



The CENTRE for EDUCATION
in MATHEMATICS and COMPUTING

Digital Drama

*A CS and Society resource addressing
social issues within the realm of digital
technology and computing*

This resource will:

- improve your ability to recognize digital drama, and
- encourage reflection on your approach to digital drama and how you engage with it.

What Is Digital Drama?

According to a survey done in 2023 by the Pew Research Center, over 90% of teens report using the internet daily, and 46% of teens report using the internet almost constantly.

Given this pervasive access to the internet, chances are good that you may have been involved in, or a witness to, some form of digital drama.

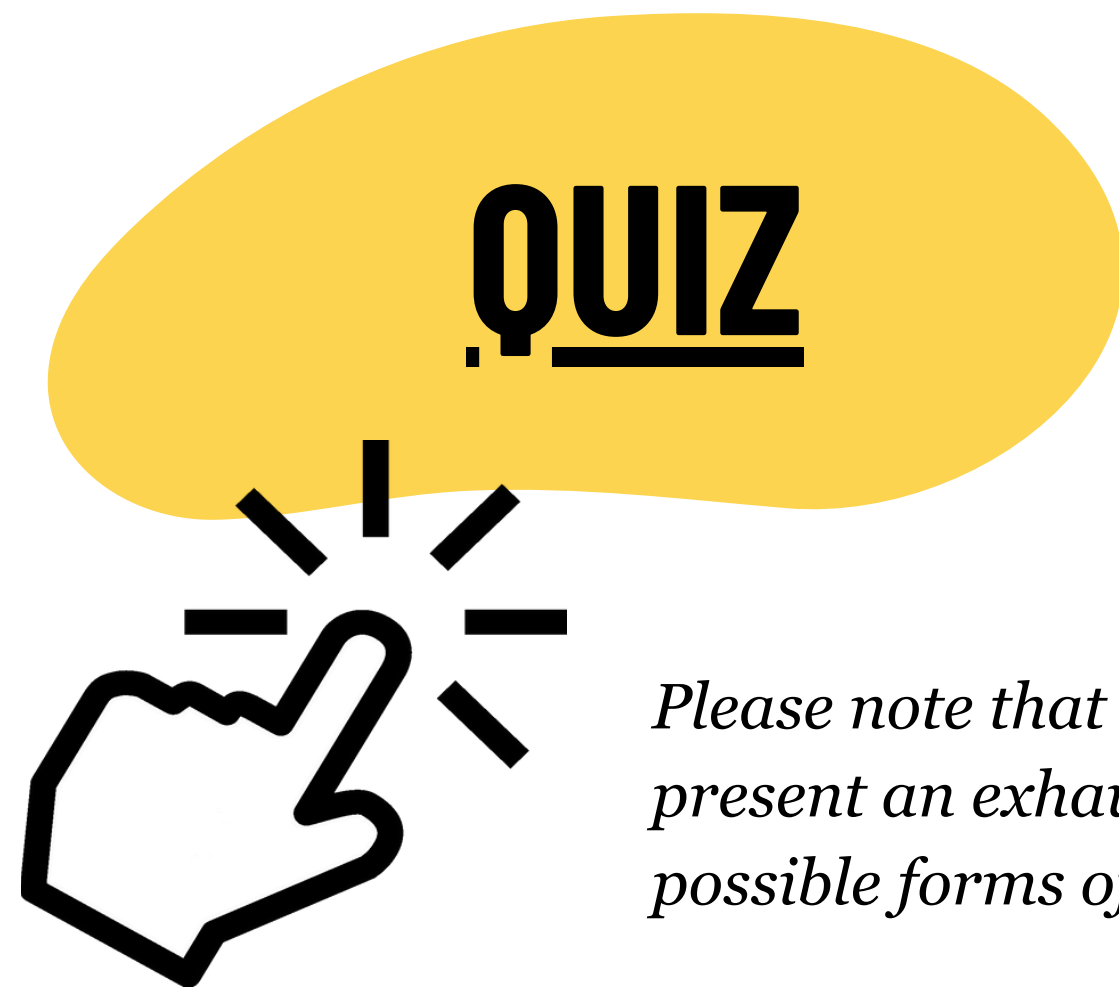
Digital Drama

Conflicts and disputes that occur in the everyday world amongst people online or through technology.

