**Internet Safety**

In today’s world, most every youth has access to technology and the internet. Various forms of technology include smart devices, tablets, computers, and video gaming systems. Through the internet, a great deal of content is accessible and only a click away. With access to the internet it means youth can be exposed to risky, illegal and sexually explicit materials, as well as cyberbullying, sexting, and online predators. The capabilities of blocking, filtering, and monitoring software can be overcome by a determined child. Many teenagers live out their lives online, ultimately in the public’s eye. Teenagers may share private photos on social media sites, send tweets and text messages, as opposed to calling. In today’s world, social media is a large part of a teenager’s life and when it comes to sharing information, they often share, text or post information most adults would deem, not appropriate to share.

When it comes to children and teenagers accessing and using the internet, what they can access, and internet safety are important terms that come to mind. In efforts to promote internet safety, adult guidance and supervision are necessary. Examples of concerning encounters that children and teens may experience are discussed below:

**Exposure to inappropriate material:** Sexually explicit materials, such as adult and child pornography. Many young people are learning about sexual intercourse from the internet, media, or their peers. Without guidance from parents and guardians, children may develop flawed views and opinions of their self-image based on unreasonable interpretations, which could affect their development in the long run.

Aside from sexual content, children may be exposed to **risky and illegal materials.** For example, some sites offer instructions on actions such as picking locks, playing alcohol games and/or how to obtain access to weapon-like materials/objects. Other sites may encourage dangerous behaviors like cutting, anorexia, and suicide. Some sites will include tips on how to hide these risky behaviors from friends and family.

**Sexting:** Sexting is defined as, “sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, and/or images.” There are psychological and legal risks that come with sexting. Images could end up being sent out beyond the intended audience.

**Cyberbullying:** “Bullying through the internet.” Some common forms of cyberbullying are rumor spreading, physical threats, photoshopping, and identity theft, to name a few. Some signs that your child may be a victim are: appearing stressed when receiving an email or message, isolating themselves from family and friends, signs of low self-esteem (fatigue, insomnia, headaches, sensitivity to criticism, social withdrawal, etc.), declining grades, and poor eating or sleeping habits.

**Online Predators:** “Criminals who use the internet to steal personal information, or prey on victims to commit identity theft, stalking, kidnapping, or child sex abuse.” Means predators may utilize to reach youth include instant messaging, social networking sites, chat rooms or cell phones. If being preyed upon, possible warning signs that a youth may exhibit include: “withdrawing from family and friends, minimizing or hiding the screen when an adult comes in the room, inappropriate images or websites on their computer, strange phone numbers on the phone bill, and gifts in the mail from unknown people.”

When it comes to the safety of our youth, it is important for parents and adults to allow opportunities for mutual exchange of information and to be open in our communications. It is recommended that parents and adults have discussions about the dangers of the internet, know what current apps youth are using, have access to their passwords and ensure their social media profiles are set to private.

Article Resources: Teaching kids about internet safety ([www.edu.gcfclobal.org](http://www.edu.gcfclobal.org))

The dangers of Teen Sexting ([www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com))

Cyberbullying ([www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org))

How to protect teenagers from online predators ([www.caredash.com](http://www.caredash.com))

**Between Families Newsletter  
Training Questions  
Internet Safety  
May 2020**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ½ HOUR CREDIT.**

Questions:

1. List 2 devices that enable children/teens to access the internet.

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1. In efforts to promote internet safety, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are necessary.
2. List 2 possible internet dangers Children/teens may encounter.

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1. Internet sites never offer insight on actions such as picking locks, playing alcohol games or how to obtain access to weapon-like objects.
2. True
3. False
4. Sexting is defined as.
5. Calling and messaging photographs of puppies and kittens
6. Sending, receiving, or forwarding messages, photographs, and/or images with foul language in them.
7. Sending, receiving, or forwarding messages, photographs, and/or images that are sexually explicit.
8. There are no psychological or legal risks with sexting.
9. True
10. False
11. Which of the following is not a form of cyberbullying?
12. Spreading rumors
13. Liking another person’s Facebook post(s)
14. Stalking
15. Physical threats
16. Online Predators are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who use the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to steal personal information to commit identity theft, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or child sex abuse.
17. List 2 signs that a youth might be a victim of cyberbullying: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
18. When it comes to safety of our youth, it is not important to consider open lines of communication?
19. True
20. False