

Understanding the Most Common Forms of Cyberbullying on Social Media

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Cyberbullying is a pervasive issue that affects individuals of all ages, particularly youths. The anonymity and reach of social media platforms can amplify bullying behaviours, making it a critical issue to address. The image highlights the eight most common forms of cyberbullying on social media, each with distinct characteristics and impacts. Understanding these forms is essential to effectively combat and prevent cyberbullying.



1. Flaming

Flaming refers to the act of sending hostile and aggressive messages intended to provoke or upset the recipient. These messages are usually characterized by vulgar language and personal attacks. Flaming often occurs in public forums or comment sections, aiming to publicly shame or degrade someone.

2. Impersonation

Impersonation, also known as "catfishing," involves creating fake profiles or hacking into someone else's account to post damaging or misleading information. The imposter may send harmful messages or share sensitive content while pretending to be the victim, leading to social and emotional harm.

3. Exclusion

Exclusion happens when someone is deliberately left out of online groups, chats, or social events. This form of bullying can be particularly painful as it plays on the human need for social inclusion and belonging. Exclusion can lead to feelings of isolation and depression.

4. Harassment

Harassment involves repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages. This persistent behaviour is meant to intimidate or distress the victim. Unlike flaming, harassment is ongoing and can include threats of physical harm, relentless insults, or spreading false rumours.

5. Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking is a severe form of harassment that includes continuous monitoring, threats, and intimidation. The stalker may follow the victim's online activities obsessively, often leading to real-world fears and anxiety. This behaviour can escalate to the point of causing significant emotional distress or physical danger.

6. Outing/Trickery

Outing involves sharing someone's personal, private, or embarrassing information online without their consent. Trickery is a related tactic where the bully tricks someone into revealing personal information, which is then made public. Both actions can cause significant embarrassment, shame, and emotional harm.

7. Denigration/Gossip

Denigration refers to spreading false or harmful information about someone to damage their reputation. This can include gossip, lies, or rumours shared through posts, comments, or private messages. Denigration can lead to a tarnished reputation, social ostracization, and severe emotional distress.

8. Cyber Threats

Cyber threats involve sending messages that imply or directly state a threat of physical harm. These threats are meant to instil fear and anxiety in the victim. They can be explicit, such as threats of violence, or implicit, creating a pervasive sense of dread.

Understanding the various forms of cyberbullying is critical to addressing and preventing it. By promoting awareness, empathy, and supportive environments, we can work towards a safer and more respectful online world.