



THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

Cybersmile And Instagram Launch Banter Or Bullying? A Report Exploring The Relationship Between Banter And Bullying In The U.K.

LONDON, UK, NOVEMBER 11, 2019 - As part of its Anti-Bullying Week campaign, The Cybersmile Foundation and Instagram have worked together on a new national study in the U.K. to learn more about the relationship between banter and bullying.

[The Banter or Bullying? study](#) asked 3001 respondents aged 13-18 a series of 11 questions to share their thoughts on the fine line between banter and bullying while exploring the effects of banter on the wider community. Participants in the study from across the U.K. were given a combination of multiple choice options and the opportunity to select more than one response when appropriate to the question.

"It's been an honour to work alongside Instagram on our joint Banter or Bullying? report. Our mission was to undertake a study which not only offers valuable insights into the relationship that exists between banter and bullying, but also to create a report that would inspire meaningful conversation around the topic, encouraging young people to be more mindful of their own interactions online," said Dan Raisbeck, Co-founder, The Cybersmile Foundation.

The report demonstrates Cybersmile and Instagram's ongoing commitment to promote meaningful and positive interactions online, and hopes to encourage young people to talk about the important issue while being mindful of their own tone when interacting online.

"Banter should never be used as an excuse for bullying. We're working hard to empower people to tackle bullying behaviour on Instagram, whether that's restricting a bully from seeing when you're online, or giving you the option to post Stories to Close Friends only. This Anti-Bullying Week we'd encourage parents and teens to explore how our anti-bullying tools can help keep their experience on Instagram positive," said Kira Wong O'Connor, EMEA Policy Programmes Manager, Instagram.

The study was conducted by Censuswide between October 28th and November 5th across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland covering regions and cities including Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Sheffield and Southampton.

"I share a lot of my life online and I know first-hand how damaging it can be on the receiving end of hateful comments. I try to ignore negative comments altogether, but when I do respond, I'm often told they're 'just banter' and that I should let it go. Banter is never an excuse for bullying; they are different things. One should make you laugh, the other does the opposite," said Zoe Sugg, Founder of Zoella.

The Banter or Bullying? report has been compiled and published as part of a wider Anti-Bullying Week partnership between Cybersmile and Instagram. Other partnership activities to mark the week include special celebrity Instagram takeovers, the promotion of co-branded educational assets and an exclusive interview with the Instagram team.

Key findings

Below are some of the key findings from the Banter or Bullying? report:

- 49% of respondents said that the term 'banter' was best described as "A friendly way to make fun of people which is not serious or offensive."
- 64% of respondents said that they either 'loved' or 'liked' banter.
- 51% of respondents that were asked if they think calling something 'banter' is sometimes used as an excuse for bullying answered yes. Only 17% of respondents said that they didn't know, and 33% said no.
- 65% of respondents said there was a clear difference between banter and bullying, with only 21% saying there wasn't, and just 14% saying they didn't know.

- 35% of respondents said that the line is crossed from banter to bullying “when people tell me I’ve gone too far.” And 71% said that “When it makes people feel scared or intimidated.”
- 81% of respondents said they felt they understood the difference between banter and bullying.
- 47% of respondents said they had personally been left upset or insulted by banter on at least one occasion.
- 66% of respondents said that they had noticed somebody else left upset or insulted by banter on at least one occasion.
- 45% said they had been offended or upset after witnessing banter as a bystander on at least one occasion.
- When asked how often they see others left upset or insulted by banter, 38% of respondents said that they had seen it at least once a week. 7% of respondents said they had seen others left upset or insulted at least once a day.
- 85% of respondents said they had never excused a bullying interaction made by themselves as banter.

You can view the full study by downloading and exploring the Banter or Bullying? report on Cybersmile’s [website](#). For more in-depth data or further information about the report please contact The Cybersmile Foundation.

ABOUT THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION

The Cybersmile Foundation is a multi-award-winning nonprofit organisation committed to tackling all forms of digital abuse and bullying online. They work to promote kindness, diversity and inclusion by building a safer, more positive digital community and encouraging people to realise their full potential without the fear of ridicule and abuse.

Through education and the promotion of positive digital citizenship, The Cybersmile Foundation reduces incidents of cyberbullying and provides professional help and support services to children and adults around the world.

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