Peer to Peer Abuse: Cyber-bullying

What is Cyber-bullying? This bullying behavior occurs not face-to-face, but through use of computers, cell phones or other electronic devices with the intention to embarrass, humiliate or cause harm or fear to another. More likely to occur in middle-school years through high school. Cyber-bullying can occur by an individual or by a group. Cyber-bullying has serious negative consequences for the victim, the bully and society. An individual can be targeted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at home...at school... at work...anywhere, anytime!

Warning Signs:
Have a sudden change in moods or behaviors. Has a lower self-esteem, unwilling to go to school and avoids school, parish or other activities where peers are present. Victims of cyber-bullying are more likely to use alcohol and drugs, skip school and be victims of bullying in-person. Signs of distress: depression, sleep problems, changes in eating habits, thoughts of self harm...

What can you do? Be aware of warning signs. Teach your children about right relationships with others and how to use cyber technology responsibly and safely. Monitor your child’s use of technology. Keep the computer in a public space in your home. Talk with your child about what to do if someone is bullying or harassing them online or by cell phone.

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