# CYBERCHALLENGE: HOW TO STAND UP AGAINST ONLINE BULLYING

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Traditional bullying is not confined just to the school any more. Thanks to the internet, there is a new platform for the bullies. There is no more need for physical contact between the bully and the victims on the internet, and cyberbullying can have even more serious consequences than traditional bullying, like lower self-esteem, frustration, depression and even suicide attempts (Law, Shapka, Hymel, Olson & Waterhouse, 2012). Cyberbullying or cyberharassment takes place on the internet. It is a repeated behavior (e.g. spreading rumors, threats, posting personal photos and videos about the victims) with intent to harm. There are tragic cases of teenagers in the news almost every month: the young victims could bear no more the bullying and committed suicide. Among 10–18 years old American youngsters, 24% was a victim of online bullying and 16% was a bully between 2004–2013 (Patchin, 2013). However, there is no standard method for standing up against the cyberbully. In my theoretical presentation, first I compare online and offline bullying, highlighting the similarities and the differences between the two phenomena. I try to identify the characteristics of potential bullies and victims, as well as the long term effects to their everyday lives, emotional health and interpersonal relationships according to the most recent theories and research. I introduce some international practices and effective prevention programs (e.g. the i-SAFE and the TABBY projects) which can be used as good examples. The i-SAFE program includes topics like being a part of the online community, online safety and practical advice against the cheaters. The TABBY project ('Threat Assessment of Bullying Behaviour in Youth Online') shares the best practices increasing the awareness of the risks online. The program includes a questionnaire, guidelines for the teachers and some videos for the children. In the final part of my presentation, intervention will be in the spotlight. The school has an important role; the supportive climate in the classroom and indeed in the whole school seems to be a protective factor against cyberbullying. Even if they do not know it yet, the teachers and students can stand up against cyberbullies together.