

Relationship Advice: Have You Been a Victim of Cyber Bullying?



By Debbie Ceresa for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Typically, I don't spend much time on the computer. However, the past several months have been different. I started experiencing insomnia, fatigue and headaches because I was consumed by the internet when I no longer felt safe. I was outsmarted by a woman that I've known for years. I'll call her Lena. Lena insisted I participate in a group discussion about personal matters, but I declined her meeting. I felt it was not appropriate for me to be involved. Nevertheless, Lena continued to pursue my involvement, claiming I was unsupportive. One day I dialed Lena's number and left a voice

mail, explaining why I wouldn't attend the group. Lena asked for me to follow up with a text message, claiming she couldn't hear the recording. Lena forwarded my text message to members of the very group I declined to attend. The message was used to embarrass, humiliate, and alienate me from her supporters. Rude comments appeared on my Facebook, Twitter, and other social media accounts. Many of these messages were from people I didn't even know. I became a victim of cyberbullying. And sadly, I received only a taste of what cyberbullying is like in the online dating world. Long-term relationship problems can arise as a result of cyberbullying if not properly dealt with. As a relationship expert who has gone through it, I offer my [relationship advice](#) on how to get over cyber bullying.

Relationship Advice On Dealing With Cyber Bullies

What is Cyber Bullying? Cyber bullying is not beyond the realm of adult intellect and responsibility, nor is it limited to young people. The cyberbully uses technology to intentionally mistreat others. Computers, cellphones, and other electronic devices become weapons to cause fear, distress, or harm. But the bully is not driven by revenge alone. According to Violence Prevention Works, "Cyberbullying, like traditional bullying, involves an imbalance of power, aggression, and a negative action that is often repeated." In other words, a cyber bully needs an audience to be fully satisfied and therefore takes the bullying to social media, where humiliation is up for public viewing and twice as shaming.

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Cyber Bullying Can Take Several Forms. According to Violence Prevention, cyber bullying is achieved through these means:

- Offensive, rude, and insulting messages.
- Posted derogatory information, and/or digitally altered photos.
- Arguing online, often with the use of vulgar language.
- Hacking another's email or social media to post embarrassing material.
- Sharing of secrets to cause embarrassment.
- Repeated threats or online activity that makes a person afraid for his/her safety.

My husband and I were both profoundly affected by this woman's actions. We joined the ranks of other victims and suffered the many emotional and physical symptoms that are common after such an attack.

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How Cyber Bullying Can Affect You. As celebrity news often shows, many of today's stars, such as LeAnn Rimes, Ciara, and Adele can attest the emotional toll of cyberbullying on one's health. A few of the psychological health conditions that are brought on by bullying include stress, low self-esteem, depression, mood swings, fatigue, embarrassment and feelings of shame. Your physical health can also suffer with reduced immunity to infection, stress headaches, elevated blood pressure and post-traumatic stress disorder. Lena's assault forced my husband and I to escape to our private little island to cope with the pain and grief caused by the loss of trust and expectations from this woman. Like so many grieverers, we were embarrassed, ashamed, and depressed. The unrealistic expectations of this woman awakened my skills as a relationship expert and helped me uncover necessary tools to address my unresolved grief and negative feelings.

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Have You Been A Victim of a Cyber Bully? Here is some relationship advice to help you cope: Your first step is to acknowledge that you need to take care of yourself. If you are experiencing many of the same symptoms—don't ignore them. Your pain and the side effects of the attack are not going to go away by themselves. Don't fall into the trap of developing a lifelong relationship with your pain. You were a victim, but don't hang around waiting for the cyber bully to apologize like I did. It's not going to happen. I never received an apology. Understand that you need to forgive, not condone. To forgive means to cease feeling resentment against an offender. To condone is to treat as if trivial, harmless, or of no importance. Forgiveness is not condoning the situation. How do you forgive the cyber bully? NOT directly! Here's what I finally told myself: "I acknowledge that the things you did or did not do, hurt me, and I'm not going to let my memory of those incidents hurt ME anymore."

Don't be embarrassed, ashamed, or depressed about your grief. It's more exhausting to stay on the pain island than it is to admit you are filled with grief. In the long run, I must thank the cyber bully for showing me the path to helping others. I'm now confident I can be a lifeline to many by offering relationship advice.

Debbie is a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist® and the author to the #1 bestselling memoir A Beautiful View, available on amazon.com. A Beautiful View documents her journey through her husband's battle with cancer, which ultimately ended with his death. She has experienced grief firsthand and is well equipped to aid others in the recovery process, whether with death or divorce. For more information about Debbie and how to recover from your loss, please visit debbieceresa.com.

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