



BEWARE is a project, designed to raise awareness among youths about potential dangers online, whilst equipping them with the knowledge and power to protect themselves. It aims to reach young people, youth workers and other EU citizens to become empowered and responsible digital users.

5 European Superheroes (otherwise known as Project Partners) have joined forces to execute a detailed set of project objectives set out to improve the knowledge and skills of specifically selected sidekicks (target groups).



This guide is the result of their research carried out in different countries and will be the sidekicks' bible. It covers 2 chapters:

- Data Protection in the Virtual Environment
- Cyber Bullying: from Game to Misdemeanour

Amongst other things, it will target the peer-to-peer part of online safety, which is increasingly fostering harassment and cyberbullying, as well as the growing threat of information and identity theft. In combination with it, an interactive game has been developed to enhance the acquired knowledge and skills.

This guide is especially dedicated to young people, so it was designed using informal teaching methods to make interaction and learning more enjoyable. A few hosts will accompany you, on your journey through the exciting world of virtual reality, a world that, on one hand is loads of fun while on the other hand could be a great source of danger!

So let's get to know our hosts:



Zoe – always online, does not want to miss anything that happens to her friends (all the time on Facebook or Instagram), she is an avid online shopper; always ready to make mistakes online

Joe – the guy who has basic knowledge of the online environment. He doesn't have the patience to read too many details, but he still wants to be safe. He will give you some tips along the way.



Bob – the curious guy who will discover a lot of new things about the virtual world and will gladly share them with you.

Linda – our older friend, who always comes up with stories and questions to tickle our brains!



ACTIVITY FOR GROUPS



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Chapter 2

Cyberbullying - between Game and Misdemeanor



1.1. Introduction

“Data Protection in the Virtual Environment”, the first chapter of this guide, focuses deeply on issues concerning online safety and the risks of using certain apps and social networks. Indeed, it offers a great deal of information and tips on how to be safe online, and how to protect ourselves and those we love from potential dangers. In this respect, the first chapter also mentions that younger people are exposed to cyber-aggression, a phenomenon which consists of using social media deliberately to upset, threaten and intimidate someone else.

Cyberbullying is one of the main challenges of the 21st century and, as such, it is becoming increasingly necessary to know the dynamics of any cyber-attack in order to defend ourselves against this phenomenon. The digital era we are living in needs people to become more aware of the risks of online harassment. As a result, the purpose of “Cyberbullying - between Game and Misdemeanor”, the second chapter of this guide, is to give an account of the differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying as well as to provide a better understanding of the dynamics of such a phenomenon.

This attempt becomes even more important if we consider that cyberbullying lacks a shared definition and approach at European level, since it falls within the additional competences of the European Union. In addition, many member States do not provide a specific definition of cyberbullying in their national legislation, thus hampering even more of the possibilities for a shared understanding at European level.

Therefore, the aim of this guide is to analyse the impact of online harassment in the countries involved in the BEWARE project and contribute to the development of a common approach at European level in order to combat the episodes of cyber-aggression.

More precisely, 75 young people, aged between 15-20 years, were selected and were asked to fill in a questionnaire to analyse the degree of knowledge and the perception of this phenomenon. What the data suggests is that participants are aware of cyber-bullying being a nowadays reality since they experienced it firsthand and, as such, they are aware of the risks they take when they use social media. Nevertheless, the results show that the 55% of the participants do not actually know when cyber-aggression can be called this way, while some of the others think that cyber-aggressions are related to threats (mental or physical) and offenses. Also, concerning the cyber-bullying phenomenon, they realize that there is a difference between an harassment and a joke but they do not actually know how to define cyber-aggression.

Finally, participants confirmed that there is a growing need for spreading awareness about this phenomenon, since part of the problems nowadays seems to be related to the limited knowledge about effective prevention and intervention tools and how to implement them.

As far as the structure of the second chapter is concerned, the first part defines the phenomenon of cyberbullying and its various manifestations. The attempt of the second part of this chapter is to give advice on how to deal with cyberbullying and how to prevent it. This guide is also addressed to youth workers who want to tackle this issue with other young people. For this reason, non-formal activities related to the topics covered have been included in a specific toolkit for youth workers.

1.2. Cyberbullying at European level



The definition of a common approach about cyberbullying at European level is still far from being achieved. The main reason can be found in the limited role assigned to European Institutions concerned the field of cyberbullying prevention, where the EU has only a ‘supplementary’ role consisting mainly of supporting, coordinating or supplementing the initiatives adopted by the Member States at domestic level¹.

Nevertheless, among the major initiatives that have been taken at European level in this regard, it is worth mentioning the following ones:

- Multiannual Community programme on protecting children using the Internet and other communication technologies.

¹ “While both the Lisbon Treaty and the Charter provide legal grounds for EU action in the area of children’s rights, neither of them confer a competence on the EU as a general policy area. Under the principle of conferral set forth in Article 5(2) of the TEU²³⁷, the EU can only act within the limits of the powers assigned to it. The EU may have ‘exclusive’, ‘shared’ or ‘supplementary’ competence. Competencies not conferred upon the Union in the Treaties remain with Member States. This is the case for cyberbullying, for which the EU has only a ‘supplementary’ role consisting of supporting, coordinating or supplementing the initiatives adopted by Member States at domestic level.”
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL_STU\(2016\)571367_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL_STU(2016)571367_EN.pdf)

- Daphne III Funding Programme.
- Safer Internet Day.
- European Anti-Bullying Network.

Similarly, different legal aspects indirectly concerned with this phenomenon have been covered and can be applied to cases of cyberbullying and online harassment: expressions of racism and xenophobia, support and protection of victims of crime, sexual harassment of a victim under 18, procedural safeguards for children accused in criminal proceedings, data protection regulation.

At domestic level, the majority of practices adopted by the Member States against cyberbullying are already part of existing provisions in their penal codes, but only half of them have specific laws in regards. Similarly, until 2016 only 14 members states had developed an official definition of cyberbullying, which, in the majority of cases, was limited to defining it as a form of bullying taking place online.²

2

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL_STU\(2016\)571367_EN.pdf#page=167](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL_STU(2016)571367_EN.pdf#page=167)

1.3. Bullying and Cyberbullying: *what, where, who and why*



Bullying is a phenomenon that is becoming more and more common among teenagers, but as results of the Beware questionnaire show, children don't really know how to recognize and define it. For this reason, before starting analyzing the phenomenon of bullying, we need to give a simple and general definition of what it's meant by "bullying":

"Bullying is an unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time." – Stopbullying.gov

According to this definition, we can talk about "bullying" when an aggressive behavior presents also the following characteristics:

- **Intention** to harm → the bully *wants* to hurt the victim

- **Repetition** over time → the aggressive behavior takes place *multiple times*
- **Power imbalance** between the victim and the aggressor → the bully wants to hurt the victim multiple times and make him/her *feel vulnerable*

We've now defined what bullying is and its main characteristics, but unfortunately we cannot resume all kinds of bullying under one single word. Bullying has many faces and, in order to understand when a bullying episode is happening, it's important to firstly learn how to distinguish one from another. In fact, bullying can occur in multiple ways:

- **Verbal bullying:** Name calling, starting rumors, negative teasing, threats.
- **Social or relational bullying:** Excluding others from the group, ignoring and shunning, gossiping, spreading rumors, telling secrets.
- **Physical bullying:** Hitting, kicking, inappropriate touching, sexual gestures, groping, threatening.
- **Cyberbullying:** Using e-mail, social network sites, cell phones, webcams, text messages, and Internet sites to send mean messages, spread rumors, post embarrassing pictures or videos and fake websites or profiles.

