

CyberHood Watch

Questions: For Ross Ellis of Love Our Children USA

http://www.loveourchildrenusa.org/kidsteens_stopbullying.php

CHW Partners - 1. What are some immediate steps that should be taken if your child becomes a victim of CyberBullying?

Ross Ellis - Victim's parents should be supportive of their child. Parents may be tempted to tell their kids to toughen up, that names never hurt anybody, yet – cyber attacks can harm a child easily and have a long lasting effect. Millions of cyber accomplices can help target or humiliate your child. That emotional pain is very serious and very real! Do not ignore it!

Alert the school and guidance counselor to watch out for in-school bullying and see how your child is handling things. It is important that you give your child love, support, nurturing and security. Children have committed suicide after having been Cyber Bullied. Take it seriously!

Immediately contact your local law enforcement agency (not the FBI) if you have any knowledge that personal contact information has been posted online, or any threats have been made to your child.

SAVE all proof of the CyberBullying. Save in an email folder, in your favorites if it involves a web site and print everything out.

Although print-outs are not sufficient evidence of proof of Cyber Bullying, you should bring a print-out of all instances to show them. You will need electronic evidence and live data for proof.

You should also contact your Internet Service Provider (ISP) as they have Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) that define privileges and guidelines for users and the actions that can be taken for violated guidelines.

CHW Partners - 2. Cell Phone: Pocket PC cyber mobile communication device... As parents, what should we be aware of when allowing our children the use of a cell phone?

Ross Ellis - Cell Phones And Your Children

Kids, Cell Phones and Rules

Before you purchase a phone and a plan, you should know what your child's school rules are regarding cell phones. Many schools don't allow cell phones on campus or mandate that cell phones be turned off during school hours. If your reason for getting your child a cell phone is to be in contact with them during the day, then the cell phone purchase may not be necessary.

Kids, Cell Phones and Etiquette

Kids must understand and practice good cell phone behavior. By using good cell phone etiquette, your kids can be spared from potentially embarrassing situations. Teach your child to use the vibration mode on their cell phone so it doesn't disturb other. Teach them to excuse themselves so they can have a phone conversation, and to turn off their phone when in public.

Mobile Safety

Kids need to know who they are texting and talking with. They should not text or talk to strangers and certainly should never text or talk about sex with strangers.

Text Messaging Costs

Depending on what mobile service you use, one text message can cost 15 cents to send and a couple of cents to receive. Check with your carrier to see if they have flat-rate texting that can be included in your child's or family's service plan.

Social Networking By Cell

Many social sites have a feature that allows users to check their profiles and post comments from their cell phones. This allows teens to network socially from anywhere. Don't be mistaken by thinking that any filtering controls on your home computer will do the same for your kid's cell phone. It doesn't. Have a conversation with your kids about using common sense and responsibility when they use social networking on their phones.

Phone Bullying

Kids need to know that Instant Messaging/Text Messaging Harassment is wrong, harmful and at times illegal. Kids should never:

- Sending hateful or threatening messages to other kids
- Kids send death threats using IM, text-messaging, photos and videos
- Kids gang up on their victim in text wars or text attacks. They send hundreds or thousands of text-messages to the victim's cell phone or other mobile device, resulting in a large cell phone bill and angry parents.
- Texting or Warning Wars kicks someone else offline for an extended period because ISP's offer a way of "telling on" a user who uses the Internet for inappropriate behavior, remarks and language.
- A kid may create a screen name that is very similar to another kid's name but add or remove an extra vowel. Then they use this name to say disparaging things to other users while posing as the other person.

Social Mapping

Many cell phones have GPS technology installed. This allows your kids to pinpoint their friends' exact physical location and allows their friends to pinpoint them. Explain this technology to your kids and let them know that this can only be used with their friends that they know – not anyone they may meet online or through texting.

Media Sharing By Phone

Cell phones for the most part come equipped with cameras and videocams. Kids are drawn to these devices because they can share media with friends. Talk with your kids about never letting other people photograph or film them in embarrassing or inappropriate situations (and vice versa). They need to understand their own and others' privacy rights which can become a personal reputation and safety issue. Your child understand that it's rude to take embarrassing pictures of their friends with a phone, or to use the phone to gossip about others.

Smart Phones

3G-phones usually include the Web. This device gives your kids access to everything on the Web as if they were on their computer. Some Mobile phone companies offer filters but have no control over the content your child accesses. Parents should have a discussion with their kids, just as you do about accessing the Internet on their computer. If you have concerns about your kids accessing adult sites, you can turn on the filtering.

CHW Partners – 3. The CyberHood Watch is a firm proponent of Internet safety education as the most effective way to resolve and prevent crimes on the Internet and other new media. What are your feelings regarding Internet safety education?

Ross Ellis - Educating kids and parents about Internet safety is critical. Parents need to learn the lingo and the game in order to protect their children. If parents feel uncomfortable on the Internet, they can take lessons at the library, evening schools or local community centers.

So many parents say "my child would never meet anyone from the Internet"yet the reality is that so many kids are looking for something more ... someone more ... more love ... more attention ... and when a stranger tells them how wonderful they are and how happy they can make them ... don't be fooled! Your kids will believe them.

Love Our Children USA offers you **internet safety facts** ... Advice for parents and childcare givers to help keep your children surf serious, surf smart and surf safe

Here you will find information on parental control software, keeping kids from visiting inappropriate websites and ensuring their use of appropriate monitored chatrooms. You can also learn about **cyber bullying** which is serious and on the rise!

