

NOVEMBER – The e-Bully

Music Full then Under

LEE: Thanks for tuning in to the November ScoutCast! I'm Lee Shaw, Team Lead of National Alliance, and joining me, as always, is Bryan on Scouting Blogger, Bryan Wendell.

BRYAN: This month's ScoutCast is kind of ripped from the pages of the November issue *Boys' Life* Magazine where there's a fictional, heart-warming tale about two boys who are bullied and then they find ways to use that bullying to their advantage. They kind of turn it around. And it's written by none other than James Patterson, the award-winning, bestselling author.

LEE: So, we at ScoutCast thought bullying would be an important topic to discuss this month, specifically, the kind found out there on the internet because there ain't no bully like a e-bully.

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LEE: And joining us for the discussion is Tahia Marable. Tahia is the Program Manager for Education Outreach and Prevention with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The Center works with the BSA on all of our Internet safety content. Welcome to ScoutCast, Tahia.

TAHIA: Hi. Thank you for having me.

LEE: Glad you could join us. So, what are the traits of a social media bully?

TAHIA: Cyberbullying is the use of technology to tease, humiliate, threaten and/or harass someone. It's pretty much takes place through text messages or a

social media platform. And traits of cyberbullying could include sending mean comments or posts, sending embarrassing photos of someone, or even sharing private information about someone to humiliate or mock them.

BRYAN: So, Tahia, is the solution here for the parent or unit leaders to monitor every Tweet, Snap, Instagram post? How does a unit leader or a parent watch out for this type of cyberbullying that might be happening?

TAHIA: It's kind of impossible to monitor every single tweet and post that your Scouts or child may be partaking in. We just really recommend to have those conversations and talk to your children about what cyberbullying is, and there are some indicators that Scout leaders can look out for as well as parents if you are concerned about your child possibly being cyberbullied including if they're just avoiding the use of the Internet in general or seeming stressed about like emails or instant messages or texts that they may be receiving. Some other general bullying traits that get their withdrawing from family or friends or resisting to attend school or social events. Those are all some signs that you can look out for.

LEE: So what recourse would our listeners have if they thought that their child or someone in their troop or in their crew was a victim?

TAHIA: It's important and this is just in general to all online safety rules. It's important that children know that adults are here to help, and Scout leaders and parents are what we consider trusted adults for children. So, if they do expect that their child is being cyberbullied, we really want those trusted adults to tell the children not to respond, be the bigger person. If

you do respond the situation can escalate and it will just blow out of proportion. So, not responding is one initial response, and then also if they are receiving threatening texts or comments, save the evidence. Just don't delete it because if it is threatening trusted adults can help children go to their school administrators, teachers, if it's happening at school, or even law enforcement if it is life-threatening. And also, many apps, text message, websites and even Internet providers have reporting mechanisms for cyberbullying and it's against their right of use, so report the inappropriate behavior also.

BRYAN: So, report it right through the app if it was through an app.

TAHIA: Exactly. Facebook has you can report comments and then a lot of times the actual platform will either delete the comment, and if they get so many reports about a particular user, that user account will be deactivated.

BRYAN: That's great advice. Some other advice I'd like to ask you about is the kind of dark side of an already pretty dark topic, but what if you discover that it's your own child or your own Scout who is the bully?

TAHIA: If you feel that your child is the bully, it's again just having that initial conversation and talking to them. A general rule like, it's okay to not like someone or not agree with someone, but that doesn't mean that you have to be disrespectful or even talk to them. Being the bigger person and not being disrespectful online. It's really all about being a great little digital citizen. Just like we teach our children to be an outstanding world citizen, we want them to be a great digital citizen also. So, your perceived behavior online is no different than it should be in the real world.

LEE: *Boys' Life* has a cool story and we have a pretty cool show, Bryan, I like to think anyway, right? But sometimes we really have to take a backseat to discuss really important issues such as this cyberbullying. And Bryan, I don't even know if you're aware of this but I'll share it with the listeners; Before I joined Scouting as a professional I was a juvenile delinquent counselor and I witnessed a lot of bullying in that field. I can only think of what it would have been like for me to have that kind of role today as opposed to over some 20 years ago. It's just at a whole 'nother level. So, this is a very important topic and I'm so glad that Tahia, you could spend some time with us and enlighten us to really help us figure out the best way of protecting our young people from bullies online.

