



### FAMIPED

**Familias, Pediatras y Adolescentes en la Red. Mejores padres, mejores hijos.**

## Cyberbullying: the deception of fake anonymity PART 1

**Autor/es:** David Cortejoso Mozo, Psicólogo Sanitario en Centro Psicológico y Educativo Huerta del Rey. Autor del manual para padres: ¡P@dres en alerta! Nuevas Tecnologías.

**Traductor/a:** Pablo Ocaña Escolar.

[Volumen 9. Nº1. Noviembre 2016](#) [1]

**Palabras clave:** [cyberbullying](#) [2], [cyberharassment](#) [3], [bullying](#) [4], [ICT](#) [5]

Nowadays, the even badly named *digital native people*, move in the digital world with ease. This is a world which gives them easy access to communication, leisure, knowledge and millions of curiosities in which they can spend their time. One of the problems in this world in which we all move is the fake sensation of anonymity.

In fact, digital native people are *orphan digital people* since they are exploring and interacting with this new environment, that is Internet, and technological devices in order to get connected, even without the existence of a proper guideline of their mentors; without limit, without knowing the rules and responsibilities, with no rules of use and not knowing the risks and how to protect from them. This is our job as parents and, unfortunately, we are not doing that.

Parental digital mediation is unknown nowadays and parents usually claim weak and frequently heard sentences such as "we are really far away from new technologies", "we are too old to cope with machines", "we have no idea on how the Internet works", "our children know more about Internet than us", etc.

Parental digital mediation is an essential task that parents are obliged to do nowadays in order to promote a sensible use of new technologies, to teach our children the risks implied by the Net, how to protect from them and offer solutions when, sadly, this danger becomes a reality.

The fake anonymity sensation that children (and many adults) think that they have when interacting with ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) is provoked, firstly, by the lack of parental mediation and, secondly, by technologies themselves, since they make them believe that what they do or send to the "cloud" is there, feeling protected behind a screen or a keyboard.

This causes, many times, that children dare to do things with new technologies that they would not do in real life. This includes harassing, insulting, threatening, excluding, pushing or lying

### Reasons for changes in the “playing field”

Cyberbullying refers to the bullying and aggression among children that is done using new technologies and devices connected to the Internet. School bullying has always happened but this has been brought to a new sphere. Which are the reasons why children use new technologies to do cyberbullying? There are some and clear ones:

- - The agresor/s need to show that aggression and the domain over their victim so that they need others to see that. On the Internet and with new technologies, the audience is higher and this is really necessary for them.
- - Insults, threats and aggressions are going to be visible for more time on the Internet and this is going to hurt longer as well.
- - Cyberbullying, as other subjects related to the Net, catches everybody's attention, it has a viral effect, it reaches many people and it is easy that other people add to an aggression.
- - ICT fake anonymity makes many prefer this method instead of direct actions even though, cyberbullying and bullying are closely linked and the ones who start harassing directly also use ICT to reinforce this aggression.
- - New technologies allow them to act at any time, not necessarily immediately, they can act in no real time.
- - By acting via Internet, authority and responsibility are minimized so they dare to do these aggressions with greater ease. Also, the protective effect of social and cultural restrictions gets minimized.

### Agents involved in cyberbullying

In order to give a more formal definition of cyberbullying, it can be said that it is: "the deliberate and normally repeated harm, inflicted by a child or a group of children towards another user by using digital media". There are three main factors in this definition: the aggressors' intentionality, that it is something repeated and constant (not isolated) and that the usage digital media to be done.

Cyberbullying is an educational burden in our days, it can be expressed in many different ways but it has always the same goal: hurting someone. It can be done by means of insults, threats, provocations, group or activity exclusion, spreading a lie, revealing a truth, manipulating an image or video, coercing, spying, harassing and a long etcetera.

But cyberbullying is not just a matter of two. The main agents involved in cyberbullying are:

- - Aggressor/s: those who hurt the victim using new technologies.
- - Victim/s: those who are hurt by aggressors.
- - Spectator/s: those who see the aggression and participate in an active or passive way, being spectators. Remember that aggressors need to show the aggression so, without any spectators, it is likely that it would not happen or it could be minor.

In that sense, spectators are a fundamental group when preventing cyberbullying, from the own families and from school, because thanks to their intervention, many cyberbullying situations would be avoided. We should educate them to act and report these situations and we can give them various reasons:

- - Because nobody has the right to act in the Internet abusing anyone, no matter what the reason is.
- - Because we must be supportive and help others.
- - Because if they don't act, they are encouraging the aggressor to keep on attacking.
- - Because once that you begin, it is easier that other people come to help.
- - Because if this is tolerated, unfairness becomes rule and you grow up tolerating it.
- - Because by helping a victim, you will feel good with yourself.
- - Because it does not pay being a friend of someone who attacks somebody.
- - Because fighting is not compulsory, the solution is reporting that to an adult.

### References

<sup>1</sup> [Hábitos seguros en el uso de las TIC por niños y adolescentes y e-confianza de sus padres](#) [6]

<sup>2</sup> [Monográfico sobre Ciberacoso Escolar \(Ciberbullying\)](#) [7]

<sup>3</sup> Web article [bullying-acoso.com](#) [8]: [Qué hacer si sospechas que tu hijo es víctima del ciberbullying](#) [9]