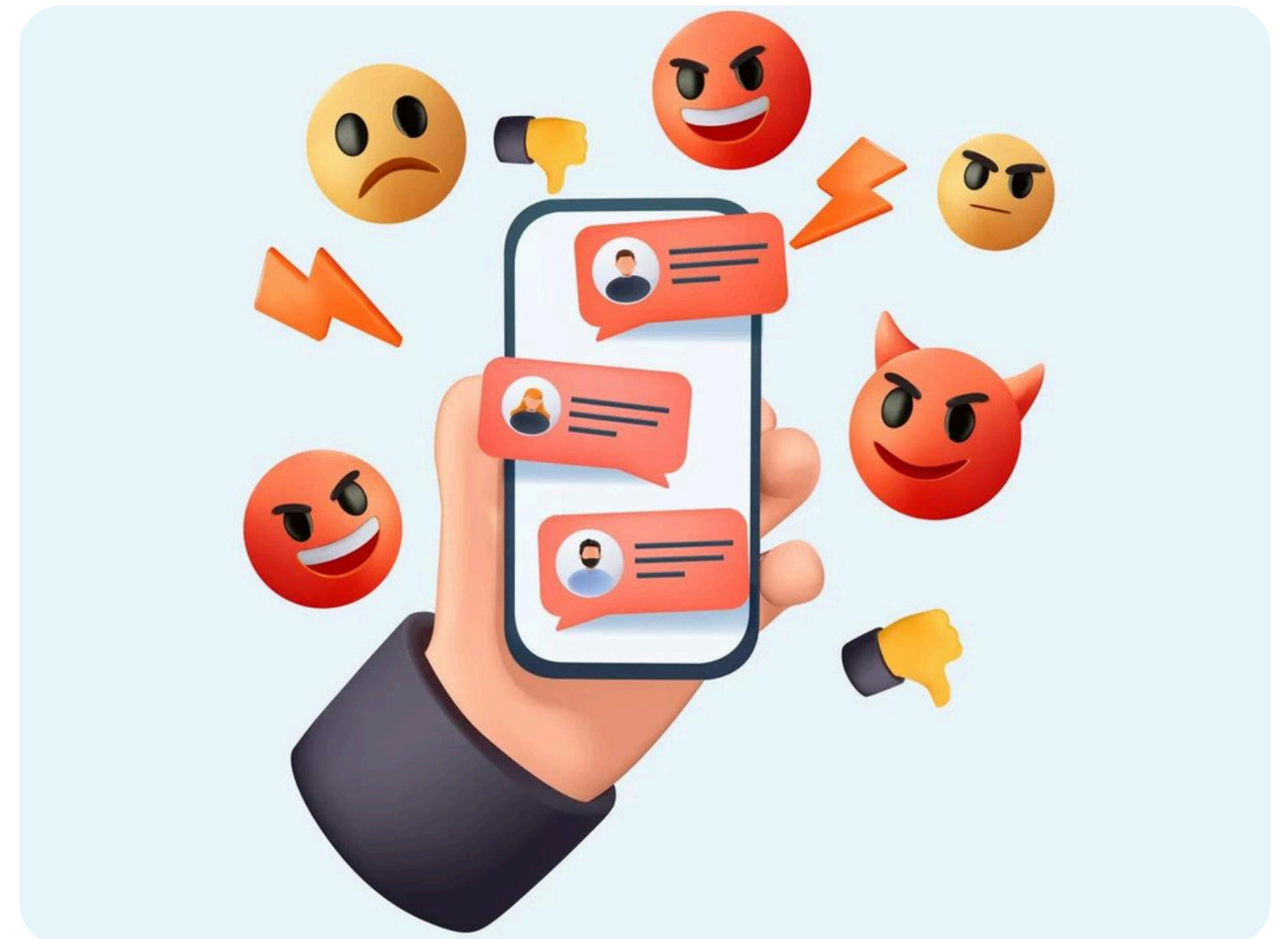


Forms of Digital Drama

Digital drama can occur in many different forms. In the following quiz, see how many forms you can correctly identify.



