Problem

Cyber Smarts for the Facebook Generation
Strategies and Downloads to Stop Cyberbullying and Online Self-Harm

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For the Facebook Generation, their worlds revolve around all things electronic. As a result, the venue for student problems is shifting from the real world to the virtual one. Unfortunately, virtual world problems can often become real world problems too. At our professional development workshops all over the U.S., we’re getting a lot more requests for help with students who are facing or engaging in cyberbullying. We have also been getting a lot of questions about what to do about students who are literally trashing their own reputations and credibility by posting damaging pictures and comments about partying, substance abuse, their interpersonal relationships, and their feelings about their teachers and bosses. In a time when more and more employers and colleges are requiring access to applicants’ Facebook and My Space pages, students continue to make themselves unemployable and unlikely admission candidates when their less-than-sedate lives are memorialized on the internet--forever.

Just like the saying, "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas," what happens on the internet stays on the internet. Help your students avoid being haunted throughout their lives by indiscretions or misbehavior that they exposed to the world at the start of their lives.

Teach: CYBERBULLYING HURTS BULLIES TOO

Bullies--be they cyberbullies or real-world bullies—are not known for their empathy. If you want to change the bully’s behavior, avoid relationship-based interventions at all times. Instead, show the bully that by hurting others, he hurts himself. Bullies may rein in their conduct if misbehavior costs them something they really want, so show bullies that if their primary “expertise” with people is limited to being a good bully, they will have great difficulty keeping jobs, apartments, roommates, friends, etc. Teach bullies that there is "no way to hurt others without hurting yourself." Be sure that you don't let bullies say they can stop bullying but they choose not to. To respond to such claims, use the phrase included on our Poster #97--shown here--such as "Bully today, bully tomorrow. Stop now if you can." SEEN Magazine readers get this printable without charge at http://www.youthchg.com/strategies.html.

Get This Printable Poster/Worksheet at No Charge
**Teach: CYBERBULLYING IS A CRIME**

Your students may not know that cyberbullying is a crime. Teach them: "Cyberbullying doesn’t just break school rules, it breaks the law.” Our brand new printable (Poster #278) can serve as a visual reminder of that important safety message. You can use the printable to initiate a discussion of which specific actions constitute cyberbullying so no student can ever claim “I didn’t know that was cyberbullying.” SEEN Magazine readers get this printable without charge at [http://www.youthchg.com/strategies.html](http://www.youthchg.com/strategies.html).

**Teach: FACEBOOK IS THE ACCIDENTAL RESUME**

Students who post on Facebook and similar sites about partying, substance abuse, or their dislike for their employer, don’t realize that they are doing great self-harm. Make sure your students know that many employers and university admissions staff now require access to students’ Facebook and My Space pages, and they often ask to review students’ blogs. In fact, there are now sites so sophisticated that bosses and universities don’t have to ask. These rogue sites gather pictures and text from supposedly private pages and blogs. A student may be only 13, but their misdeeds as a young teen may follow them in cyberspace for the rest of their lives. Youthful errors used to stay in the past, but that will stop with the Facebook generation. Because the internet is forever, you can refer to Facebook as "the accidental resume."

The intervention pictured is our Poster #277, which also can be used as a handout. It gives you a compelling, new tool to educate your students before they are harmed in cyberspace. It shows a Facebook-style page where a student has made negative comments about his job, and revealed his substance abuse. This poster/worksheet brings the cyber world and real world together. Ask students to view this printable through the eyes of a boss, school admissions officer, or apartment manager. (Thanks to special ed teacher, Chris Wells for devising the ideas for this printable.) SEEN Magazine subscribers get this printable with no charge at [http://www.youthchg.com/strategies.html](http://www.youthchg.com/strategies.html).

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Ruth Herman Wells, M.S. is the Director of Youth Change Workshops, http://www.youthchg.com. Ruth has trained thousands of educators throughout North America. Her workshops include Control the Uncontrollable Student and Motivate Work Refusers and Apathetic Students. Ruth is the creator of dozens of innovative books, posters, and podcasts. Her books include Turn On the Turned-Off Student. Her workshops are offered live, on-site, online, and on DVD. Email Ruth at dwells@youthchg.com or call 800-545-5736. To get hundreds more interventions from Ruth, visit www.youthchg.com.