Is it Cyberbullying or Digital Drama?

The term cyberbullying gets used a lot when we talk about kids and the internet. But is every negative online interaction really cyberbullying or is it just digital drama? Let's break down the differences:

Cyberbullying	Digital Drama
Cyberbullying is behavior intended to upset, harass, or otherwise harm a victim. When this behavior is repeated and ongoing, it can cause an increase in anxiety, depression, loneliness, and other mental health issues in the victim. Cyberbullying can take many different forms including: ● Belittling or ridiculing a victim directly and/or publicly ● Embarrassing a victim by posting personal or intimate information, photos, or videos in public places ● Posing as the victim by using their accounts without permission or creating phony profiles ● Stalking a victim across platforms to get around privacy restrictions or blocks ● Threatening or attempting to coerce a victim to do things (often sexual) they do not want to do **What Can Families Do?** Have conversations with your child about cyberbullying—even if they are not a victim or perpetrator. It is important for them to know these behaviors are unacceptable, and that you are a trusted adult who is willing to talk about difficult topics with them. Many states have their own laws to protect citizens against extreme forms of digital abuse. If you or your child is experiencing repeated, ongoing harassment or threats, contact your local police department to file a report and get support.	Digital drama can be defined as the everyday disagreements that happen between peers. Some examples of digital drama include: ● Digital miscommunication that leads to hurt feelings ● Arguments between friends or romantic partners that get carried out through digital communication ● Gossip that spreads digitally People will often make their drama public because they enjoy the audience or because drama and gossip is something for people to bond over. While digital drama may not seem as serious as cyberbullying, it still has a very real effect on us. **What Can Families Do?** Before it happens: help your child recognize some examples of digital drama. When it happens: whether your child is involved in it or watching it from afar—support them through it in the same ways you would any other peer drama.

For more support with this topic, visit StopBullying.gov