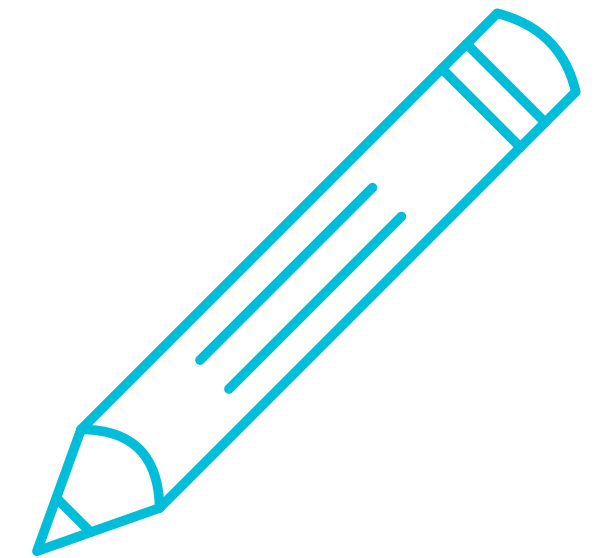
Please note that this quiz does not present an exhaustive list of all possible forms of digital drama.



Forms of Digital Drama: Journal

Reflect privately on the following questions by writing in a journal:

- In your experience, which forms of digital drama are the most common?
- In your experience, which forms of digital drama cause the most harm?
- Describe a specific example of digital drama that you have witnessed.



Online Disinhibition Effect

The following video explores why people might engage in digital drama by investigating a phenomenon known as the online disinhibition effect.



Online Disinhibition Effect: Discussion Questions

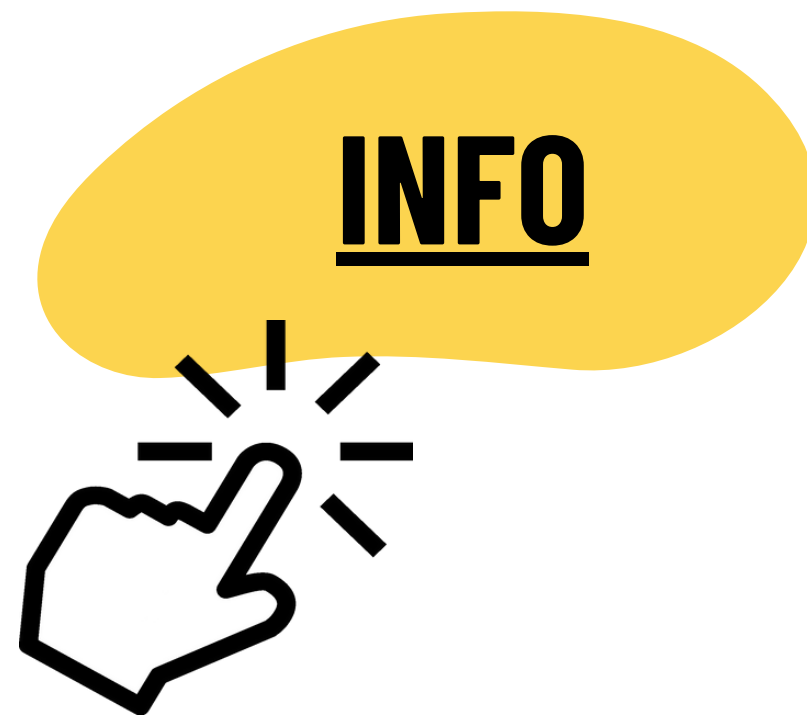
1. What do you think is meant by the phrase “protected by the internet”?
2. Have you ever experienced the online disinhibition effect? That is, have you ever acted differently online than you would have in person? If so, describe the situation.
3. In what ways can online disinhibition be **toxic**? In what ways can online disinhibition be **benign**?
4. Aside from the online disinhibition effect, what other reasons might people have for engaging in digital drama?