TAHIA: I'm glad I can help. And, we talked about whether you expect your Scout or child to be a victim of cyberbullying or even possibly being the cyberbully, it's important that also teach children just not to be a bystander. So, if they see things that are happening whether it's within their troop or friends or family members, don't forward messages or post, don't add to the insulting comment. And you can also report on behalf of your friends and family members also.

BRYAN: That's a great point. There's really a third role that we don't often talk about; there's the victim, the bully, and then the bystander who we don't want to just be a bystander anymore, right? We want them to speak up for for what's right.

TAHIA: Exactly.

BRYAN: One question about resources. I know the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has tons of great resources, an excellent partner with the BSA. Is there a website or somewhere you'd like us to send listeners where they can learn more about ways to recognize and also deal with cyberbullying?

TAHIA: Of course, yes. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has a great resource to students and parents and communities called NetSmartz – NetSmartz, N-e-t-S-m-a-r-t-z – and you can find it at [NetSmartz.org](https://www.net-smartz.org), and it's all about online safety. It discusses and provides tools and information for a number of online safety issues, but cyberbullying definitely being one of those prominent issues. As a parent or Scout leader you can go visit the website and find tons of resources, how to have conversations with their children, what the issue is and what are some sound resolutions, and then also resources directly for children too, whether they're videos or games or e-books that have to do with cyberbullying and again, if they're the victim or possibly doing it and also, about not being a bystander.

LEE: Let's not forget the Cyber chip. The Cyber chip is another great tool for Scouts to learn about cyber bullying and it's a requirement to earn the rank of Scout and Star. Scouts and parents can go to [scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org) to learn more about the Cyber chip. So, Tahia, is there anything about the e-bully that we haven't talked about that you think our listeners would need to know?

TAHIA: I definitely would recommend, just like I mentioned before, to visit [NetSmartz.org](https://www.net-smartz.org), and if you are dealing with issues you have resources

available to you to assist children. So, if there are any issues you can report that to either our cyber tip line and there's resources for children.

BRYAN: I also wanted to ask you one more question about the role that parents might play in introducing their children to social media. Is there any type of recommendation on when is the right time to allow your son or daughter to get on Snapchat or Instagram? As the father of two, I'm looking for this advice pretty soon.

TAHIA: Every family dynamics are different and every child is different, so you as a parent know your child best and their capabilities of handling whether they be risk online or in real world. That's what I love about the NetSmartz resource is because we have age-appropriate resources all starting at kindergarten all the way through twelfth grade.

BRYAN: That's great.

TAHIA: I have a toddler who already loves the iPad and has ABC games, so, as a child progresses in age and experience and level of maturity the reins kind of loosen year after year, and just initiate conversation early, set those rules, set those boundaries early so that it's not a surprise when they get into those tween and teen years.

LEE: This was a really good show and a great discussion. I so much appreciate you, Tahia, for coming on and just sharing with us and educating us as well to help us all be a little safer.

TAHIA: Thank you guys for having me.

BRYAN: Now let's take a brief Safety Moment, and then we'll be back with Reminders and Tips.

(Safety Moment – Transporting Scouts)

BRYAN: Okay, let's jump into Reminders and Tips for November. First, let's talk membership inventory. By now, all your new youth and adult applications from your recruiting campaign should be submitted to the Council Service Center. And remember, you can do that online now.

LEE: And it's a good idea to compare the My.Scouting Tools records to your own to make sure there are no discrepancies and that all those new members of the family of Scouting are properly registered.

BRYAN: Now, let's talk *Boys' Life*. In addition to the James Patterson story that kind of formed this entire great episode, the November *Boys' Life* has a feature about Scouts from many different nationalities and backgrounds who all came together at the South Florida Council's annual Lincoln-Marti Camporee.

LEE: And the November/December cover feature of *Scouting Magazine* helps parents weigh the risks and rewards of taking the kids into the outdoors.

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LEE: So, that, sadly, brings us to the end of the November ScoutCast. Thanks to our great guest, Tahia Marable, for joining us.

BRYAN: And thanks to you for listening. Now, is there a topic you want to know more about? Email us at Scoutcast@scouting.org, or tweet @BSAScoutcast. And be sure to come back next month when our topic is gonna be adult awards. Until then, I'm Bryan Wendell.

LEE: And I'm Lee Shaw. Be safe out there.

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