

Helping Kids Respond To Mobile Harassment

(NAPSA)—To protect their children from mobile harassment, parents may want to learn exactly what's involved. Recent research suggests that 32 percent of teens know someone who has been harassed or bullied via text.

Mobile harassment and bullying, which take place on a mobile phone through text messages, instant messages, e-mails and social networking sites, can have short- and long-term consequences, including psychological harm, depression, anger, violence, low self-esteem and even suicide.

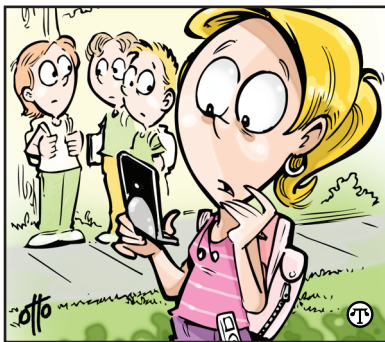
While most kids view such behavior as a normal part of teen life, the damage caused can spread with viral speed and may permanently damage someone's reputation.

Most every teen has at some point seen, forwarded, talked about or otherwise enabled the viral spreading of harassment-type messages. According to the recent "LG Text Ed Survey," conducted by TRU Research, 43 percent of all teens surveyed have sent, received or forwarded a text calling someone names or putting someone down. Additionally, 41 percent of teens surveyed have sent, received or forwarded a text that contained rumors about someone that were untrue.

"In most cases, senders do not think about the harm or consequences of their actions when they send or forward these messages or photos," said Dr. Joel Haber, psychologist, bully expert and LG Text Ed Advisory Council member. "The adolescent brain may not be registering the potential damaging impact it may have on its target."

Fortunately, there are a few ways parents can help teens avoid this type of situation.

- When your children get a mobile phone, tell them about appropriate behavior and let them know when behavior crosses the line and becomes hurtful or mean to others.



Teens and tweens may not realize that their actions in spreading messages may be causing harm.

- Teach teens to stop and think about what they are doing before they take action on a text message.
- Stress the significance of speaking out against children who hurt others through their mobile phone or online activity or, if this is not safe, providing help to the targeted child in a confidential way that makes him or her feel safe.
- Make sure your teens have someone to go to to report any direct threats—you, their school, a hotline number or the police.
- Make sure your teens know that it is never OK to threaten anyone through their phone, online or offline, make fun of others, post embarrassing photos, impersonate others or forward salacious messages about others.

For More Information

To learn more about this issue and how to talk to kids about mobile harassment, you can visit an easy-to-use, interactive resource, the LG Text Ed website at www.lgtexted.com.

The LG Text Ed Survey is a national snapshot of texting behaviors among 13- to 17-year-olds and the parents of 13- to 17-year-olds. The study was conducted online within the United States among 1,017 teens and 1,049 parents of teens.