

Sexting, Texting and Social Media — the New World of Teen Communications

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As if learning to navigate sex, love, lust, affection, relationships, honor, morality, and trust weren't already difficult enough for a teen to do in private, kids now have to do all that living in a world where one stupid text message or email can become public, permanent, and prosecutable. Errors can include accidentally sending a photo to the wrong number, to adolescent squabbles uploaded to cyberspace, to pedophiles and pornography mongers targeting adolescents whose profiles showed exploitable vulnerabilities. This presentation will provide a view into the new world of teen communication and implications for child safety, prevention and interventions that can and should be done at home, school and in the community.

Attendees will be able to:

- Examine the youth's world of texting, sexting and social media
- Review statistics and case examples of sexting incidents and exploitation and what to do about them
- Discover effective preventative and educational measures
- Explore implications for parents, mental health providers, child welfare services, and schools to moderate the influence of social media on children and youth

Relevant Data:

- At least 20% of high school students report ever having sent a naked picture of themselves through text or email, almost twice that number report sending sexually suggestive messages. (Temple, et. al. 2012; The National Campaign, 2010)
- The most common recipient of explicit, on-line images is a boyfriend/girlfriend (83%), the least common recipient is someone known only online. (15%) (The National Campaign, 2010)
- There is conflicting research on whether or not sexting is correlated with risky sexual behaviors. (Hasinoff, 2012, Temple 2012)
- 46% of teens say that parents most influence their decisions abuse sex, a finding consistent over the 20 years. (Albert, 2010)
- 11 states have laws making sexting a misdemeanor and 4 have laws making it a felony; 20 states have special provisions for minors sending or receiving. (Hinduja and Patchin 2015)
- While sexting is becoming more common, the majority of teens report that they are 'bothered' by being asked to send a naked picture. (Temple, et al, 2012)

References

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