A majority of states have laws that explicitly include electronic forms of communication within stalking or harassment laws Most law enforcement agencies have cyber-crime units, and Internet stalking is often treated with more seriousness than reports of physical stalking Help and resources can be searched by state or area.

When an individual is a target of cyberbullying, they have a higher tendency to abuse drugs and alcohol. In addition, they will probably suffer from emotional or physical issues and have low self esteem. Cyberbullying can also affect how a student does in school. A victim will often have poor grades or want to avoid even going to school.

LAWS!!!

There is a national law that makes it a crime to use a phone or the internet in a way that is menacing, harassing or offensive. To be considered a crime, the behaviour must be likely to have a *serious effect*on the person targeted.

*Stalking* is where a person keeps giving someone else unwanted attention, e.g. by contacting them or following them around.  It includes contacting or approaching them using the internet or other technology.

*Intimidation* is where a person:

* harasses someone, including by cyberbullying them (e.g. posting or sending offensive material over social media or by email);
* approaches someone in a way that makes them feel scared, including by sending threatening emails or text messages, or posting things online.

**Making threats**

It may also be a crime under NSW law if it involves sending emails, messages or posts which threaten to kill or hurt someone or threaten to destroy or damage property, or if it involves publicly threatening or encouraging violence against someone because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex or HIV/AIDS status.

**Encouraging suicide**

Under national law, it is a crime to use a phone or the internet to send or post anything that encourages or helps someone to commit suicide. There is also a NSW law which makes it a crime to encourage or help someone commit suicide.

**Nude or sexual images**

Cyber-bullying could be a crime if it involves sending or posting nude or sexual images of someone without their permission, or threatening to. This is called image-based abuse and it is a crime in NSW and is also against national law.

## **What civil (non-criminal) laws apply?**

Cyber-bullying may also breach some civil laws.

For example, it’s against anti-discrimination laws to publicly encourage hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule towards someone because of their race, transgender identity, homosexuality or HIV/AIDS status.

Cyber-bullying may also be considered defamation if the online posts or messages damage someone’s reputation because they say untrue things about them.