

# STANDING UP AGAINST BEAUTY CYBERBULLYING



**THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION**

Developed in  
partnership with

**RIMMEL**  
LONDON

# WHAT IS BEAUTY CYBERBULLYING?

Beauty Cyberbullying is when somebody is bullied or abused online because of their appearance or identity for reasons such as the make-up they wear, their hairstyle or any other features that are unique to them. Many of us have seen hurtful and toxic comments on social media targeting celebrities because of their identity, but it is not just famous people that are being targeted. With over 45 million females around the world experiencing Beauty Cyberbullying, the problem is clearly a mainstream issue.

## HOW DOES BEAUTY CYBERBULLYING AFFECT PEOPLE?

As with other forms of online bullying, Beauty Cyberbullying can have devastating effects. Not only can it make people feel afraid to celebrate and explore their own beauty and individuality, but it can also lead to those targeted experiencing low self-esteem, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, self-harm and in some cases, suicide.

## WHY DO PEOPLE DO IT?

People bully for many reasons and Beauty Cyberbullying is an easy option for a person who is trying to make someone else feel bad. It is often a default method of attack - targeting something that is unique to the person, such as their weight, height or make-up. This could be because the bully feels jealous or even intimidated in some way and is trying to feel better about themselves by bringing others down.

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A TARGET OF BEAUTY CYBERBULLYING

If you find yourself targeted for the way you look or the way you express your individual beauty, use the tips below to empower yourself to move on from the abuse and to celebrate your beauty with confidence.

## 1

### REPORT AND BLOCK

Always report abusive or hateful comments to the platform you are using and make use of the block and mute tools so that you don't have to experience any more negativity in your feed. Keep a record of any abuse or bullying by taking a screenshot and saving it in case the problem continues or escalates. Reporting online abuse helps platforms to recognise abusive accounts that repeatedly harass other users.

## 2

### TAKE CONTROL

Social media companies have come a long way in empowering users to manage their own experiences on their platforms. These features are no use if we do not take the time to learn what they are and what they can do! Be sure to learn about the available privacy and security filters which can be tailored to make your time online more positive and enjoyable.

## 3

### ALWAYS REMEMBER, IT'S NOT YOU!

We are not going to spend time demonizing bullies. Just remember that you are being bullied because the person bullying you is a bully that needs help with his or her own issues – it has nothing to do with you, the way you look or your individuality!

## 4

### TALK ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM

Share your problem with someone who you know and trust. This could be a close friend, family member, a teacher at school or a work colleague. Confiding in someone who is close to you will help you to express your feelings without the fear of judgment. You might also be surprised how many people have been personally affected by the problem!

## 5

### KNOW WHEN TO GET PROFESSIONAL HELP

Sometimes we all need a bit of extra support. There are lots of organizations that provide practical help and support for people who are targeted online. In addition to comprehensive cyberbullying support resources, Cybersmile provides a Global Support Service for victims of online abuse that can be accessed from anywhere in the world.

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE SOMEONE ELSE BEING TARGETED

If you see someone being bullied online there is lots you can do to help. The following tips will be useful should you ever find yourself concerned about another Internet user.

## REPORT IT

Reporting bullying or abusive behaviour enables platforms to identify individuals and groups that behave inappropriately online. Reporting them is important and can be done by third parties on most of the major social media platforms. The more online toxicity that can be identified and reported, the more platforms will be able to respond and take action.

## 2

### LET THEM KNOW THEY ARE NOT ALONE

Send the person being targeted a private message to let them know that you are aware of what is happening and are checking to see if they are ok. You do not know how the person is really feeling about the situation, but just letting them know you are aware and concerned, is enough to let them know someone is looking out for them. This alone has the power to change or even save lives.

## 3

### SIGNPOST TO PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

If you think that the person being targeted is struggling with the situation, or they are showing signs of distress, you can let them know about crisis support services that offer urgent support through helplines. Some platforms provide reporting facilities for users who are demonstrating suicidal tendencies or other signs of distress. You can also make a note of the services and organisations listed at the end of this toolkit so that you are able to provide a lifeline for someone in need.

# CELEBRATE YOUR BEAUTY!

Your beauty is yours. It is unique to you and is constantly evolving. We believe that beauty should be recognised and celebrated without compromise, so we've put together the following tips to help you maintain a healthy perspective in regards to your own beauty.

1

## BE YOUR OWN KIND OF BEAUTIFUL!

Understand that no two people look exactly the same. Some people have physical differences such as prominent birthmarks, freckles and curly hair. Some people are tall, some short, some broad and some skinny - the list is endless! Try not to base your idea of beauty on societal ideals or other people, base it on yourself.

2

## SELF-ACCEPTANCE IS THE KEY

Celebrate your individuality and accept you are not perfect, nobody is! We all have insecurities about ourselves and the way we look, but try to accept that all the things that make you different are your superpowers - they set you apart from the rest!

# 3

## KEEP IT REAL!

Try not to be influenced by what you see online and don't set your standards by the glossy images of celebrities, influencers and models. Underneath all the editing software and digital enhancements, they are just normal people. Being inspired by the people you admire to express your own beauty is great, but try not to pin unrealistic standards on enhanced images that are created for promotional purposes.

# 4

## BE YOU, UNASHAMEDLY!

Ultimately, you are the one who should make decisions about how you want to express your beauty, not other people. Try not to be influenced by people who put you down or try to impose their idea of beauty on to you, they are not you and they see the world completely differently. Validation and self-confidence come from within and can take time to develop - focus on your own unique beauty and the things that you love about yourself and your confidence will shine through. Don't rely on others to make you feel good about yourself - focus on self-validation because nobody can take that away from you!

# 5

## APPRECIATE YOUR BODY AND WHAT IT DOES FOR YOU

Beauty Cyberbullying can lead to an unhealthy perspective of our own identity. Try not to worry about how beautiful your body is, or isn't, and try instead to focus on what your body does for you and how to look after it. Regardless of your physical attributes, your body does amazing things for you every single day. It moves you around, helps you to create, enables you to meet people, lets you hug those you love and helps you to see the world around you. Take the time to think about what your body does to get you through the day and try to respect it for the gift that it is!

# RESOURCES

## U.K.

**Samaritans:** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**Mind:** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## U.S.

**Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

**Mental Health America:** [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)

## CANADA

**Crisis Services Canada:** [www.crisisservicescanada.ca](http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca)

**Canada Mental Health Association:** [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

## AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

**Lifeline:** [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

**Beyond Blue:** [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**Ministry of Health:** [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz)

## EUROPE & INTERNATIONAL

**Befrienders Worldwide:** [www.befrienders.org](http://www.befrienders.org)

## MIDDLE EAST

**The Lighthouse Arabia:** [www.lighthousearabia.com](http://www.lighthousearabia.com)