In this guide we will concentrate on the last type of bullying, the one that usually occurs online and that, due to the increasing use of social media, is becoming more and more common: cyberbullying.

By defining cyberbullying as a sub-category of bullying, we can guess that both cyberbullying and “normal” bullying, represent a dangerous and equally serious issue. Nevertheless, the former owns some particular characteristics that make it even more endangering and more difficult to cope with.

As the table shows, cyberbullying owns three characteristics that help us to distinguish it from any other type of bullying.



NORMAL BULLYING

- Intention to harm
- Repetition over time
- Power imbalance between the victim and the aggressor

CYBERBULLYING

- Intention to harm
- Repetition over time
- Power imbalance between the victim and the aggressor
- Use of electronic or digital means
- Sense of anonymity and lack of accountability
- Publicity

First and foremost, cyberbullying is based on the use of electronic and digital means, such as computers, smartphones and tablets, which gives the bully a wide range of devices to choose among to bother the victim. Secondly, cyberbullying happens in cyberspace, a place with multiple venues where billions of people can easily hide. The screen suggests a sense of anonymity that pushes people to be bolder and to say things we would never say face-to-face. Cyberbullying usually happens in the comfort of your own house and can transform it into a

very uncomfortable place due to the mental violence that aggressors are perpetrating. The fact that it doesn't involve a physical aggression, in this sense, doesn't make it less dangerous.

Finally, cyberspace, and in particular social media, is a public arena where everything is public and everyone is allowed to share his thoughts about someone else, even if those thoughts are bad and insulting. The visibility of such comments online as well as the difficulty in removing inappropriate information posted by someone else, makes cyberbullying even more violent and alarming.

2.3.1. The blurring line between cyberbullying and jokes

The definition of cyberbullying helps us to distinguish a bullying episode from a simple joke. It's very important to learn how to do that, because in order to cope with the problem and seek for help we should be able to recognize it in the first place. In fact, one of the most alarming results of the research led by the BEWARE project is that, even though teenagers are aware of the difference between cyberbullying and jokes, the 55% of the interviewed admits that they are not able to give a concrete definition of “cyber aggression” and wouldn't know how exactly cyber aggression can be identified as such. As a consequence, the possibilities to confuse a cyberbullying episode with an innocent joke are potentially high.

The same can be said for the other categories of bullying which, as in the case of cyberbullying, do not involve a physical aggression. Teasing is a common aspect of young people's interaction and, when done in the right way, can actually be a very positive way of communication and creation of bonds. Children can use it to create new relationships or try to change someone's behavior, but in both cases it's a harmless way to exchange jokes back and forth. One of the main distinctions between a joke and bullying is that, in the former case, if the teased child gets offended the tease eventually stops because the comment wasn't meant to be hurtful in the first place. Nevertheless, there are also other distinctions which help us to pay attention to our way of interacting with other people.

Positive teasing

- It takes place within a strong relationship with two people who appreciate the teasing as affectionate
- The teaser is using a “joking” (rather than aggressive) tone of voice and smiling
- The person being teased does not look distressed

Bullying

- The content of the teasing turns from affectionate to hostile
- There is a power imbalance: the person teasing has more power among peers compared to the person being teased
- The teasing occurs repeatedly
- The child who is teasing means to upset or hurt the child being teased
- The child being teased is upset or hurt by the interaction

I better explain this difference to all my friends



2.4. The multiple manifestations of cyberbullying



Once we've defined the phenomenon and learnt how to recognize it, it's time to think about *where* episodes of cyberbullying can take place. In fact, unlike "normal" bullying, cyberbullying doesn't happen in the park right in front of our house or at school; cyberbullying happens in the cyberspace, an undefined place where billions of anonymous

people can interact among themselves in different ways. In this sense, it's important to investigate where cyberbullying can take place. Participants affirm that cyberbullying episodes are likely to happen on any kind of social media, even though probabilities increase even more when it comes to those with a private-messaging function.

- **Texting** – It doesn't always have to be someone you don't know. Sometimes the aggressor is someone you know very well, someone who has your cell phone number and knows how to hurt you. Teenagers tend to hide their messages and make sure that nobody except them has access to them. That's why it's becoming more and more difficult to fight cyberbullying: most of the time we don't even realize something is going on and youths, especially during the teenage years, can be very hurtful.
- **Instant messaging** – Instant messaging is just another variety of texting. The worse side? Even people you don't know can send you a message. Nowadays, almost every website has an instant messaging platform where users can meet each other and start chatting. For example, loads of video gaming websites have their own instant messaging platform that could easily be transformed into a means to start offending other players, especially if the game is not going the way we planned.

- **Social networks** – Social networks are like a window that directly shows our life, even if we didn't mean to. Pictures can be posted without our consent, we can be tagged on posts, we can share our thoughts, ect... It's the easiest way to let someone into our lives, but it can be as beautiful as dangerous: bad comments can be left under our posts, screenshots of our pictures can be taken and shared without our consent, and once we have shared our data with the net, it's very difficult to permanently remove it.
- **Anonymous apps** – These apps allow to create posts anonymously (which doesn't mean that data is not being registered), chat with new people, share pictures and videos. The fact that you don't have to share your identity often leads to racial abuses or violence threats.

Hmmmm... I didn't know there were so many manifestations of cyberbullying



- They do not show empathy and compassion for the victims. This is due to the fact that they generally do not realize the consequences of what they are doing;
- They feel more powerful than the others. As we said, in fact, all types of bullying concern a perceived imbalance of power between the victims and the aggressors;
- They enjoy conflicts and they look for them;
- They refuse to accept responsibility for negative behaviors.



