



ThinkUKnow e-Newsletter - Volume 5, Issue 2

There is much discussion around encouraging children and young people to be ethical bystanders, and rightly so. Most young people don't bully, and most aren't bullied either, but we do know that they see this happening and it does impact them. Talking about ethical bystander intervention, and showing it are two very different things. In this issue of the ThinkUKnow e-newsletter, we're going to look at ethical bystander intervention from two angles - before it becomes bullying and when the bullying has happened.

Creating a positive culture

We can help children and young people to be ethical bystanders by encouraging them to create a culture in which bullying and cyberbullying are not welcome. This means cultivating respectful relationships and developing conflict resolution skills. Let's be honest, this is no easy task and one that cannot be outsourced, we all have a responsibility to model and teach these skills.

Respectful relationships need to be modelled by all of us, parents, siblings, schools, sports clubs and friends. Showing respect in all of our relationships starts in the home, from a young age. It requires us to think about how we talk about bosses, colleagues, friends and family members in the home and making sure we model the same behaviours we expect of children and young people.

Some of the media which young people consume, be it TV, movies, music or games, can show great examples of respectful relationships, whereas others

Time2Talk

In this section we look at ways to start talking with children and young people about their use of technology.

What proportion of digital communications do you think are negative?

How would you resolve an argument with a friend online? What about an argument with someone you don't know?

Who would you report cyberbullying to?

How would you help a friend who was being cyberbullied? Do you think you know enough about how to help them?

Intervening in cyberbullying

Cyberbullying isn't going to disappear tomorrow, but we can change how we respond to it so that it does eventually disappear. This involves equipping all of us with the skills to be positive bystanders with active reporting, support and resisting involvement.

Young people need to be empowered to report cyberbullying if it happens to them, or someone else. Many social network sites and games allow users to report the

can show the opposite. Have discussions with your child about these examples of disrespectful relationships and what they would do if they were put into those situations. For help on how to do this with current TV shows and movies, feel free to check out www.common sense media.org.

Conflict resolution skills help us to overcome differences in ethical ways, without resorting to name calling, violence or bullying. It involves understanding our emotions, empathising with others and looking at the bigger picture. Much of what eventuates into cyberbullying, harassment or sexual bullying starts with a conflict. We need to help children and young people develop skills to resolve conflict, and give them opportunities to practise these skills. Role-playing conflict scenarios can better prepare children and young people for real-life conflict.

We live in an incredibly diverse country, and when we use the internet, we are living in an even more diverse world. We will come across people who have different values, ethics, opinions and attitudes, but we can manage these interactions in a way that promotes a more positive co-existence.

cyberbullying of another person. Reporting isn't dobbing, but reporting is a two way street, young people need to know that when they report something, it will be dealt with appropriately. Children often report that once they've reported bullying, the situation gets worse which is a reflection on how adults deal with the issues. Make sure you are aware of the anti-bullying policies your school, sports club, social media service, game or other organisation your child is involved with have in place. Be sure to also support the actions of these organisations at home in order to present a united front.

Children and young people will often go to their friends for help and support before talking to an adult. We need to help these children and young people to provide adequate support for their friends by acknowledging that something is going on and letting them know that they have their back. Incidents that occur online are often only the most visible of a range of issues affecting children and young people and it may be worthwhile teaching children and young people mental health first aid - how to support a friend who is struggling.

Finally, we can help young people to overcome pressure to join in with cyberbullying. If people realise they don't have an audience of supporters, they may reconsider their bullying behaviour. Saying "no" can be difficult, but it gets easier with practise and pretending. Just as we encourage you to run through conflict resolution scenarios with young people, it's also worthwhile practising scenarios of saying "no".

Next month, we recognise the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence. You can find out more information on this day at www.bullyingnoway.com.au as well as some activities to run at home or at school. Our hope is that one day we no longer need to run such events, as every day is an opportunity for action against violence in all forms.

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