



SOCIAL MEDIA: ISSUES AND TIPS FOR TEENS

OVEREXPOSURE: Includes both posting a great deal of personal/private information and self-published sexual pictures (sexting, selfies, etc.).

The invincibility factor: we can have an illusion of anonymity and privacy; our actions online do pose risks. What we do online can have far reaching consequences.

What can we do:

- Think before you post: what would family, a prospective employer or college recruiter think of it? Almost all employers search job candidates online.
- What we post is PUBLIC AND PERMANENT! Anything can still be online even when you go back to delete it – don't believe the "10-second" hype (e.g., picture is only visible for 10 seconds) apps (Instagram, Snapchat) are promising.
- If you talking about sex or posting sexually suggestive pictures, they may draw attention both from perpetrators AND law enforcement.
- Privacy is a myth in social media - think critically: YOU CAN'T TAKE IT BACK!

ADULT PREDATORS: Most likely scenario: kids/teens are lured into online contact and then persuaded over time to meet offline, force is rarely used; use promise of acceptance and love.

- It's usually not 'Stranger Danger.'
 - 70% - 90% of sexual abuse committed by persons known to the victim.
- Deception is not the norm.
 - 5% of offenders tried to deceive victims about being older adults. Most deception involved promises of love and romance. Predators use GROOMING (manipulation of their victims)!
 - Start with chat rooms, go to Instant Messaging, then e-mail, then cell phone.
- Force is seldom used.
 - 5% of offenders used force, 16% coercion, 3% used abduction

What we can do:

- THINK CRITICALLY about communicating via social media with people you don't know; predators try to MANIPULATE us into being in contact with them. They try to convince us they really care – if someone is too good to be true, don't believe it!

CYBERBULLYING/"DRAMA" & HARRASSMENT: An array of activities including: teasing others about appearance, sexuality, etc., embarrassing someone using text, photos, etc., making threats and using physical intimidation.

What can we do:

- Do not to reply or respond to what is being said about you. Inform your friends they should also not respond your behalf.
- Be an ally – when you see something nasty posted about someone else, you can be encouraging to the victim (anonymously when needed).
- Be choosy about what you post about yourself – gives less information for others to use against them.
- Tell adults when you need help. Ask them to help you figure out a solution
- Inform the Internet service provider, school, and/or law enforcement when necessary.
- Inform school and police when necessary.

- Don't erase or delete messages: keep them as evidence. Block bully from access to cell phone and social networking sites.
- NEVER share passwords with any friends, not even best friends!!!
- DON'T BULLY OR HARRASS OTHERS! You may find that you become a victim yourself.

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL: Access to adult-related material in general.

What we can do:

- If you see something that bothers you, talk to adults about it!

OVERALL TIPS:

- Never post your personal information, such as a cell phone number, address, or the name of your school.
- Be kind to others on all forms of social media – if you wouldn't say something to another person's face, don't post or text it!
- Be aware that information you give out through social networking sites, instant messages, e-mails, and blogs could put you at risk of bullying and other types of victimization. Also be aware that posting information about your friends could put them at risk.
- Use privacy options on all social networking sites.
- Report misconduct to Internet providers and/or social networking sites.

RESOURCES:

- www.NetSmartz.org/TEENS or www.nsteens.org
- www.safeteens.com
- http://kidshealth.org/teen/safety/safebasics/internet_safety.html
- <http://teens.webmd.com/features/teen-internet-safety-tips>
- <https://www.aacc.edu/technology/file/GamingTips.pdf>

Sources: www.netsmartz.org and www.netfamilynews.org.

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