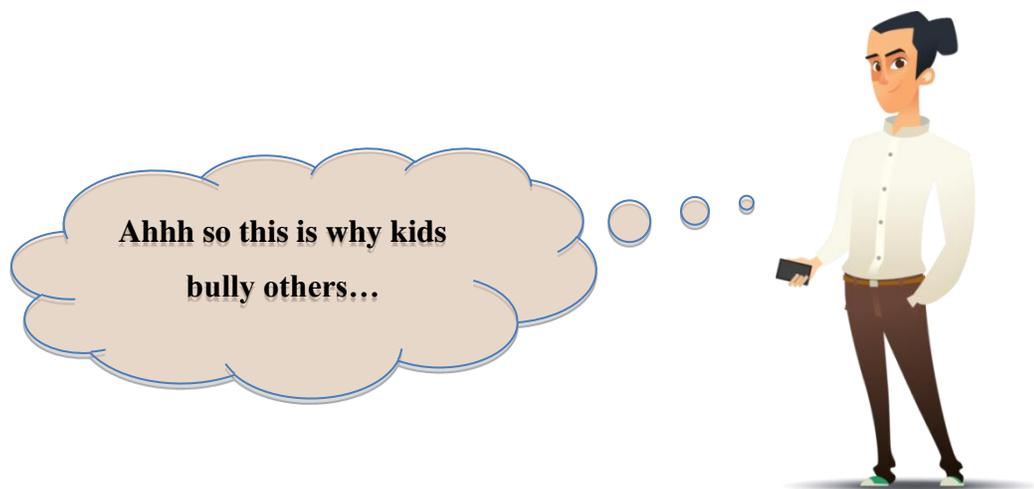
2.5.1. Why do children bully others?



We have now defined *what* cyberbullying is, *where* it happens and *who* is the aggressor. But the real question that should come to our mind when we think about cyberbullying is: *why* do kids bully others?

- **Power** – Teens who like to be in control and have power are more inclined to become bullies. When things don't go the way they planned, they start performing bullying behaviors in order to establish their supremacy again. This usually happens when a kid wants to have power over smaller or weaker students, or when competition is involved and someone wants to affirm himself over the other competitors.
- **Peer Pressure** – The teenage world can be a very hard and cruel place where to live. Everybody wants to fit in, and the need of being accepted and the fear of being the next targeted kid are good enough reasons to start bullying others.
- **Prejudices** – A different race, religion, sexual orientation. A different diet, a special need. Being different is always a hard thing to cope with, especially during teenage years, when prejudices always lead to a new root to start bullying.

- **Payback** – Sometimes, kids who have been bullied in the past become bullies themselves. Usually these kids feel justified for their actions and feel a sense of relief and revenge for what they have experienced.
- **Popularity** – Social status is important when you are a kid and are trying to affirm yourself. Popular kids make fun of less popular kids, spread rumors and ostracize others. They also do that to get attention or to diminish the social status of another kid that they feel might become more popular than they are.
- **Personal problems** – Kids who have a difficult home-background are more likely to become bullies to regain the control they feel is lacking at home. Teens who have low self-esteem due to abuses may resort to bullying to cover the lack of self-worth.
- **Pleasure** – Sometimes kids are bored, and in order to add some excitement to their lives they may start bullying others. They may also experience a lack of attention from their parents, and bullying may help them get some of the attention they're missing. Also, sometimes kids lack empathy and actually enjoy hurting other people's feelings. They also appreciate the sense of power they get from bullying and find their hurtful jokes funny.



2.5.2. Gender of the cyber aggressor



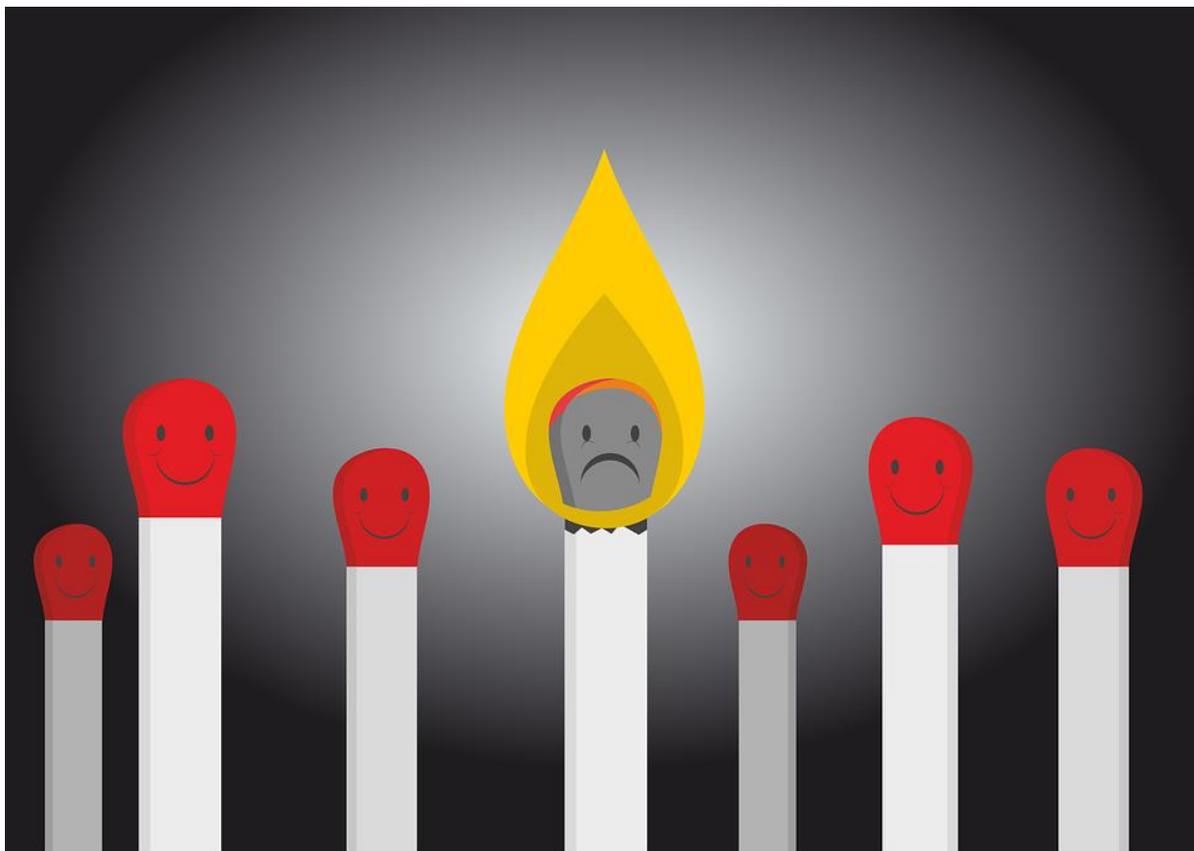
When comparing the findings with those on traditional bullying, where boys tend to bully more than girls, evidence suggests that cyberbullying is generally equal for both sexes. Although some studies suggest that girls are perpetrators of cyberbullying as much as boys, no conclusive evidence can be drawn on this aspect.

