**CYBERBULLYING - SPOTTING THE SIGNS**

Young people today are using the Internet for just about everything, including bullying.  Every day all across the nation, people are being cyberbullied in the comfort of their own homes. Often students who are being bullied at school go home with hopes of escaping, only to find that when they get on the Internet, the bullying continues.  Though a teen may be being bullied, they may not know that help is available or may feel too embarrassed to speak up.  With the amount of time young people are spending on the Internet or on their phones, it is important to be able to spot the signs of cyberbullying.  Keep in mind that cyberbullying may be happening on top of other victimization.  Teens may be experiencing physical bullying, dating violence, harassment, stalking, or other forms of victimization.  Fortunately, victim service providers are qualified and trained to recognize the signs of victimization and are skilled in providing effective victim services.  Eighty percent of victim service providers believe that they are uniquely qualified to both recognize the signs of bullying and cyberbullying, so it’s time teens know where they can turn for help.\*

*EMOTIONAL*

Becomes withdrawn or shy                                                      Shows signs of depression

Is extremely moody or agitated                                                Is anxious or overly stressed out

Shows signs of aggressive behavior

*SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL*

Suddenly stops using the computer                                         Changes eating or sleeping habits

Hurts self, attempts or threatens suicide                                  Suddenly changes friends

No longer wants to participate in activities once enjoyed

*ACADEMIC*

Doesn’t want to go to school                                                    Gets into trouble at school

Skips school                                                                              Loses interest in school

Drops in grades

*SIGNS THAT A TEEN MAY BE CYBERBULLYING OTHERS*

Stops using the computer or turns off the screen when someone comes near

Appears nervous or jumpy when using the computer or cell phone

Is secretive about what they are doing on the computer

Spends excessive amounts of time on the computer

Becomes upset or angry when computer or cell phone privileges are limited or taken away

The biggest red flag is a withdrawal from technology.  If you notice a sudden change in computer or phone usage, talk to the child.  They may be being cyberbullied.

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\*Statistics from the National Crime Prevention Council’s 2010 Cyberbullying Prevention Research study