



THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

The Cybersmile Foundation Publish National Gen Z Report Exploring the Prevalence and Emotional Impact of Identity-Based Cyberbullying in the U.S.

New York, USA, October 28, 2021 – The Cybersmile Foundation have announced the launch of a new national report focusing on the prevalence and emotional impact of identity-based cyberbullying on Gen Z in the U.S. The study, titled *'The State of Play Report'* is published today and has been sponsored by CO. by Colgate.

The Cybersmile Foundation asked 1,096 respondents between the ages of 16 - 24 a series of 22 questions relating to their own experiences online in regards to identity-based bullying and abuse. Respondents were asked to share their experiences of identity-based bullying as bystanders and how these experiences affected them. Identity groups present in the study include racial or ethnic, gender, sexual, religious beliefs, perceived physical and mental ableness, physical appearance, skin tone, personal opinion and expression of individuality.

Key findings from *The State of Play Report* include:

- **62%** of respondents have been targeted with online bullying, abuse or harassment
- **87%** of respondents have seen someone targeted with online bullying, abuse or harassment
- **90%** of respondents have seen someone bullied online based on their physical appearance
- **78%** of respondents have seen someone bullied online for their racial or ethnic identity
- **77%** of respondents have seen someone bullied online for their gender identity

- **74%** of respondents have seen someone bullied online for their perceived physical or mental ableness
- **74%** of respondents have seen someone bullied online for expressing their individuality or identity
- **73%** of respondents have seen someone bullied, abused or harassed online based on their skin tone
- **78%** of respondents have seen someone bullied, abused or harassed online based on their sexual identity
- **74%** of respondents have seen someone bullied, abused or harassed online for their religious beliefs
- **86%** of respondents have seen someone bullied, abused or harassed online for expressing their opinion

In addition to offering powerful insights into the realities of life online for Gen Z, *The State of Play Report* also contains expert advice for being a better digital citizen, best practice tips for dealing with cyberbullying as an intended target as well as a bystander and a series of direct links to Cybersmile’s education and support resources.

“As Gen Z continue to spend more and more time online it has never been more important for Cybersmile to deepen our understanding of the true extent and impact of identity-based bullying, harassment and abuse online. Identity-based bullying and abuse can lead to a wide range of issues which deeply affect not only the intended targets of the abuse, but also larger numbers of people who have been indirectly exposed to the abusive and problematic content. In addition to helping Cybersmile understand the extent of the problem, this important State of Play report provides us with crucial insights into the emotional impact of identity-based bullying and abuse. The powerful data from this report will play a key role in the effective development of scalable and sustainable volunteer training and support resources for a wide range of identity-based bullying and abuse related problems,” said Laura Lewandowski from The Cybersmile Foundation.

As part of their ongoing work together to combat cyberbullying, CO. by Colgate and The Cybersmile Foundation have also announced that they will be holding a roundtable discussion on cyberbullying to coincide with National Bullying Prevention Month with actress Alisha Boe and Cybersmile’s resident wellbeing and parenting expert, Dr. Deborah Gilboa. The online event will focus on the prevalence and emotional impact cyberbullying has on Gen Z, as well as best practices for being a better digital citizen.

“At CO. by Colgate, we envision a world where everyone can express themselves freely and that’s why we’re proud to partner with The Cybersmile Foundation on The State of Play Report. Founded on the values of inclusivity and authentic self-expression, CO. by Colgate believes that a smile is a powerful tool in building connections across all people and identities. Yet, we have seen how easily bias can turn into cyberbullying, and no one understands this better than the current, rising generation-Gen Z. Through The State of Play Report, our mission is to show how we can reimagine a healthier future for all – one where everyone feels confident be who they truly are, without fear,” said Dana Medema, Vice President & General Manager, Oral Care, Colgate-North America.

Cybersmile and CO. believe in an inclusive future where everyone can express themselves freely and live their truth boldly. For every CO. by Colgate product purchased in 2021, \$1 will be donated to The Cybersmile Foundation, for a minimum donation of \$200,000 and a maximum of \$300,000.

Join the Instagram Live Event at 6:00 p.m. EST today and hear from CO. by Colgate, The Cybersmile Foundation, and Alisha Boe. For more information, visit [@CO. Colgate](#) and [@cybersmilefoundation](#) to learn about identity-based bullying.

The State of Play Report is based on a survey conducted by Persky and fielded among 1,096 people, ages 16 - 24 years old, from June 3 to June 4, 2021. For more information on the report, visit <https://www.cybersmile.org>.

If you are experiencing identity-based bullying or negativity online, The Cybersmile Foundation offers a range of help and support services for users of all ages and abilities at www.cybersmile.org/what-we-do/total-access-support.

ABOUT COLGATE-PALMOLIVE

Colgate-Palmolive Company is a caring, innovative growth company reimagining a healthier future for all people, their pets and our planet. Focused on Oral Care, Personal Care, Home Care and Pet Nutrition, the Company sells its products in more than 200 countries and territories under brands such as Colgate, Palmolive, elmex, hello, meridol, Sorriso, Tom’s of Maine, EltaMD, Filorga, Irish Spring, PCA Skin, Protex, Sanex, Softsoap, Speed Stick, Ajax, Axion, Fabuloso, Soupline and Suavitel, as well as Hill’s Science Diet and Hill’s Prescription Diet. The Company is recognized for its leadership and innovation in promoting environmental sustainability and community well-being, including its achievements in saving water, reducing waste, promoting recyclability and improving children’s oral health through its Bright Smiles, Bright Futures program, which has reached more than 1.3 billion children since 1991. For more information about Colgate’s global business and how the Company is building a future to smile about, visit www.colgatepalmolive.com.

ABOUT THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION

The Cybersmile Foundation is a multi-award-winning nonprofit organization committed to digital wellbeing and tackling all forms of bullying and abuse online. We work to promote kindness, diversity and inclusion by building a safer, more positive digital community. Through education, research, awareness campaigns and the promotion of positive digital citizenship we reduce incidents of cyberbullying and through our professional help and support services we empower those affected and their families to regain control of their lives.

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The Cybersmile Foundation is an international nonprofit organization registered as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization in the U.S. and as a registered charity in the U.K. (No. 1147576)