The fact that girls are more involved in bullying online than offline may result from the indirect nature of electronic communication and the opportunities it presents for group social interaction. Research shows that while boys tend to be more aggressive and are often involved in physical bullying, girls tend to use emotional tactics.³

Girls tend to be more covert in their bullying tactics (e.g. sending intimidating emails from a fake account or spreading rumours about their victims). The means used to perpetrate cyberbullying seem to be linked to gender differences. Girls seem particularly active in social media. As a result, it was found that more girls bully on social networks than boys.

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3881143/>

2.6. The bystander



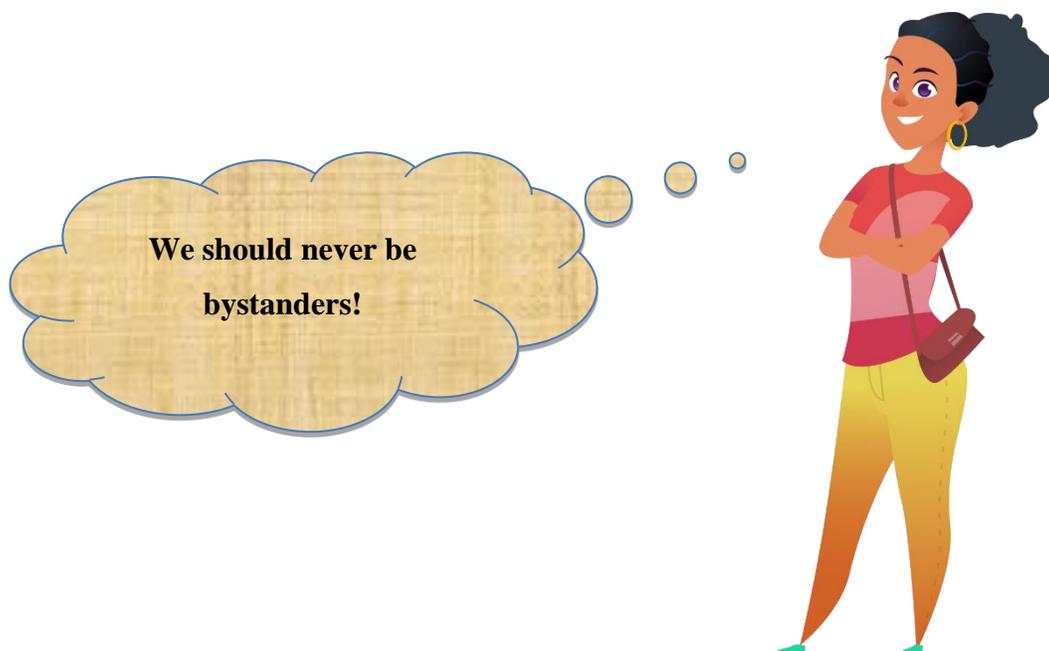
The bystander is someone who sees what is happening between the bully and the victim but is not directly involved in the bullying episode. In traditional cases of bullying, the bystander's role is limited to that of witness. Digitally, the numbers of bystanders can be thousands or in some rare cases millions as a result of content spreading virally online.

Also, as reported in the Beware questionnaire, the vast majority of the participants is aware of cyberbullying episodes such as shaming, insulting, posting pictures without consent and stealing identities and personal data.

When it comes to cyberbullying, there is no clear distinction between a perpetrator and a bystander. While bystanders in traditional bullying are just passive or encourage the perpetrator,

bystanders in cyberbullying can actually be involved in the incident. If a perpetrator posts derogatory content about a victim online and bystanders choose to share the content their role becomes similar to that of the cyberbully. In this respect, the results of the Beware questionnaire shows the 80% of the participants agree on the fact that those who witness a cyber-aggression and do not report it are responsible too, while the 19% gave “Maybe” as an answer and only 1% of them thinks that witnesses are not responsible.

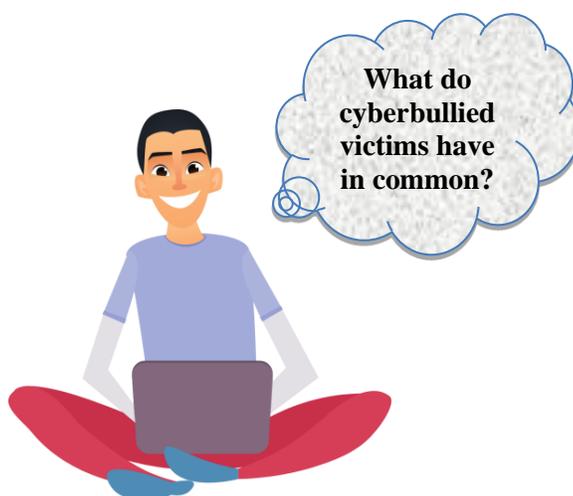
By consuming, liking and sharing the harmful content, bystanders may, thus, reinforce the behaviour of perpetrators.⁴ A recent study has found that compared to face-to-face situations, bystanders are even less likely to intervene with online bullying. For instance, it has found that bystanders are reluctant to take action when the victim is someone they do not know well, however this amount decreases when the victim is a close friend of the bystander.



⁴ <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/who-speaks-against-online-bullying>

2.7. The cyber victim

Every victim of cyberbullying displays certain characteristics, but in the most of the cases students are likely to be bullied because of a number of perceived vulnerabilities, such as the student's appearance or body size, the degree of masculinity or femininity, the performance in school, the perception of being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, as well as the student's low income household, his/her race, ethnicity, national origin or religion, and disabilities or any special health needs.



Similarly, there are also some unperceived vulnerabilities which increase the likelihood to become a victim of bullying. In other words, cyberbullied have some general characteristics in common:

- they are shy and with low self-esteem;
- they are insecure, anxious and sensitive, with problems with the correct encoding and interpretation of emotions;
- they have less developed emotional connection with their parents;
- they have less connection with school;
- they spend more time online;
- they use more aggressive or passive coping strategies;
- they have negative self-related attitudes.

For this reason, we can define the victim as an individual who presents particular difficulties, physical or psychological disabilities, problems in establishing social relationships or belong to a minority group. Victims of cyberbullying may not know the identity of their bully, or why the bully is targeting them.



2.7.1. Gender of the cyber victim and influential factors

Research has indicated that girls are more likely to be bullied online. The high presence of girls among victims may be due to the fact that girls are more likely to report cyberbullying episodes turning more than boys to their parents and friends for help. As the results of the Beware questionnaire suggest, almost every participant, especially if female, would report a cyber-aggression if it occurred to her/him, and they indicated the police, their parents and the network administration as the most common authorities to whom to report the episode. Unlike girls, boys might tend to underreport incidents due to societal constructs on male identity. This behavioural factor should indeed be taken into consideration as it may be that boys do not always report when they have been bullied.

