

# Leading counsel: What is cyberbullying?



BY JOHN SCHEPISI AND SILVANA RASO

From the law firm of Schepisi & McLaughlin, P.A. – Leading Counsel is a regular column that provides our readers with insightful analysis on the tough topics in today's legal landscape.

Schepisi & McLaughlin, P.A. is a general practice firm handling a variety of matters such as civil

litigation, family law, real estate, business and employment matters, and zoning law.

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## What Is Cyberbullying?

by *John A. Schepisi*  
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With the advent of new technologies and social media forums, almost every aspect of our lives has been formatted for the Internet. We pay our bills online, we go grocery shopping online, we order food for delivery online, and we communicate with people both in

our hometown and across the globe online.

Unfortunately, some of our poor social behaviors have shifted to the Internet as well. With constant access to multiple, interactive social media outlets, the opportunities to engage in bullying have increased tenfold. Instead of bullying in the physical, where authoritative figures (e.g., principals, teachers, and parents) can control what occurs and the ramifications thereafter, individuals can now bully from home. This behavior has been appropriately labeled "cyberbullying."

Cyberbullying has become a multi-faceted approach to bullying, mainly due to the fact that social media outlets have covered virtually all methods of interfacing with your peers. People can be bul-

lied via comments on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Keek, just to name a few – those comments can be on videos, pictures and statutes alike. This expanding of opportunity for people to bully has made it imperative for everyone to protect himself or herself against it.

A few tips to guard yourself against cyberbullying, or further bullying:

- Do not respond to cyberbullying messages.
- Block the person that is cyberbullying.
- Keep evidence of the cyberbullying. Record dates, times, descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred; save and print screenshots, emails and text messages – use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and

cell phone service providers.

If you or someone you know is suicidal due to excessive cyberbullying, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or contact a lawyer who specializes in bullying cases.

As many outlets as there are to cyberbully, there are just as many to prevent and report it. Know your rights and do not be afraid to speak up or ask for help.

More information about the firm can be found at [www.schepisi.com](http://www.schepisi.com).

*John A. Schepisi is the founder and senior partner of Schepisi & McLaughlin, P.A. Silvana Raso is the managing partner in the firm. Schepisi & McLaughlin, P.A. has represented clients in bullying cases throughout the state of New Jersey.*