Social Media: Snapchat's Friend Solar System



Snapchat introduced its Friend Solar System feature in August 2022, which organizes the people you interact with the most into a ranked “best friends” list. This feature has raised concerns about its potential effects on teen mental health. In April 2024, Snapchat responded to these concerns by turning the feature off by default, but still allowing users to opt in if they choose to do so.



In your opinion, do social media platforms have a responsibility to design features that promote positive interactions and reduce conflict?



Social Media: Draft an Email



Draft an email to a social media platform of your choosing.

Option 1: Request to remove a feature

- Identify one feature on the platform that you believe contributes to digital drama.
- Explain why this feature is problematic.
- Request that the platform consider removing this feature.

Option 2: Request to add a feature

- Propose a new feature for the platform that could help mitigate digital drama.
- Explain how this feature would be beneficial.
- Request that the platform consider adding this feature.



Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a specific and serious form of digital drama. After reading the article, complete the infographic found under additional materials.

Cyberbullying

The use of technology to repeatedly harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person.

ARTICLE



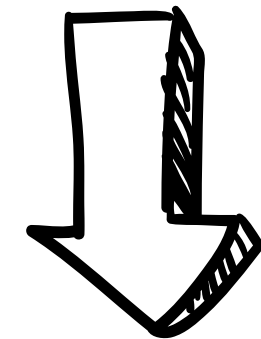
Sexting

In 2018, a MediaSmarts survey found that 41% of teens had sent sexts. In addition, 30% of sext recipients reported sharing them by either showing them to others in person, forwarding them to others electronically, or posting them on social media or other public forums.

Sexting

Sending sexually explicit messages, images, or videos by text or private message.

RESOURCE



Non-consensual sharing of sexts is a form of cyberbullying.



Sexting: Questions To Consider

SENDING A SEXT?

Consider

- Is this how you want people to see you?
- Could somebody use this to hurt you?
- Would you be upset if someone shared this with others?
- **What other questions should be considered?**

SHARING A SEXT?

Consider

- Did the sender mean for it to be shared?
- Did the sender have permission to send it?
- How would you feel if someone shared something like this about you?
- **What other questions should be considered?**



Offenders, Targets, Bystanders, and Upstanders

Instances of drama and bullying often involve four characters:



Offenders

People who initiate the drama or the bullying



Targets

People whom the offenders victimize



Bystanders

People who ignore the drama and the bullying



Upstanders

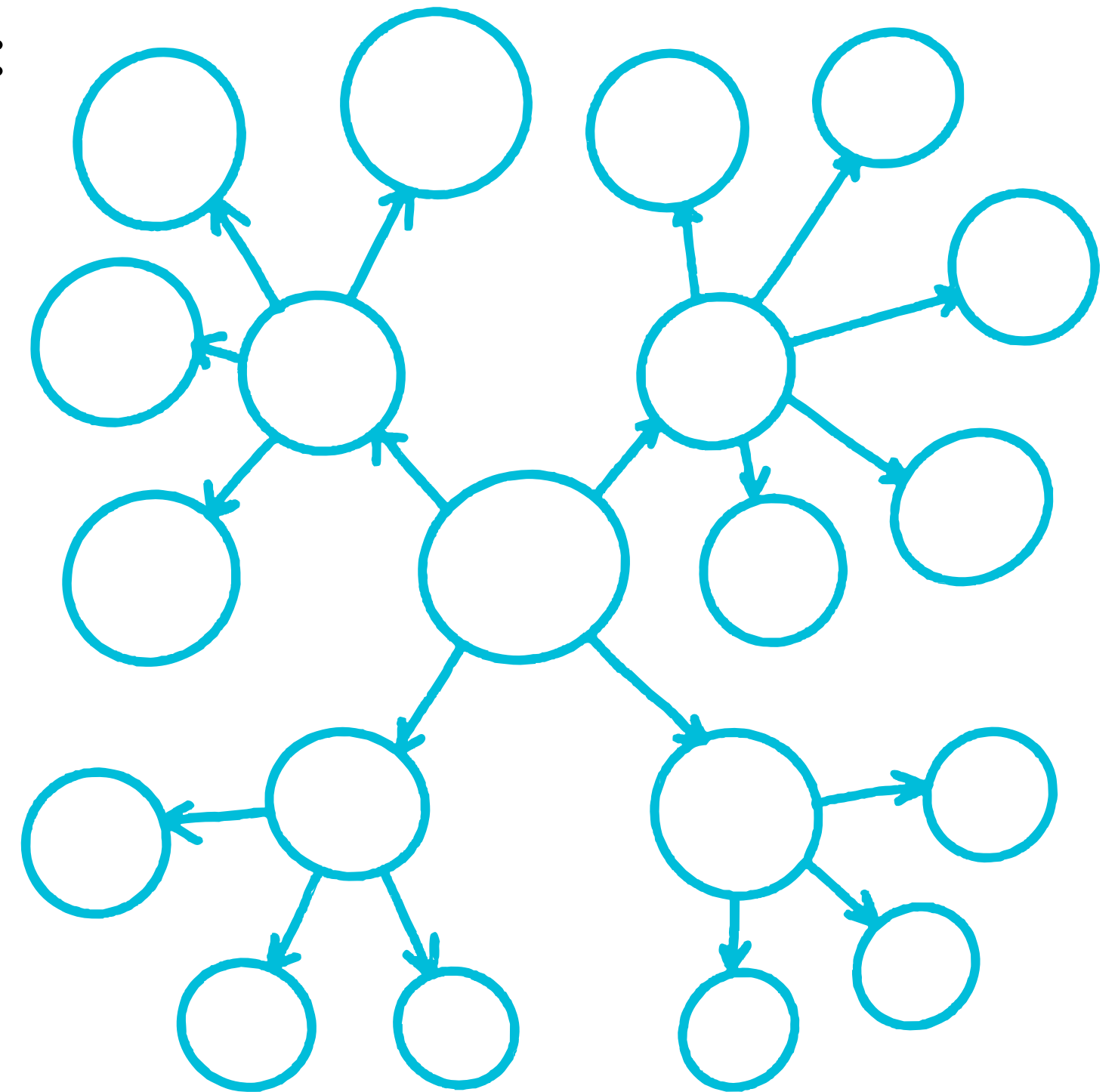
People who support and stand up for the targets



Brainstorm

As a class, brainstorm the following questions:

- What are some reasons why bystanders would ignore drama and bullying when they see it happen?
- How can a bystander become an upstander?



Case Study: The Confetti Prank

Priya and Jayden prank their friend Maya with a confetti blast in the school cafeteria, filming her reaction for TikTok. Despite Maya's discomfort, Jayden uploads the video which goes viral. While some classmates find it funny, others criticize Priya and Jayden for their insensitivity. Maya feels humiliated by this video, and many classmates take sides, escalating the drama.

1. Identify the characters in this case study. Who are the offenders, targets, bystanders, and upstanders?
2. Imagine what happens next. Expand the story to include how Priya, Jayden, Maya, and their classmates can de-escalate the drama and resolve the situation.



The Weekly Stand

The Weekly Stand is a low-commitment, but high-impact initiative to turn bystanders into upstanders. It includes 52 simple actions that you can take to make a positive impact on the people around you.