The type of school attended also has a strong influence on the likelihood of being a victim of cyberbullying. To give an example, at the high school, a small percentage of the pupils are victims whereas at a non-selective secondary school a greater percentage of the pupils are affected by bullying online.

Furthermore, the type of internet use has a strong influence: ‘cyber-fixed’ profiles (high internet consumption) are more affected by cyberbullying whereas ‘cyber-distanced’ profiles (lowest internet consumption) are less affected.

In the victim:

- Problems of low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence;
- High levels of loneliness and anxiety, suicidal ideation;
- Difficulties in school integration and in the learning process;
- Social mismatch and isolation;
- Anger and frustration;
- Clinical symptoms such as neurosis, hysteria and depression;
- Physical health concerns such as problems sleeping, poor appetite, skin problems, headache;
- Unleashed violent attitudes;
- Fewer relationship and more emotional and peer relationship problems.

The results of the Beware questionnaire in this regard are unambiguous: the most common consequences of cyberbullying on the victim that have been identified by the participants are depression, anxiety, self-harm, low self-esteem, eating disorders and suicide, and participants suggest psychological help in order to give support to the victims.



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

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 (e.g., nightmares)
- + No longer wants to participate in activities once enjoyed
- + Hurts self, attempts or threatens suicide
- + Suddenly changes friends

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.

For more information check out www.ncpc.org

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

2.9. Are you a victim of cyberbullying? Here's how to cope with the problem



First and foremost, it's quite obvious that you should avoid giving personal pictures, telephone numbers, addresses or any other kind of personal data. Better safe than sorry!

But if it's too late, here's some advice:

- Try not to reply with anger. Keep calm, or you'll just make it easier for the cyberbully to hurt you.
- Be firm with your answers: you'll look stronger and tougher and the aggressor could be discouraged. On social media there is no physical contact, which is helpful in this case because nobody will see your real reaction. Fake it through 'til you make it come true, keep calm!
- Ask a friend to help you answer the cyberbully

- If the cyberbully keeps harassing you, you try to ask him to stop! There is no guarantee of success, but is an attempt you should try in order to show that you are not going to accept abuses anymore.
- Seek for help! Talk to the people you know will listen to you and that will try to help you out: a teacher, your parents...
- Block the cyberbully! Probably he won't stop anyway, but at least you will be less tempted to reply.
- Don't be afraid to talk to an adult. You won't be punished: trying to ignore the problem or minimize it won't be helpful. It could get things worse instead.
- If the harassment is going on on your email, change your address. One useful method to avoid harassment is to ignore the bully.
- Contact the social network management system and ask to remove any of your personal data. The material won't be deleted, but people won't have access to it.
- Save proofs. The cyberbully disadvantage is that you can save every insult and threat. Use them wisely!
- If the cyberbully doesn't remove the content within 48 hours you can make a complaint to the European Data Protection Supervisor, even if the identification of the person that posted the non-authorized content is not possible. The intervention of the Data Protection Supervisor will take place within 48 hours.
- If you are threatened of physical damages, don't hesitate to call the police! Ask a parent or any other adult to call the law enforcement.
- Take into consideration the possibility to talk to the school authority.
- Protect your accounts and your mobile phone! Don't share your passwords with anybody: it could be very dangerous to share it.

REMEMBER: seeking for help in order to stop these bullying episodes IS NOT a symptom of weakness. It just means that you are not willing anymore to accept threats or bas teasing! Furthermore, seeking for help could push other kids in your situation to do the same. Many bullying episodes could fall into the category of misdemeanor: that's why it's important to talk to people such as trustworthy adults. Confronting more experienced people could help you understand the seriousness of the situation and how you should behave after a cyber-aggression episode.



2.10. Do you know somebody who is a victim of cyberbullying?

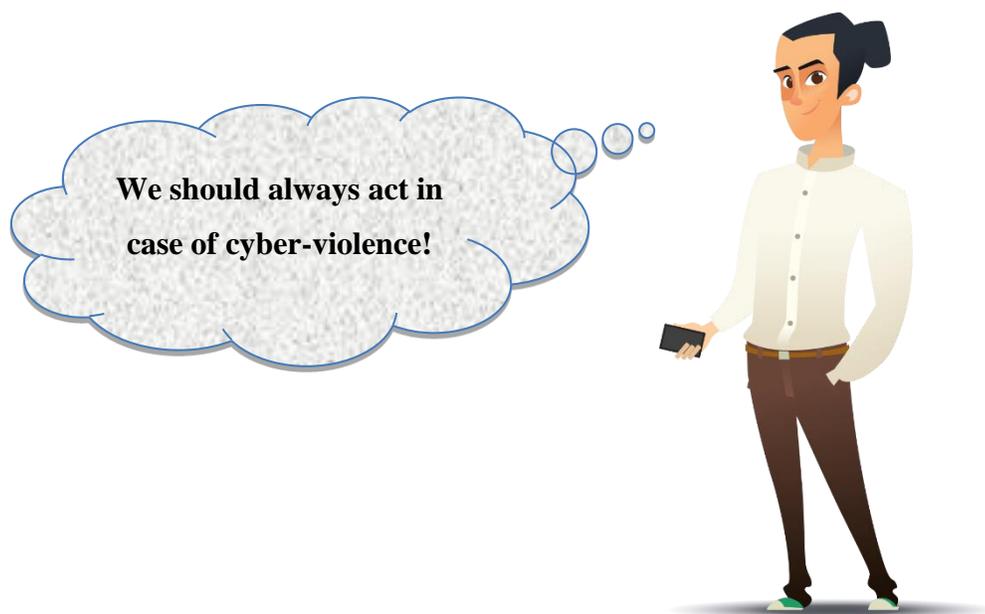


If you know somebody who is a victim of cyberbullying, *don't be a bystander*: ACT! A **bystander** is someone who witnesses an episode of cyber-violence without intervening. The best thing to do to stop these episodes is to stand against them.

- **Report the episode to the school authority.** If the victim is one of your schoolmates, report it! You can report the episode anonymously without exposing yourself to any risk.
- **Report the episode to the website/app/game.** Every respectful social network or platform forbids cyberbullying and gives easy tools to report violations while keeping your identity safe.
- **Talk to a trustworthy adult.** Tell an adult that you can rely on what happened if a classmate had a bad experience online. A parent, a teacher, your trainer or any other adult would be okay, what's important is that the person you are talking to is **trustworthy**.
- **Collect evidence.** Take a screenshot, save the picture or the message, record with you phone the episode. This way the adult you're talking to will be able to intervene with proofs in his hands and will be able to observe the abuses the victim suffered.
- **Show true interest.** Show your classmate that he is not alone. Send some encouragement messages or pictures. Tell him you care and show him how much you're interested in his situation: he won't have to cope with the situation all alone, but he will be able to count on you. Also, why don't you try to involve other classmates too? You

could post some positive comments under one of his pictures or one of his posts. Remember: there is strength in numbers!

