

# Preventing Cyberbullying

## Top Ten Tips for Adults Who Are Being Harassed Online



Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D.

October 2013

### 1. Stay up to date with privacy settings

Social networking sites and programs are modifying and updating their privacy settings frequently. Make sure that you're familiar with the new profile options, and keep as much information as possible restricted to those you trust.

### 2. Restrict access to your contact information

Do not give out your email or phone number to people that you do not know. Also, keep your email and phone number off of social media sites. You never know who might have access to them, and you cannot trust everyone who is a "friend" or "follower."

### 3. Learn Internet etiquette

To prevent potential problems with other Internet users, learn social conventions related to interaction in cyberspace. For example, do not write in all CAPS. This can be perceived as yelling to some. Also resist using sarcasm online as it can be easily misinterpreted.

### 4. Don't send inappropriate pictures or videos

Remember that today's boyfriend or girlfriend can be tomorrow's scorned lover. You do not want someone with inappropriate pictures or videos of you posting them online and sharing them with the rest of the world. Don't put yourself in the position of being worried about this.

### 5. Google yourself

You should always know what is being said about you online. It is often surprising to find information you thought was private show up in public databases, news articles, or on social networking pages that have been indexed by search engines.

### 6. Do not accept friend requests from strangers

If you do not know the person who is sending you a friend request, ignore it. Most social media sites and programs also give you the option to block the user if you like.

### 7. Use site-based controls

Disable search options on certain social media sites to prevent anyone from searching for you or messaging you. This allows you to have more control over who you interact with online, as you are the only one who can initiate it.

### 8. Keep your information protected

If using a public computer, be sure to log off of any site you are on when you walk away from that computer – even for a minute. In fact, do it on your other portable devices too if there is a chance that someone might come by and use your account to be funny or mischievous. Do not give passwords out to anyone and change your password frequently. Also, make sure your phone has a passcode or password.

### 9. Be skeptical in online interactions

Even among people you trust, it is risky to reveal too much information because you never know for sure if the person you think you are communicating with is really there—or if they are alone.

### 10. Guard against mean people

Remember that some people have a lot of time on their hands and all they want to do is make life miserable for others. Don't let them. Resist putting too much personal or private information online that could be used to harass or humiliate you.

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. is a Professor at Florida Atlantic University and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D. is a Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Together, they lecture across the United States and abroad on the causes and consequences of cyberbullying and offer comprehensive workshops for parents, teachers, counselors, mental health professionals, law enforcement, youth and others concerned with addressing and preventing online aggression. The Cyberbullying Research Center is dedicated to providing up-to-date information about the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying among adolescents.

For more information, visit <http://www.cyberbullying.us>

© 2013 Cyberbullying Research Center - Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin