



*Sedgwick County...  
working for you*

November 2013

## Cyberbullies Harm

Cyberbullying – voluntary and repetitious abuse using computers, cellphones and other electronic devices – is a modern method of victimization that has affected more than 40 percent of youths in the United States in the past year. Like traditional bullying, cyberbullying is used to exert power and dominance over another person, but technology enables the cyberbully to harass, threaten or ridicule the victim in both public (the Internet) and private domains (text messaging). It can occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is persistent, amplifying the frequency and impact of the abuse.

Most research on cyberbullying has examined the short-term consequences of victimization, leading to a lack of research on the relationship between being cyberbullied and a victim's long-term psychological health. However, as cyberbullying and traditional bullying share similar goals, such as exerting torment over the victim, it can be suggested that the two forms of bullying share potential psychological consequences, such as loneliness, peer rejection, low self-esteem, poor mental health, depression, isolation, hopelessness and suicide.

Recent high-profile cases of teens who have committed suicide because of relentless cyberbullying have increased the public call for accountability. However, changing a culture that accepts bullying as a form of behavior or even entertainment – as is played out in much of today's popular culture – is often more difficult than changing policy and law.

If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, please call the **Sedgwick County Suicide Prevention Hotline** at **316-660-7500**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### **For More Information**

Contact COMCARE of Sedgwick County at 316-660-7600 or visit the Sedgwick County website at [www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org).