- **If you know the cyberbully, tell him to stop!** Try to make him understand that is not cool to behave like a jerk with other people. It's important not to stay quiet: if you don't say anything you could encourage the bully to keep behaving like that.
- **Do not encourage the bully.** If you witness cyberbullying episodes, *do not encourage them in any way*. Don't add any comment that could make the bully think what he's doing is right: avoid like, smiles or any other form of support.
- **Keep yourself safe.** Don't threaten physically other people. Avoid getting in trouble to help your friend, you could get the situation even worse! Furthermore, if you notice cruel or insulting behaviour on social media, don't be part of them, just report them!
- **Use imagination.** Think in a creative way about what could stop a cyberbullying episode. Share your opinion with others and use everybody's talent to find a solution.



2.11. Cyberbullying and the importance of prevention

In an era in which we are becoming increasingly dependent on the internet and social networks, we are witnessing an increasing number of cyberbullying acts or cyber attacks in general. Such situations can be extremely unpleasant and awful for the victims.

When we speak about cyberbullying there are several factors that we have to consider, *in the first place* the importance of **prevention**. It is actually possible to fight cyberbullying episodes simply by prevention, but to ensure that this will happen, the online users must have a certain degree of **knowledge** about the instrument they are using. Therefore, it becomes important the family role in educating their children to use properly and conscientiously internet and social media.

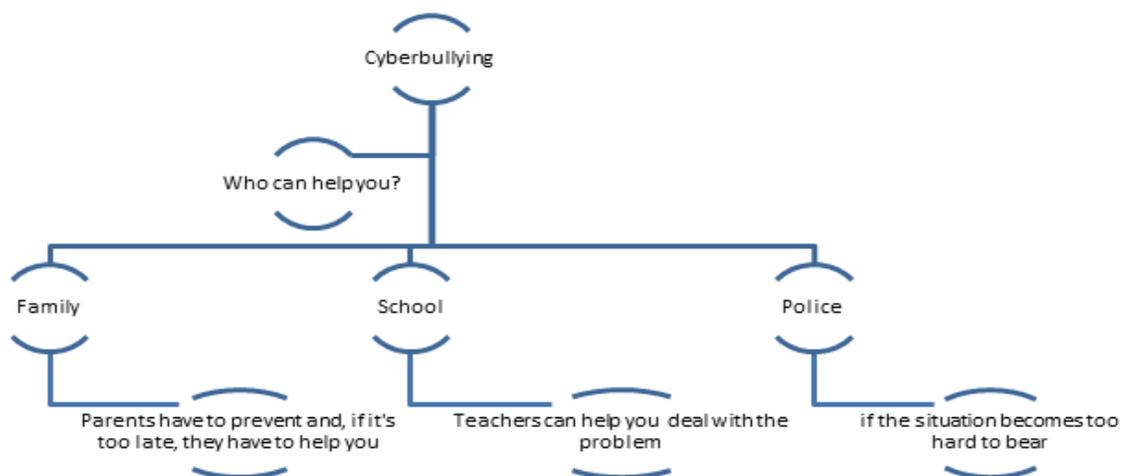
2.11.1. Tips for preventing cyberbullying

- **Inform yourself.** In order to prevent cyberbullying you have to understand exactly what it is. In what it consists? How and Where? Talk about it with your friends in order to understand their point of view and if they ever had that kind of experience.
- **Protect your Password.** Keep it a secret, don't even say it to your best friend! But if someone comes to know it, you are always in time to change it.
- **Think.** Before posting any of your photos on a social network, send it to friends or other people you trust. Those who want to hurt you can use it as they like to ruin your life.
- **Never open unknown messages.**
- **Always log out from online platforms.**
- **Increase your awareness.** Create a movement or a group, or an awareness-raising campaign. If we all come together we can prevent this phenomenon, especially if we would be more conscious.
- **Configure your privacy settings.** On the majority of social networks you often have the option to change who can see what you post. Accordingly, before accepting any new friendship request think it through!

- **Search your own name over search engines like Google (egosurfing).** If you could find your name after such research, try to remove the available information before it's too late!

....And obviously don't be a cyberbully yourself !

The juvenile victims of these kind of episodes can, in case it is too late, rely on these 3 institutions: **the family** (social instruction), **the school** and **the police**.



2.12. The importance of school in preventing and protecting victims

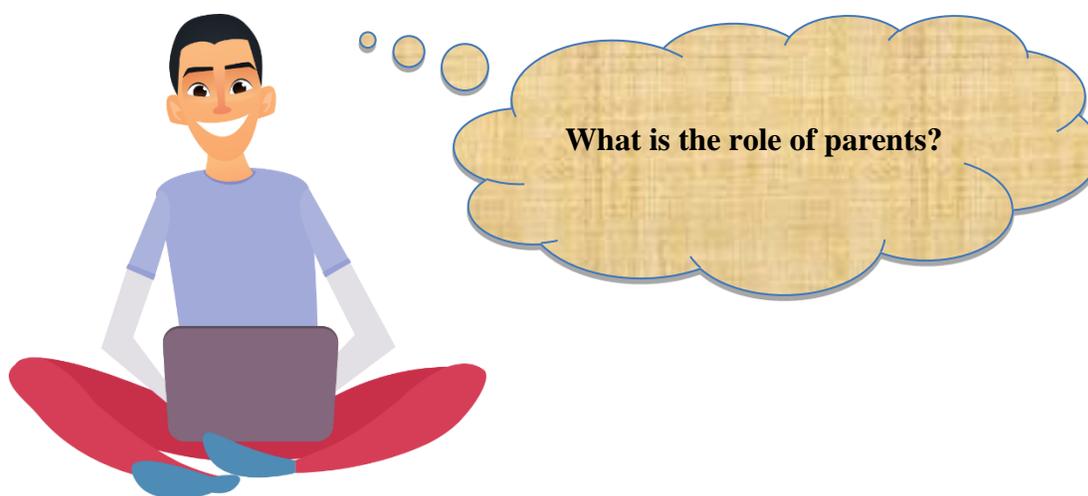


The role of the school in educating young people about mutual respect and in proper use of the internet, especially social media, is extremely important. Whenever the school Director comes to know about cyberbullying acts against a pupil of his school, he will have to inform promptly the parents of the involved children. The school rules must provide disciplinary measures in accordance with the seriousness of the acts done. It is also appropriate to save on the computer the information which can serve as proof and then, if it possible, delete - or get the platform operator to remove - all the content posted online.

When it comes the schoolmates to be involved, it is advisable that the parents contact the teachers themselves and, if there's one, to the school psychologist to consider reporting the incident to the police. So it is up to the school providing education and information, do prevention and takes act on problems afflicting children, to enhance their well-being and ease their discomfort.

2.13. How your parents can help you in case of an cyber-attack

Keep a relationship of trust with your parents, tell them in what way you use social media. In the first place come to an agreement in which way they might assist you on your use of digital media and on the posted content. In the event that you want to start acting with major freedom find an agreement with your parents; but **REMEMBER**, make sure that they're able to provide help in case you will need it!



2.13.1. The role of parents

When it comes to preventing and responding to cyberbullying, parental involvement in monitoring their children's online interactions and relationships is essential. Parents have to keep an eye on the screen or what the child is doing all of the time. In most of the cases, parents did not grow up in the digital age; they are not familiar with the virtual environment. As a result, it is their duty to learn how various social networking websites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram) work.

Parents are expected to talk regularly and specifically with their children about online issues. Also, they have to set time limits and discuss rules for online safety and Internet use.



Clearly, it may be difficult for parents to know whether a child has experienced cyberbullying. If the common cyberbullying indicators are present, parents can be encouraged to communicate their concerns to the child and offer their support. They must be supportive and understanding if their children are being bullied, and try to find out how long the bullying has been going on.

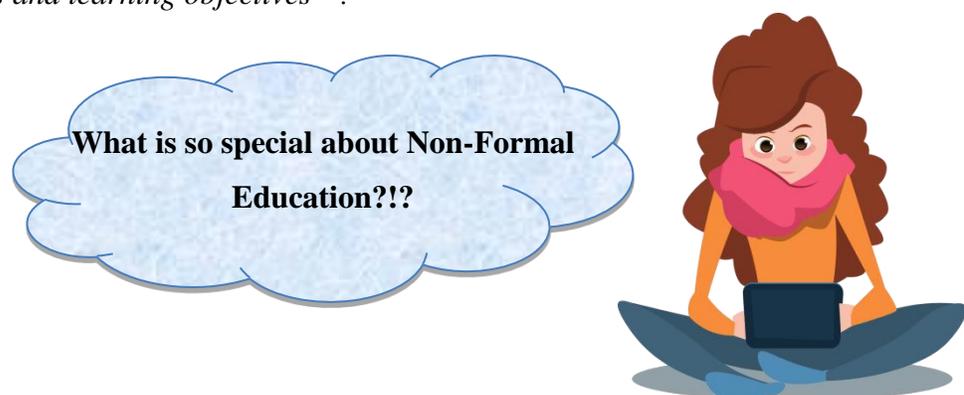
The first step to prevent cyberbullying before it becomes worse is telling their children not to respond to any cyberbullying threats or comments online. In addition, it is important not to delete any of the messages as well as everything related to the cyberbully (e-mail addresses, online screen names, etc.).

Then, parents should report the incident/s to the school as soon as possible, and ask for its help. Indeed, communication and relationships between parents and school personnel are critically important in recognition of cyberbullying attack. In conclusion, parents need to protect their child and be the ones their kids go to when something is wrong.

2.14. Non-Formal Education to tackle cyberbullying

There are many different ways to tackle cyberbullying and spread awareness among young people, but what the BEWARE Project suggests that the most effective one could be Non-Formal Education (NFE). But what is it?

The definition of Non-Formal Education provided by UNESCO-UNEVOC is “*any organised educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives*”⁶.



NFE has special characteristics that make it different from any other kind of educational method and which make it funnier and more enjoyable for students to learn through it:

- Participation in all activities is **voluntary**
- The main focus is set on **people as learners**
- Activities and methods are always designed for a particular **target group**
- The learning is **planned, structured and evaluated**
- It's **intentional** and **monitored**
- Experiencing, often called as '**learning by doing**', is the main working method

In order to better understand what **Non-Formal Education** is, it's important to operate a distinction between Non-Formal Education and **Informal Education**.

⁶ <https://unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=education&context=>

Informal education is the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment - from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the marketplace, the library and the mass media. Every person experiences informal education in his or her everyday life, from birth to death. We learn something new everyday just by installing relationships with other people and living our lives, whereas NFE, as we mentioned earlier, is planned, intentional and evaluated by an educator.

Also, in NFE, *educator means facilitator*. Educator is the wide definition for the process of educating from all aspects while facilitator is just the person who has a specific strategy or method guiding pupils through it. Educators enable learning and facilitators encourage communication amongst the group.

But *why* should we choose NFE as the main education methodology to tackle cyberbullying and spread awareness? Actually, there are many advantages that could help us to pursue our aim:

- NFE can actively support change and have a real impact on the society
- NFE is essential to deliver and develop those concepts that cannot be simply «taught»
- NFE is useful to teach important values such as freedom, peace, respect, diversity, human rights
- Non formal methods have been successful in: social inclusion, capacity building, active citizenship, sustainable development, conflict resolution

2.15. Role games

The best way to implement this method in an educational environment is through *role game*. Why role game? Because it creates strong empathy among the participants and stimulates creativity. In fact, it's very important to encourage personal contribution in order to help kids to reflect about *their own* experience and being objective about themselves by increasing self-awareness.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that role game is very versatile. This characteristic allows the possibility to adapt the game to our *specific target group* by playing different roles in different situations.

Role game can be very helpful when it comes to understand:

- the implications of a particular behaviour
- a social phenomenon
- particular roles and figures
- the contribution kids can give in that particular position

Also, it's very easy to start a role game because you won't need too much material. It will be sufficient to have:

- a background story
- objectives
- roles and rules
- practical activities

See below our **toolkit** to start implementing role game with your target group!



ACTIVITY FOR GROUPS

The thinking hats

Overview:

The group is divided into 3 groups of 5 people each. A conflict situation is displayed.

The activity involves 5 imaginary hats, each of a different color. These colors signify roles that must be adopted when an individual dons them. For example, while wearing the yellow hat, the individual must look only at the positive aspects of the situation under discussion. Conversely, the black hat signifies critical thinking and looking at negative points alone.

Discussion in groups about the conflict (each person in his own role without revealing it to the others); exploring different sides of the situation.

Presenting by the color of the hat – explaining the role that you had under the hat, how was it useful or not useful in the discussions.

Goal: To communicate the differences and to seek collaborative solutions

Yellow hat

The Yellow Hat symbolizes brightness and optimism. Under this hat you explore the positives and probe for value and benefit.

Key Words: best-scenario; benefits; positive thinking; optimism; value and benefits;

Black hat

The Black Hat is judgment - the devil's advocate or why something may not work. Spot the difficulties and dangers; where things might go wrong. Probably the most powerful and useful of the Hats but a problem if overused.

Key Words: risks; potential problems; obstacles; downsides; weaknesses

Red hat

The Red Hat signifies feelings, hunches and intuition. When using this hat you can express emotions and feelings and share fears, likes, dislikes, loves, and hates.

Key Words: feelings; intuition; fears; impact on others; like; hate; share fears; share excitement;

Key Words: feelings; intuition; fears; impact on others; like; hate; share fears; share excitement;

Green hat

The Green Hat focuses on creativity; the possibilities, alternatives, and new ideas. It's an opportunity to express new concepts and new perceptions.

Key Words: creative thinking; alternative solutions; refine and develop ideas; new perceptions; innovation

Blue hat

The Blue Hat is used to manage the thinking process, to summarize the information, to state the common goals. It's the control mechanism that ensures the Six Thinking Hats guidelines are observed.

Key Words: process; focus; big picture; agenda; mapping the next steps.

TASK:

During the discussion of the conflict you should adopt the attitude and characteristics of the following role:

Blue hat

You are wearing the **Blue hat**.

TO DO:

Define the problem that you are facing and describe it at the beginning of the discussion. Moderate and facilitate the discussion of the situation. Wrap up at the end and try to gather the ideas in decision how to face the conflict.

Having the Blue Hat you have the following role: manage the thinking process, summarize the information and focus on the common goals. You will be the control mechanism that ensures that you are trying to resolve the conflict.

Key Words: process; focus; big picture; agenda; mapping the next steps

Help questions:

What problem are we facing as a group?

How can I best define this problem?

What is my goal and outcome?

What do I seek to achieve by solving this problem?

What is the most effective method of proceeding from this position?

How can I best organize and arrange my thinking to help move me beyond my present circumstances?

Example:

“We have a deadline for an important project that we can’t ignore. However, as teachers, our main goal is to help the students as much as possible. Do you have any ideas how we can find a balance....”

“So, by what has been said so far, we can conclude that it is the best decision to... “

Remember: base your comments on the role (hat) you are having!

Notes:

TASK:

During the discussion of the conflict you should adopt the attitude and characteristics of the following role:

Red hat

You are wearing the **Red hat**.

Having the Red Hat means that you will have the following role: you will rely on your feelings, hunches and intuition. You should express emotions and feelings and share fears, likes, dislikes, loves, and hates, you should cry, yell.

Key Words: feelings; intuition; fears; impact on others; like; hate; share fears; share excitement;

Help questions:

What is my gut telling me about this solution?

What do I feel about the conflict – am I scared, happy, sad?

What are my feelings telling me about the choice I am about to make?

Based on my feelings, is there a better way to go about this?

Intuitively, is this the right solution to this problem?

Example:

“I want to help Tom! I feel so sorry for him!”

“That was an amazing idea, I am excited!”

Remember: base your comments on the role (hat) you are having!

Notes:

TASK:

During the discussion of the conflict you should adopt the attitude and characteristics of the following role:

Black hat

You are wearing the **Black hat**.

Having the Black Hat means that your role is to judge the situation—be the devil's advocate, tell why something may not work. You should spot the difficulties and dangers; where things might go wrong.

Key Words: risks; potential problems; obstacles; downsides; weaknesses

Help questions:

What is the fatal flaw in this idea?

What is the drawback to this way of thinking?

How many ways is this likely to fail?

What are the potential risks and consequences associated with this?

Do I have the necessary resources, skills, and support to pull this off... probably not.

Example:

“Tom came in the worst moment possible! We have a deadline, if we try to multitask we will fail!”

“Even if we succeed applying with the project within the deadline, we might not be approved and it will be a waste!”

Remember: base your comments on the role (hat) you are having!

Notes:

TASK:

During the discussion of the conflict you should adopt the attitude and characteristics of the following role:

Yellow hat

You are wearing the Yellow hat.

Having the Yellow Hat symbolizes brightness and optimism. Under this hat you explore the positive sides of the situation and probe for value and benefit. Face the conflict with optimism and try to encourage the others.

Key Words: best-scenario; benefits; positive thinking; optimism; value and benefits;

Help questions:

How can I best approach this problem?

How can I make this work?

What positive outcomes could result from this action?

What are the long-term benefits of this action?

Example:

“Everything will be fine, don’t worry. Let’s think positively. I think the best thing to do is....”

Remember: base your comments on the role (hat) you are having!

Notes:

TASK:

During the discussion of the conflict you should adopt the attitude and characteristics of the following role:

Green hat

You are wearing the **Green hat**.

Having the Green Hat allows you to focus on creativity; the possibilities, alternatives, and new ideas. It's an opportunity to express new concepts and new perceptions while facing the conflict. Try to offer innovative and creative methods to solve the problem.

Key Words: creative thinking; alternative solutions; refine and develop ideas; new perceptions; innovation

Help questions:

What alternative possibilities could exist here?

Could this be done in a different way?

How can I look at this problem from a unique perspective?

How can I think outside the box about this?

What if...?

Example:

“Let’s try another point of view. What if we try to optimize our resources and do this... and this...”

Remember: base your comments on the role (hat) you are having!

Notes:

TASK:

During the discussion of the conflict you should adopt the attitude and characteristics of the following role:

White hat

You are wearing the **White hat**

TO DO:

Wearing the white hat you have to collect facts, stats, and data that helps you piece together the information it needs to reach logical fact-based solutions. You collect this evidence to help the other thinking hats work through the problem more effectively. You must, however, avoid making conclusions or judgments about the information it has collected.

Having the White Hat you have the following role: Bringing forward stats, facts, and data that can be used to solve the problem. Prioritizing facts over opinions and beliefs. Highlighting gaps in knowledge, perspective, and awareness. Bringing forth logical solutions to the problem at hand. Key Words: process; focus; big picture; agenda; mapping the next steps.

Key words: neutrality, facts, detective, objectivity

Help questions:

What do I know about this problem?

What don't I know about this problem?

What can I learn from this problem?

What more would I like to learn about this problem?

How will I go about acquiring the facts, stats and data that will help me resolve this problem?

What potential solutions exist based on the facts, stats, and data I have collected?

Example:

“So, we just decided that it is better to do...”

Remember: base your comments on the role (hat) you are having!

Notes:

Situation

You are the leader of the scout group. Before leaving for a camping trip, Mario's parents (a new arrival to the scout group) ask to have a private meeting with you to inform you about Mario's situation: the couple is divorcing and he is going through a very delicate phase. They ask you to look after him and try your best to include him in the group.

During the camping, Paolo reports you that Mario has been having hostile attitudes and has been taking funny pictures of younger members of the group, in particular Stefano. The group has found out that Mario has published these pictures on Facebook along with inappropriate comments about Stefano's physical appearances and sexual orientation. He has even created a "hate page" on Facebook with pictures of Stefano with a series of anti gay comments which is becoming increasingly popular at school.

You are facing a delicate position, and you remember about the conversation you had with Mario's parents. How would you solve the conflict?

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