



PORN



SEX

**PLEASURE
Vs PROFIT**

SEXTING
INFORMATION PACK
FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

SEXTING

WHAT IS SEXTING?

Sexting is sending sexually explicit messages via mobile phone, email, web chat, social networking sites, Bluetooth or instant messenger. To put it simply Sexting = sex + texting.

Sexually explicit would include naked images, pictures of genitals, masturbation, and ejaculation. Images most commonly being shared include BYM exposing or flashing their genitals as well as masturbating or ejaculating. GYW share images of themselves undressing or naked, exposing or flashing their genitals as well as masturbating. All of these types of acts could be considered pornographic.

What is concerning about the activity is its rapidly increasing popularity and it not merely an extension of 'I'll show you mine if you show me yours' behaviour. Explicit images are also often taken when the victim was not in a position to make a good decision, such as at a party where large amounts of alcohol have been consumed or when consent was not given to the sex being filmed and shared.

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

Technology has advanced and mobile phones now have the capability to record and send photos and video. With the ease of this, sending suggestive and explicit messages and pictures has increased, especially among teens. (Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project 2009 – <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1093/generations-online>) The availability of the means to do this has been accompanied by the pressure and expectations that CYP should adopt adult behaviours and they are using these images as part of self-promotion and branding online.

There are also expectations on YM to have images of girlfriends and partners and they are asking for these to be provided. This entitlement needs to be challenged and YM need to know that it is not acceptable to use these images in any way to blackmail, humiliate or embarrass. In addition possession and distribution of the images may constitute an offence even if the YW has 'willingly' provided them.

HOW IS IT HAPPENING?

It is becoming increasingly common for young people to take and share sexually explicit images. It is difficult to give exact numbers but different surveys suggest around one third of young people are doing this. 70% of 11-18 year olds surveyed were found to have known the sender of the sexually explicit message personally. 23% of messages were found to have come from a current partner, 45% from friends and 2% from adults. (MTV / AP Study 'Thin Line' – <http://www.athinline.org/about#research>)

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?

CYP are often unaware of the actual and potential consequences of their actions. Once in cyberspace these images can never be erased and can be transmitted around the world in a very short space of time. Again possession and distribution may constitute an offence, depending on the nature of the images.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Parents must be prepared to discuss this issue with their children prior to secondary school as these behaviours are regularly seen at S1 and S2 level. It is imperative that protective adults embrace technology for the valuable tool that it is and engage with children in cyberspace as well as in the real world. CYP need the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills to safely navigate cyberspace, to identify risks and take appropriate steps to keep themselves safe.

Key messages to get across to young people:

- Don't assume anything you send or post is going to remain private.
- There is no changing your mind in cyberspace – anything you send or post will never truly go away.
- Don't give in to the pressure to do something that makes you uncomfortable, even in cyberspace.
- Consider the recipient's reaction.
- Nothing is truly anonymous.

WARN YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF SEXTING.

It is important to remind your children of the dangers of sexting, including the legal implications and the dangers of sexual predators.

REMIND CHILDREN TO THINK BEFORE THEY ACT.

Often children do not consider the full implications of sexting. Make sure to fully educate them so they know exactly what the dangers are. Hopefully they will then be less likely to do something they will later regret.

TELL CHILDREN THAT SENDING OR POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY IS ILLEGAL.

Tell your child that it is illegal to possess or distribute naked photos of anyone who is under-age, and that the penalties for breaking these laws are severe.

WARN THEM ABOUT SEXUAL PREDATORS.

Remind your children how easy it is for photos to fall in to the wrong hands, and warn them that once a photo is online they will be unable to track it and it might be there forever.

WARN THEM NEVER TO ASK ANOTHER PERSON FOR AN IMAGE.

You need to talk with your CYP about the potential consequences for them and others of taking, sending or distributing sexual images. They should not put any pressure, emotional blackmail or threats on another person to send images and they should not be any part of a chain where this is happening. They need to be aware that this is illegal if anyone involved is under the age of 18.

TALK ABOUT WHY PEOPLE HUMILIATE, BLACKMAIL OR BULLY OTHERS THROUGH IMAGES.

It seems that the potential of new technology has added another way in which young people can achieve status with their peers. The sharing of images has been linked to young people, usually young men, vying for power within their peer group and using others, usually young women's images as the means to do that. We need to talk with our CYP as to why it is unacceptable to be part of any humiliation, bullying or blackmailing.

PARENTS SHOULD LEARN HOW TO USE AND MONITOR THEIR CHILDREN'S MOBILE PHONES.

Familiarise yourself with your child's mobile phone and keep an eye on its usage and content, and get to know what it is and is not capable of doing.

PARENTS SHOULD CHECK PHOTO GALLERIES ON THEIR CHILDREN'S FACEBOOK AND MYSPACE ACCOUNTS.

Shoulder-surf when your children are online, and take a look around their social networking pages. Take the plunge and make your own account, get to know the sites, and make sure to keep up with your children's activities when online. Make sure to keep an eye on their page to ensure they don't willingly or otherwise post up information or photos that they may regret.

GIVE YOUR CHILDREN CLEAR RULES ON WHAT THEY CAN AND CAN'T DO WITH THEIR MOBILE PHONE.

Establish a firm set of rules of what your child can and cannot do with their mobile phones including consequences if they break the rules.

This was abbreviated from a full fact sheet at: www.community.nsw.gov.au.



www.womenssupportproject.co.uk