RESOURCE



Choose one of the actions from The Weekly Stand and try it this week. For a greater challenge, choose one per week for the next couple of weeks, or consider taking on the full 52 week challenge.



More Information and Resources

General information:

[Bullies Out](#)

[Common Sense Education](#)

[Pew Research Center](#)

[Media Smarts](#)

Cyberbullying resources:

[Unicef](#)

[Kids Help Phone](#)

Sexting resources:

[Need Help Now](#)

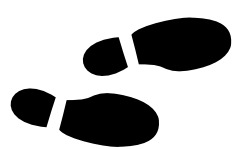
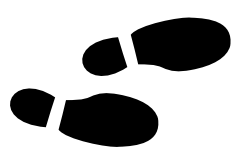
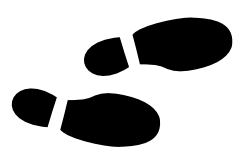
[Cybertip](#)



Additional Materials

CYBERBULLYING

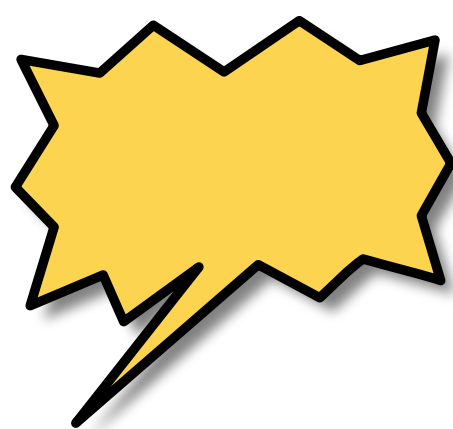
_____ victims everywhere



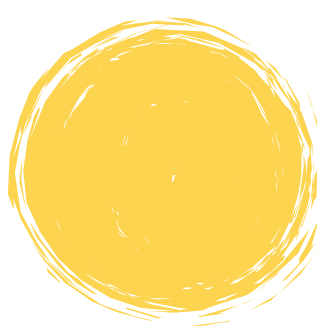
Examples:



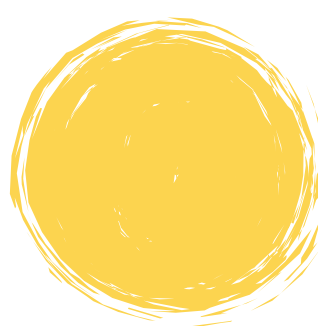
Most common type:



Percentage of youth who ...



report
being
victims



report
being
witnesses

Impact:



Warning Signs:



Ways to take action:



CYBERBULLYING

Follows victims everywhere



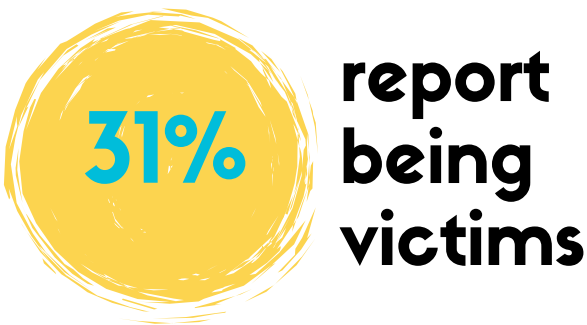
Examples:

- posting embarrassing photos
- impersonation
- gossip
- exclusion
- stalking
- threatening to reveal private information
- name-calling

Most common type:



Percentage of youth who ...



Impact:

- shame
- anxiety
- poor concentration
- feeling hopeless
- self-harm
- relationship problems

Warning Signs:

- changing amount of time spent online
- being secretive about online activities
- appearing sad/angry more than usual
- trouble sleeping or eating
- lower grades or skipping school
- detachment from family and friends

Ways to take action:

Do not respond. Take screenshots to keep on record. Block individuals and adjust your privacy settings. Report through the social media site and talk to a trusted adult.

