Myths and Facts About Bullying and Cyberbullying

Myth: Cyberbullies are usually people who are popular, athletic, and attractive.

Fact: Cyberbullies come in all shapes and sizes. Because people who cyberbully can hide behind their anonymity, they are often physically weak and socially awkward. Often, they are the victims of traditional bullying who turn to cyberbullying to get revenge.

Myth: Young people are rarely the cyberbullies.

Fact: Although they may not always be the main perpetrators, 53 percent of students in fourth to eighth grade admit that they have said mean or hurtful things to someone online. Another 5 percent admit that they participate in cyberbullying “quite often,” according to the publication *Reclaiming Children and Youth*.

Myth: Most teens will not experience cyberbullying.

Fact: Recent surveys conducted by Internet safety organizations show that more than 50 percent of adolescents experience some form of cyberbullying. Many times, it begins as early as age nine. In the teen years, cyberbullying usually accompanies some form of sexual harassment.

Myth: More boys than girls participate in cyberbullying.

Fact: Boys and girls participate in cyberbullying equally, although for different reasons. They also use different methods. Girls tend to use more passive approaches, such as spreading rumors and gossip to damage reputations and relationships. Boys tend to use direct threats and cyberbully as a means of revenge.

Myth: Children rarely miss school to avoid bullying.

Fact: Educators estimate that more than 160,000 students miss school each day in the United States because they fear being bullied or harassed by their peers, according to the publication *InternetWeek*.