



SESSION 3

Real-Life Story

Hip-Hop Dancing Girl

The video she made was supposed to be private. Maria, a sixteen-year-old from Texas, was a huge fan of the movie *Step Up*. She made a home video of herself dancing hip-hop to some of the songs from the soundtrack and even tried out some of the dance moves in slow motion. But somehow, someone from her high school got the video and posted it online. The word spread, and soon millions of people from around the world had downloaded and watched her video. She is now known as Hip-Hop Dancing Girl.

Pete

Lisa and I thought it would be a funny joke. When we found the video, we laughed out loud! Maria was so funny and dorky trying to dance hip-hop in slo-mo! So we did what anyone would do—we posted it on YouTube and emailed our friends the link. How were we supposed to know

it would take off like that? I mean, people from all over the world have watched it!

Lisa

Poor Maria. We posted that video on YouTube as a joke. Pete and I thought it was just too funny! I can't believe how popular Maria's video has become. There have even been news stories about the Hip-Hop Dancing Girl. It's one of the most popular videos ever on YouTube. People have even made new videos, putting her in dancing scenes from *Center Stage* and *Dirty Dancing*. The girl's famous now. How many people can say *that* about a little video they made of themselves?

Random Internet User

So I was forwarded this email with a link to a video on YouTube. Something about a Hip-Hop Dancing Girl. Whoa! This video was hilarious! I don't think I've seen some-

thing that was so dumb but funny at the same time. I immediately forwarded the link to all of my friends. They *had* to see this!

Maria

I made this video of myself hip-hop dancing to songs from my favorite movie, *Step Up*. Yeah, it's dorky, but I was bored that day. So I figured, why not? And it didn't look that bad, so I showed it to a couple of my friends. I have no idea who got a hold of it or who posted it on YouTube. But suddenly at my high school people were laughing at me. And after a little while, people around town were calling me Hip-Hop Dancing Girl. Huh? I had no idea what was happening. It wasn't until one of my friends saw my video on YouTube that I found out. By that time there had been more than 200,000 views of my video.

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I was so embarrassed! I can't go anywhere without people laughing at me. People I see who I don't even know shout, "Hey, it's Hip-Hop Dancing Girl!" and stuff like

that. There's no escape. I don't leave my house very often. I rarely go online. You can bet that I haven't made another video. I've been depressed, and my parents thought it would be

a good idea for me to see a psychologist. So I've been going once a week for almost a year now. That video has ruined my life.

Discussion Questions:

1. No one created a Web site that said derogatory comments about Maria. No one excluded her from an online group. No one has been cruel by saying mean things about Maria online. So how is what happened to Maria cyber bullying?
2. Are Pete and Lisa guilty of cyber bullying? If so, what roles from the Bullying Circle did they play?
3. Are the millions of people who have viewed the video also responsible in some way? What about the people who also forwarded it? If so, what roles in the Bullying Circle did these people play?
4. How has this affected Maria?
5. If this happened to you, how do you think it would affect you?