Talking about online bullying

Talking to your child about online bullying can be hard to navigate. Here are our top tips to help get the conversation started.

Look for the invisible issues

Cyberbullying continues to happen for kids well into their teens but is it important at this age to look for the invisible issues that may be at play in cyberbullying situations for both the victim and the perpetrator. Is your child lacking in self-esteem, acting out for attention, or trying to increase their social standing in their group hierarchy to feel validated? Maybe they are jealous of someone, seeking revenge by righting a wrong on behalf of a friend, or simply acting out because they're bored.

Understanding what the backstory might be allows you to address the real problems and issues occurring in a bullying situation, no matter what role your child plays. Read between the lines.

Having difficult conversations isn't easy for anyone, but there are a couple of tips that can help keep things on track:

Use questions and comments like:

I can see this is upsetting for you. I'm upset for you too. I'm keen to hear your side of the story.

Why do you think Josie did what she did?

What would you do if that happened to you?

Has anything else been happening outside of school for Josie that would make them act that way?

Our family values are X. Do you think the way you acted is in line with that? Why/Why not?

What would you change if you could have your time over?

What advice would you give Josie?

Who supported you in the situation? Who do you feel is on your side?

What are other people saying about the situation? What do you think about that?

What were your intentions when you sent that message/story/video?

Do you know how to report this happening?

www.interactionservices.org/online-safety-training