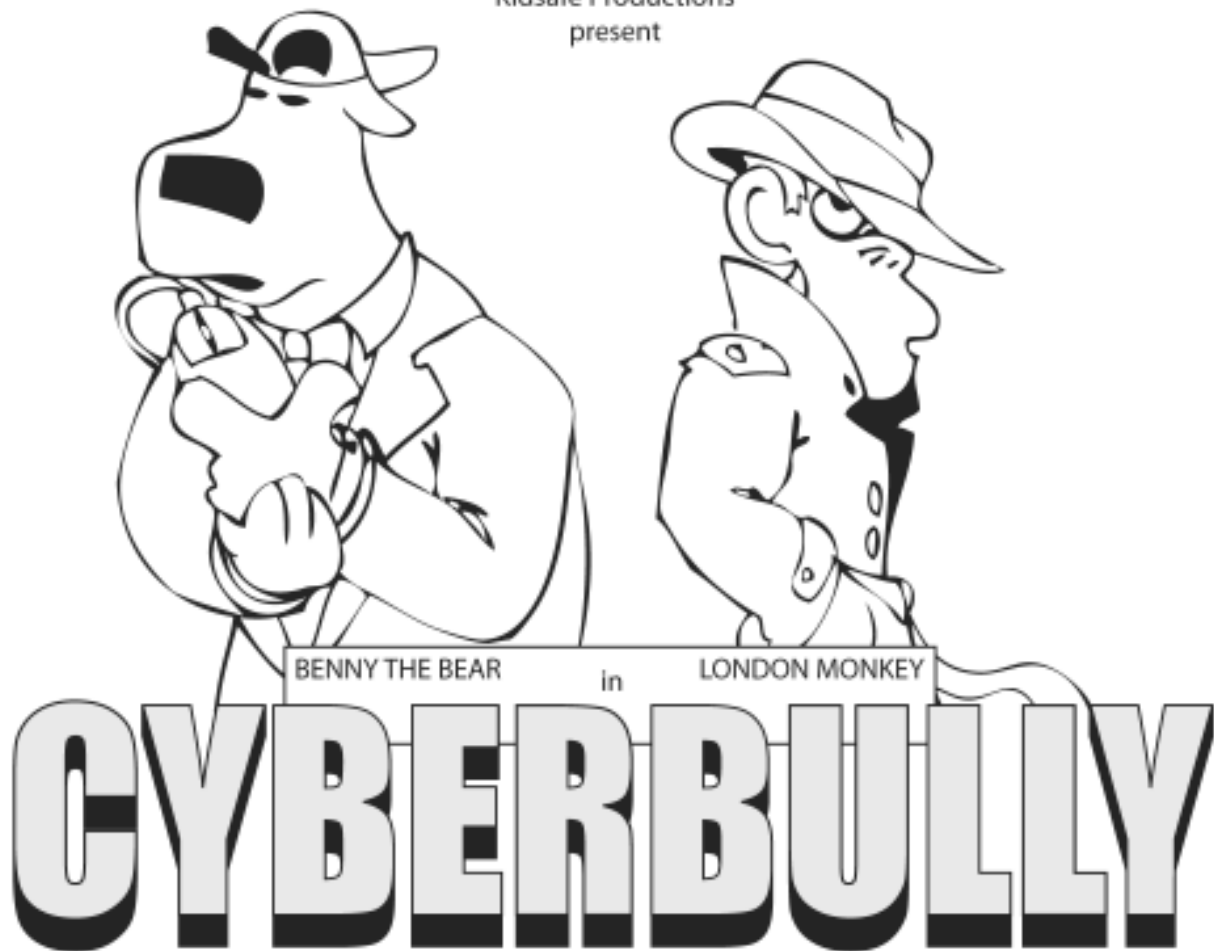


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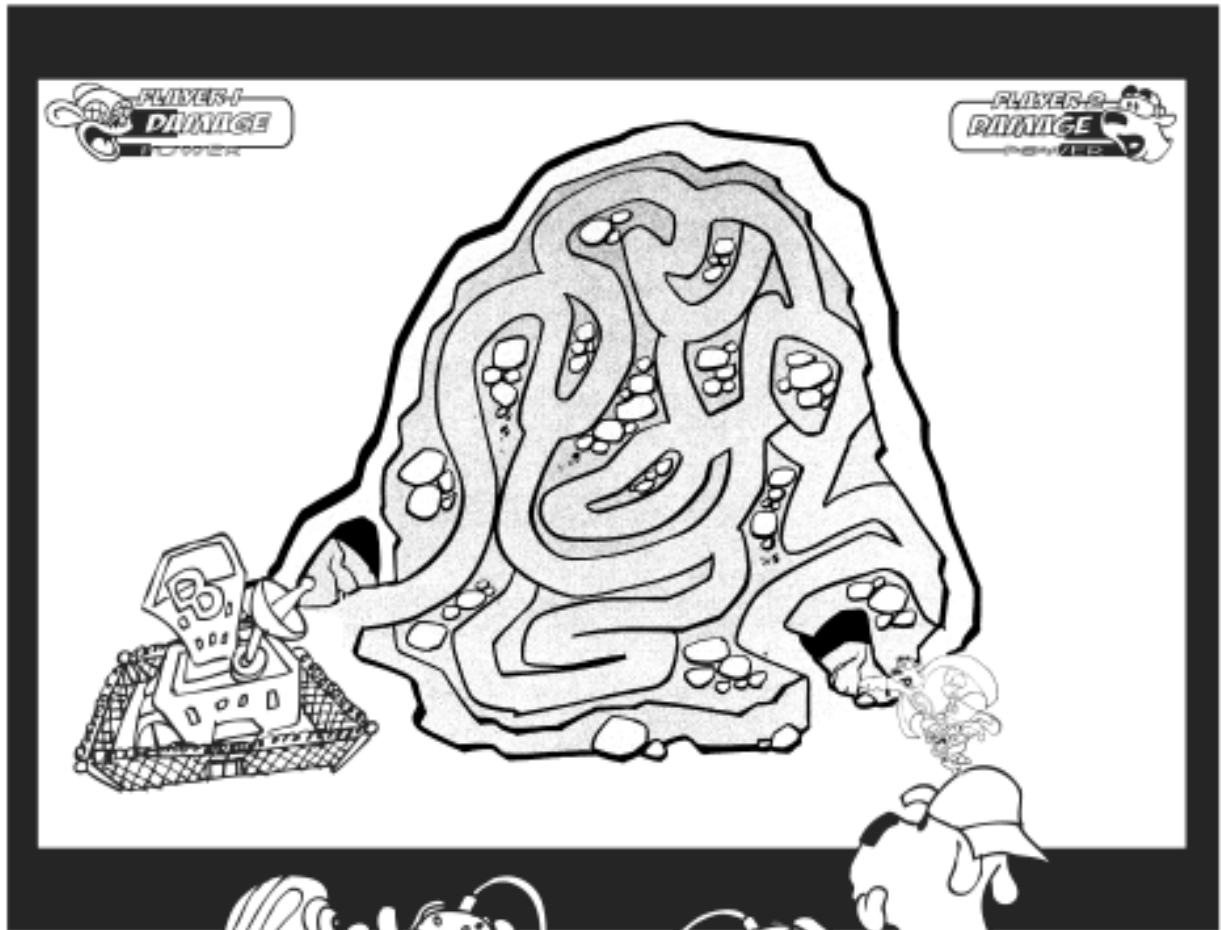
Cyber-bullying occurs when somebody sends (or posts) harmful or cruel messages or images over the internet - or over other digital communication devices. Kids might use the internet to threaten their peers, or to send information that will embarrass one of their classmates.

Or perhaps they might pretend to be somebody else when visiting a chat room in order to get the other person in trouble.

A cyber-bully might make fun of a person's race, religion, height, weight, intelligence - exactly the sort of things a playground bully might decide to pick on. Cyber-bullying lacks the immediate physical threat that youngsters might experience on the playground, but in some ways this online form of bullying is even worse. Lies and rumours are posted on websites around the clock - so the bullying doesn't stop when the youngster comes home from school.

Part of the attraction for cyber-bullies lies in the fact that they can carry the act out anonymously. There's nobody supervising them when they are online, and they might feel that cyber-bullying allows for easy revenge. They can say things online that they might not have the nerve to say face-to-face. Moreover, they don't have to engage with the other person emotionally. They don't have to deal with feelings of guilt if they can't see the other person crying.

Benny and London are playing a video game starring their favourite superheroes **SENTINAL SAFETY** and **SPIDERMONKEY**. They are in hot pursuit of their arch nemesis, **THE DEMENTED DANGER**, and need you to help catch him! The door has slammed shut! **SENTINAL SAFETY** and **SPIDERMONKEY** have wandered into the **DEMENTED DANGER'S** sinister trap! They have no choice but to wander the maze of malvolent mountain to reach the other side to reach the hideout of **DEMENTED DANGER!**
Beware of falling rocks!



The potential for online cruelty is almost unlimited. Some of the worst incidents include:



Threats: This can involve online arguments that use vulgar language or threaten physical violence.



Harassment & Cyberstalking: This can occur when someone repeatedly sends the same message to a person, or posts suggestive photos of that person.



Impersonation: Pretending to be someone else to get another person into trouble or create a rift between them and their friends.



Outing: Sharing secrets or embarrassing information online.



