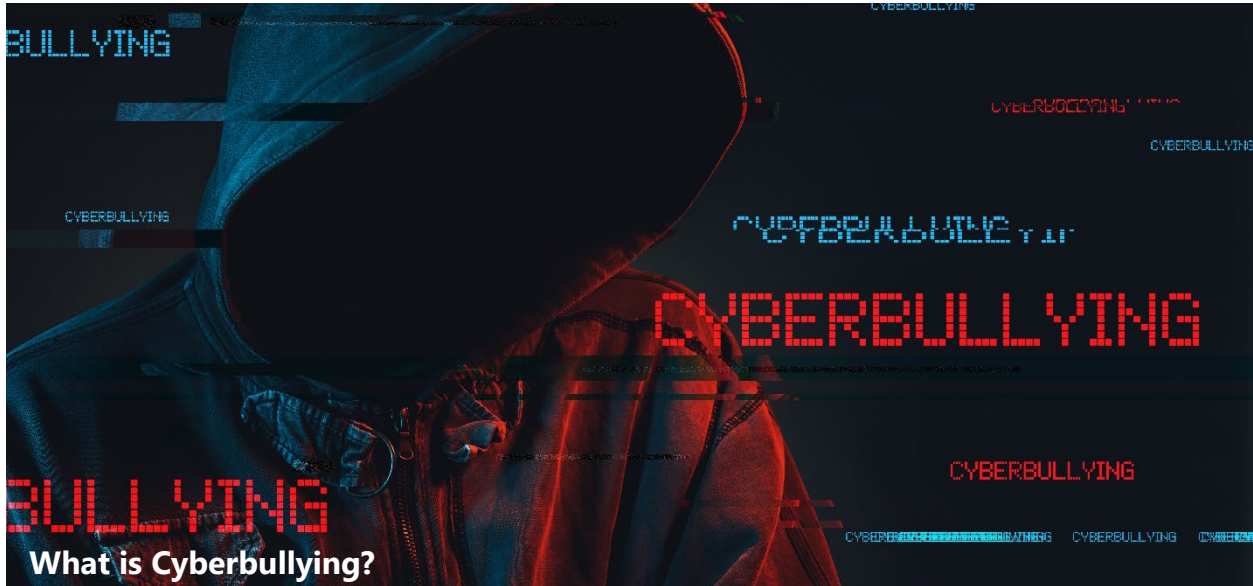# Women's Health

# Cyberbullying - Youth



**What is Cyberbullying?**

Cyberbullying is the use of technology, such as the internet, social media or other digital communication platforms to harass, intimidate, or threaten someone. Cyberbullying can take many forms, including spreading rumours or false information, sharing embarrassing or damaging photos or videos, cyberstalking, hate speech, and online harassment.

The anonymity and reach of the internet can make cyberbullying especially harmful, as the victim may feel unable to escape the abuse and it can have a lasting impact on their mental health and well-being. Cyberbullying can be just as serious as in-person bullying, and it's important for those who experience it to reach out for help and support.

Cyberbullying is using technology to bully or hurt someone else and can include:

- Sending/sharing nasty, hurtful or abusive messages or emails.
- Humiliating others by posting/sharing embarrassing videos or images.
- Spreading rumours or lies online.
- Setting up fake online profiles.
- Repeated harassment and threatening messages (cyberstalking).

## It's not your fault!

Remember, it's not your fault if you are being cyberbullied, and you don't have to face it alone. By reaching out for help and taking care of yourself, you can start to heal and move forward. Engaging in cyberbullying can have serious consequences for both the person doing the bullying and their targets. Some of the risks of engaging in cyberbullying are:

- **Legal consequences:** Cyberbullying can be a criminal offence, and the person doing the bullying may face legal consequences, such as fines or even imprisonment.
- **Damage to reputation:** Engaging in cyberbullying can damage a person's reputation and make it difficult for them to build positive relationships in the future.
- **Mental health:** Cyberbullying can have serious impacts on the mental health of both the person doing the bullying and their targets. It can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.
- **Cyberstalking:** Cyberbullying can escalate into cyberstalking, which is a criminal offense that involves using the internet to harass or threaten someone.
- **Loss of opportunities:** Engaging in cyberbullying can harm a person's future opportunities, such as education, employment, and personal relationships.

## Steps you can take

### Tell Someone
Tell a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher, or counsellor, about what is happening. They can help you get the support you need.

### Keep Evidence
Save any evidence of the cyberbullying, such as messages or screenshots, so that you can show it to someone who can help.

### Seek Support
Consider reaching out to a helpline or counselor who specialises in working with victims of bullying to get additional support.

### Block the Bully
If you can, block the person who is bullying you online to prevent them from being able to reach you.

### Distance Yourself
Avoid going to the website or platform where the bullying is taking place to reduce your exposure to it.

### Take Care
Engage in self-care activities, such as spending time with friends and family, exercising or pursuing a hobby.

## Concerned for your safety?

Report your bullying complaint to police, especially if you have concerns for your safety.

Call 000 in an emergency.

## Useful resources

- Lawstuff (www.lawstuff.org.au) provides legal information to children and young people.
- eSafety (www.esafety.gov.au) to make a complaint and access information.
- Kids Help Line (1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelp.com.au) for free phone counselling.
- Lifeline (13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au) for free support services.
- The Australian Rights Commission (1300 656 419) investigates complaints.
- Headspace Gladstone is a youth mental health support service (07) 4903 1921.