

"Sexting" A Cheat Sheet for Parents

What is it?

"Sexting" means sending or receiving a text message that has sexual content. Sending nude, semi-nude, or erotic pictures or video via cell phones.

- Dr. Sari Locker

Who's doing this?

1 in 5 teens have taken nude or semi-nude photos of themselves and sent them to someone or posted them online to be "fun or flirtatious."

73% of those surveyed said "...they knew sending sexually suggestive content "can have serious negative consequences," yet 22% said it's "no big deal."

-Survey Commissioned by National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy released Dec. 2008

What can I do?

Have a **conversation** with your kids. **You must discuss cell phone and on-line safety.** You wouldn't allow them to operate a car without safety tips and training, the same goes for technology.

Teens may not understand the long reaching effects of sexting. Talk about how their "**digital footprint**" **will last forever**, potentially jeopardizing safety, job opportunities and their reputation. Your **teen could be charged with a crime** for sending, receiving, or creating a photo involving someone under age 18 and if charged will be **registered as a sex offender**.

Talking Points

Use a real example to explain why you are concerned. For example, recently a young woman committed suicide after she was **harassed and bullied** relentlessly at her school when a nude photo that she had sent her boyfriend was forwarded to all of her peers. Make sure your kids understand that **nothing** they do on the internet or their cell phone **is ever truly private or anonymous**.

Stay current. Visit www.netlingo.com to learn the text acronyms your kids use and www.getnetwise.org/videotutorials for other safety resources.

After discussing cell and internet safety, have your kids sign a **Family Safety Plan for cell/computer usage**. You can find this and many other safety tips on our website at www.jwrc.org.



Want to hear more?

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