

# WE NEED TO TALK:

## SEXTING AND SHARING CONTENT VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

This is the third of our four-part newsletter in the “We Need to Talk” series. In this issue we will address texting, sexting, and the sharing of questionable content via social media. On Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> of Education Week, we will be addressing healthy relationships, sexting, and the potential lasting effects of impulsive and improper choices.

According to *Project Teen Canada*, 54 per cent of teenagers use cell phones daily. For parents, cell phones are an easy and practical way to stay connected to and keep tabs on their kids while giving them independence. But for young people, cell phones are much more than a tool for chatting with mom or dad – they’re an essential part of their social lives.

On an emotional level, cell phones represent intimate multimedia journals that capture important moments in the lives of youth and their friends. Unfortunately, some of these moments may not be ones that we’d like to have a permanent record of or see shared with unintended audiences. In recent years “sexting” – where teens exchange sexually explicit messages and images – has become a growing concern. Perceived anonymity and false beliefs that their texts and/or images will remain private to the receiver, may lead some youth to oversharing. Research suggests that youth engage in sexting for a variety of reasons including; feeling pressured, searching for belonging or acceptance, wanting to be popular, and a perceived normalcy that exists around sexting.



While texting is a fun and fast way of communicating, youth quite often say or do things by texting that they may not otherwise do in person. Unfortunately, the vast majority of young people seem unaware of the short-term costs or long-term ramifications associated with their actions. The tone of some text messages can be easily misinterpreted. While the sender may send a text with good intentions, the receiver may view it as offensive. While youth might willingly send sexually explicit text or nude photos to a boy/girlfriend, they do so without considering the possibility it could be sent to others. When technology is misused, disrespected, or abused it can lead to very serious consequences for youth at home, at school and with the police.

### **We encourage you to discuss with your child:**

#### **In a healthy relationship, private information is treated with respect and trust.**

- Those who really care about you don't take personal, private information you share with them in confidence, and tell or show others. Real friends don't use your personal information as gossip. If someone you thought was a friend doesn't keep your secrets, then they are not acting like a true friend. However, if your secrets involve things that may impact your safety, it's ok for real friends to talk to safe adults about it.

#### **In an unhealthy relationship, private information can be used to take advantage of you and to control you.**

- Anyone who uses your trust and friendship to control you, (i.e. making you do something you do not feel comfortable doing or else they will tell people something you told them in confidence), is using you. Avoid these people like the plague.

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## Texting Glossary:

Please Note: This is not an exhaustive list for a more complete list visit:  
<https://texted.ca/app/en/acronictionary>

asl	age, sex, location
brb	be right back
btw	by the way
diku	do I know you
f2f	face to face
fyeo	for your eyes only
idc	I don't care
idk	I don't know
ipn	I'm posting naked
kpc	keeping parents clueless
L8R	later
nvm	never mind
p911	parent alert
prw	parents are watching
rl	real life
tm	trust me
ttyl	talk to you later
ouk	are you ok
wbu	what about you
wtgp	want to go private

