

g. it's
unmist
her
ely

and harass her, and even people who stalk her at her workplace. The point is, the moderators didn't really do anything to stop these things from happening."

Blurred lines

How many Chibaboms does it take to get one Amanda Todd? Is that a question we want to know the answer to? It's not like things are going to get better, especially when "we're moving into a culture where the lines between your real life persona and your online persona are getting more blurred," Tim points out.

"Sometimes, I feel like your online persona can be so great that your real-life persona is undermined," says Tim. "100 years ago, our grandparents might have thought that the afterlife was so important, so whatever you do in this life has to be about that life. If you think about it, maybe our version of the afterlife is the online forums. Or who you are online. They think they have a life after we die, but we also have another life - online."

This type of slippage between online and offline isn't restricted to people on forums, either. Is your Instagram life the same as your real life, for instance? And by putting yourself out there, how much risk are you exposing yourself to? As it becomes more and more difficult for the average person to switch off, it's inevitable that we all become more heavily invested in the online projections of ourselves. And as that happens, maybe it's time to ask ourselves - how vulnerable are we, really? ☐

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you're a victim of cyberbullying, here's what you can do, says the Marine Parade Family Services Centre:

- * Stop or block all communication with the bully.
- * Refrain from escalating the bullying by retaliating.
- * Save a copy of the incident as evidence.
- * Talk to someone you trust.
- * Report the incident to parents, school authorities, internet service providers or web moderators.
- * Make a police report if the incident includes threats of physical or sexual violence.

THE OFFICE BAG
 The perfect work bag... plenty of boxes to fit... to be practical in sh... spacious and sophis... This cowhide leather... Toscano handbag fr... Mandy Collection ha... structured shape and... of compartments, ma... an appropriate carri... office paraphernalia.

ever you share [online],
whether it's true or not."

girls.
me when
heated on
o his dad
se bad
e, how
ters."
imately,

is "a lack of self-confidence," Tim posits.
"When you know you can't make it
in real life, you don't have confidence
in yourself. So you use the veil of
anonymity to recreate your identity,
and you can be whoever you say
you are."

The key here is anonymity. Behind
the safety of our monitors, people feel
entitled to say whatever they want,
be whoever they want. These fictions
can be all fun and games, but they can
also be dangerously disruptive to a
person's sense of self. "Fantasy is one of
the drugs of online addiction," explains
Jennie Wan from the Marine Parade
Family Services Centre's me2you cyber-
counselling service. "There's a pull and
push factor. The push factor comes
from whatever unhappiness you have
in your real life, and the more rewards
you get from your virtual reality, the
more it pulls you. You don't have to
deal with the problems of reality, like
your financial status, social status, your
personality, even your appearance.
Whatever you share with others, no one
knows whether it's true or not. That's
the fantasy, and it's addictive."

Behind the veil

There is one point that all the people
I speak to are unanimous about,
when there

SINGAPORE
1/2014
10.com.sg

LOCAL
ACTION

revealed!
the best in
music, food
and art in
Singapore