

## INTERVIEW WITH RON PRASAD - BEAT BULLYING WITH CONFIDENCE FOUNDATION

**Connection Matters Radio (CMR):** Two weeks ago we spoke with regular guest, CEO and co-founder of Beat Bullying With Confidence Foundation, Ron about bullying. Specifically it was about the concern of many children and their parents and guardians about a return to school being a potential returning to school place bullying. We also mentioned cyber bullying, which is incredibly prevalent, and that's what we'll be focusing on today. Ron, welcome back to Connection Matters Radio.

**Ron:** Thank you, Uncle Charles. Thanks for having me back.

**CMR:** Ron, what exactly is cyber bullying and where do we see it?

**Ron:** Uncle Charles, cyber bullying is repeated unwanted behavior toward a person, which happens online. Now, it doesn't only take place on social media. It can also take place on online forums, gaming platforms, text messages, and emails.

**CMR:** And of course, with the increasing use of mobile devices, iPads for messaging, and of course mobile phones and as you mentioned, the gaming platforms, where more and more people are getting involved in these massive online games, I can see that that's quite a reality there. Ron, what are some of the signs though that parents and guardians can be on the lookout for to demonstrate that the child may be the subject of being cyber bullied?

**Ron:** Sure. There are a few signs that parents and guardians can look out for uncle Charles and I'll go through a few. One is the child does their best to avoid

going online, because they'll be scared. They'll be fearful of being attacked once they go online. So, if the parent or guardian notices that the child is doing their best not to go near their device, they should start suspecting that something's going wrong.

Another sign, Uncle Charles, is when the child comes offline, their behavior changes. They are feeling very down, they feel upset. If the parent or guardian tries to talk to the child, they might not respond, they might get angry or they might give short answer responses. And that's when the parent or guardian might start thinking, there is something going on over here.

**CMR:** It is a huge issue. And I believe in speaking to you prior to this, you've done a lot of reading and speaking to people during these COVID lockdown periods, and cyber bullying instances have increased dramatically while students have been working from home. Ron, I have heard that there actually is a reporting process for cyber bullying. Can you provide some more information on that?

**Ron:** Yes, Uncle Charles. First and foremost, if it's taking place on social media, or a gaming platform, or an online forum, for example, the social media platform provider or the moderator of the online forum, or the provider, they've all got an obligation to protect the people who are using those platforms. So, that could be a starting point to report it directly to them.

Another very, very powerful and useful resource is a website called [esafety.gov.au](http://esafety.gov.au). The Australian federal

government has spent a lot of money on creating this website, which has an abundance of resources for parents, for kids, and for anyone who wants to report online bullying, and you can report it directly to them.

Now bear in mind, if you report the bullying to [esafety.gov.au](http://esafety.gov.au), it has to be for somebody who is under the age of 18. So, this is specifically targeted towards kids and the child can go and report it themselves, or somebody can report it on behalf of the child.

**CMR:** So, a school friend could actually see one of their chums being bullied. They could then go and report that themselves and they don't have to be 18. They can be obviously 15, 14 or younger?

**Ron:** 110%, Uncle Charles. 110%. Anyone can report it as long as you are reporting it on behalf of somebody who is under the age of 18. And, Uncle Charles, this website has got so many resources, information sheets, tips for parents, tips for kids, tips for friends of kids who are getting bullied. I strongly suggest that people go and have a look at this website.

**CMR:** And we'll provide a direct link to that particular website about which Ron is speaking on the CMR website as soon as this interview goes to air. Ron, what about the issue of anonymity with this particular website? People don't necessarily, and understandably, like giving their details if they're, well, dobbing someone in.

**Ron:** Yeah, that is one fear, Uncle Charles, that people might think, that

how do I provide details, and you can remain anonymous on this website. If you want to report it on behalf of someone else or yourself, you will have to give some form of evidence. And the best way to do this is to take some screenshots.

And every time I've gone to schools to speak to kids about online bullying, I've always been emphatic on saying, "Learn how to take screenshots on different types of devices, the Android devices, Apple devices, laptop computers, desktops, phones, tablets, because you never know when you might need to take a screenshot as evidence of online bullying."

**CMR:** What are some of the responses that someone might expect from this reporting, Ron? Because let's be quite frank, quite often we report incorrect behavior, or we report poor service to a customer service agency and we get very little in return.

**Ron:** Uncle Charles, I have spoken to a few people who have used [esafety.gov.au](http://esafety.gov.au) and they had lots of positive feedback regarding the responses that they have received. Now, I have personally not used it. I've not used it to report it on behalf of anyone. However, I have full faith in this service and like I said before, the Australian government has put in a lot of resources to create this website, so that people who reach out are helped in the most professional manner possible.

**CMR:** Ron, while we've been talking, I've actually had a look at the [esafety.gov.au](http://esafety.gov.au) website, and can definitely attest to the fact that it is an absolute mine of useful and eye-opening information. I do encourage people to get on there; and that's parents, guardians and children themselves.

Ron, next week, we're going to be continuing with the bullying theme, which

is so important; and we're going to be focusing more on the schools and the teachers and discussing I believe, what they can do to address this ever-growing problem.

**Ron:** Yes, Uncle Charles. Kids will be going back to school in Victoria this month. So, we'll be able to have a quick chat about what schools and teachers can do to provide a safe learning environment. And Uncle Charles just quickly going back to online bullying, it's happening a lot. And it's something that might not go away really quickly. So, let's keep supporting each other and let's keep reporting any form of online bullying that we might witness.

**CMR:** I think that's a great idea. Ron, until next week, thank you very much, indeed. And you stay safe.

**Ron:** Thank you, Uncle Charles.

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