Get Surf Serious, Get Surf Smart, Get Surf Safe!

Teach children and youth the **rules** about what they need to do to be serious and smart in cyberspace, allowing them to have fun and keeping them safe.

Sign a **[Child/Parent Internet Safety Agreement](#)** between you and your kids.

Cyberspace Dictionary

If you're not a kid or you are new to web surfing, you probably don't understand cyberspace lingo. Our **[cyberspace dictionary](#)** gives you a clearer understanding of how to protect children.

CHW Partners - 4. What key topics would Love Our Children USA want included in an Internet safety educational curriculum?

Ross Ellis - At Love Our Children USA we cover the gamut of Internet safety topics which include:

Sign a **[Child/Parent Internet Safety Agreement](#)** between you and your kids.

[Child/Parent Internet Safety Agreement](#)

[Cyber Bullying](#)

[Cyberdictionary](#)

[Internet Safety Alert](#)

[Sexting](#)

[Smart Internet Facts](#)

[Smart Internet Rules](#)

[Social Networking Sites ... Educating Kids](#)

[Software To Keep Kids Safe Online](#)

CHW Partners - 5. New media seems to be the catalyst for cyberbullying, what have you observed to be an underlying reasons for the way teens treat one another poorly.

Ross Ellis - Very often kids cyberbully because they learn aggressive behavior at home.

Cyberbullies dominate, blame and use others. They lack empathy and foresight and have contempt for the weak. They see weaker kids as their target, and don't accept the consequences of their actions. They crave power and attention.

Bullied cyberbullies get relief from feeling helpless and overpower others

Social cyberbullies have poor self-esteem and manipulate others through gossip and being mean

Detached cyberbullies plan their attacks and always likeable to everyone but their victims

Additionally cyberbullies don't need a reason to hurt others. When asked, some replied:

- Because it makes me feel stronger, smarter, or better than the person I'm bullying
- Because I'm bullied at home
- Because it's what you do if you want to hang out with the right crowd
- Because I see others doing it
- Because I'm jealous of the other person
- Because it's one of the best ways to keep others from bullying me

CHW Partners - 6. What are some of the current initiatives you are aware of in education for the prevention of cybercrime and the promotion of Internet safety education?

Ross Ellis - At Love Our Children USA we have customize programs geared towards our audience. Very effective programs we use are webinars for students. They have proven very successful. Additionally, many individual states have cyber security programs that reach out to schools and kids. The New York State Department of Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure Coordination has a wonderful program and we work with them. And Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's office has a great program as well.

CHW Partners - 7. Explain to our listeners when teasing becomes harassment, and when harassment becomes defamation. In addition, what steps should a child or parent take when he or she becomes the target of such behavior?

Ross Ellis -

Teasing is being made fun of in good-humor. It's not serious and you can laugh about it too. It's usually done by someone who cares about you, such as a friend or family member. Kids may get a little upset about the teasing and then usually forgets about it.

Harassment is constant, cruel and is meant to hurt another. It is one-sided - the same person is always being picked on, and the same person does the bullying. Bullies want to show how powerful they are by hurting others.

CHW Partners - 8. With the new media and all the social networking, share with our listeners your list of benefits and the good things this technology has to offer for our children?

Ross Ellis - When it comes to social networking sites, there are benefits *and* risks. Social networking sites are community based web sites that give teens access to connect with others through profiles.

Social networking sites offer profiles, pictures, email, instant messaging, chat rooms and blogging all on one site. The most popular social networking sites are MySpace, Facebook, Friendster, and Xanga.

Social Networking Positives

If used safely, social networking sites lets teens keep in touch with their friends and helps them express themselves and enhance creativity, communication and writing skills.

Social Networking Negatives

By posting real names, home addresses, phone numbers, the names of their parents, schools, date of birth, pictures of themselves, and other relevant information, teens can be at great risk.

Features of social networking sites include:

- Design choice, creative name, and unique URL for a page.
- Posting pictures and videos.
- Listing name, age and address
- Music options to play when a profile is accessed.
- Listing interests and favorite things.
- Posting bulletins to friends.
- Joining groups to connect with like-minded users.
- Blogging their daily activities, feelings, and moods.
- Searching for friends in various ways
- Shows when teens are online
- Shows when teens last accessed the site
- Filling out surveys and polls

CHW Partners - 9. What has Love Our Children USA found to be an effective way of helping children from becoming victims?

Ross Ellis - We have learned that education and empowerment really help. By talking to kids in their language and demonstrating how others have become victims, kids get a good sense of what the dangers are.

CHW Partners - 10. It is that age-old philosophy of standing around the water cooler where office problems to global problems are resolved. Invariably the comments of "if only" or "what if" are discussed. If only management would do this, or what if government did this, then everything would be so much better off.

The CyberHood Watch partners, Dave & Bill, are the custodians of the CyberHood Watch Magic Wand. At the end of the show, we bestow our guests with the magic wand, to wave over that one obstacle that would cause a significant change on a local, national, or worldwide if only this were done.

What would be that significant change you would make to better the lives of our children?

Ross Ellis - I would like to see all children kept safe from harm whether it's on the Internet or in person.

The CyberHood Watch Partners Dave and Bill Would like to thank Ross Ellis for her time today and her willingness to answer all of our questions, and to listen to the complete interview on 11/17/2009 with Ross Ellis on The CHWradio.com

Your CyberHood Watch Partners

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