Exclusion: Intentionally excluding someone from an online group. For example, a young boy might convince his classmates to block all of another person's messages so that he is effectively excluded from the group.



Denigration: This can occur when bullies damage someone's reputation online by spreading gossip or rumour. An extreme example of this might involve setting up a "We Hate John" site where a number of people discuss why they dislike that person.

Solutions to Cyber-Bullying



Blocking - When they are in the playground, and other children start calling them names, kids can't throw a force field around themselves to block the abuse. But when they are online, kids can block e-mails and messages from bullies they don't want to be in contact with.

Ignoring - Bullies are usually looking for a response. If they know the other person is angry, embarrassed or depressed as a result of the bullying, they might feel as if they've won. Sometimes simply ignoring them is the best option.



Reporting the Problem - When they are bullied online, kids can print out a copy of the message and show it to parents, teachers or other adults that they trust. Having written proof lends more credence to claims of cyber-bullying. Perhaps youngsters can contact the Kids Help Phone for advice. The counsellors there deal with issues like this every day, and they can give a lot of helpful advice. If the threats are serious enough, kids and their parents might even contact the bully's internet service provider. Another option might be to involve other people - such as the parents or guardians of both the victim and the bully. Many "bullies" are simply acting out after feeling they have been insulted by the other person. In a recent survey carried out by the Kids Help Phone, 70% of respondents reported having been bullied online, while 44% admitted having bullied someone else online. If they have a chance to sit down with others, bullies might start to see how their "victims" feel when they are targeted, and they will be less likely to resort to this sort of strategy.



Intervene - Why don't more kids intervene when someone is being bullied online? Perhaps it is because they get a kick out of seeing the other person being teased or bullied. More likely, though, they may simply be afraid that if they intervene they will simply become the bully's next victim! But kids who want to help have the same choices that victims have. They can leave the online environment and report the bullying to the appropriate authorities.