



TECHNOLOGY IN THE CARE ENVIRONMENT PT.2

Continuum Consulting Australia PTY. LTD.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social networking sites allow people to stay connected with family and friends. This is particularly beneficial for socially or physically isolated individuals, such as those with a physical disability or those from rural or remote areas. For many young people and adults, social media engagement is seen as being no different to their offline interactions with people. The physical age of a child, their level of maturity, and resilience can affect their ability to have positive experiences on social media.

On average, children aged 10 to 14 years old have 2 active social media accounts. These include;

- Instagram
- Facebook
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Tumblr
- YouTube



RISKS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Sharing of personal information.

This includes the sharing of an individual's full name, birthday, age, home address, phone number, email address, something that shows their face, something that shows their school uniform and the name of their school.

Other risks:

- Anonymity - It can be easier to say and do things online that you might not do offline.
- Sharing too much - Images which are okay for close friends can become an issue if shared more widely.
- Online friends vs. real friends - It is easy for people to lie online. It is important to be careful about how well you really know your online 'friends'.
- Location services - Many social networking sites use location services; this can allow people to physically locate people on these sites.
- FOMO - Having a fear of missing out of seeing others partaking in activities.

PORNOGRAPHY AND INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

It is natural and healthy for young people to be curious about bodies and sexuality, but the ease in which young people access pornography and produce their own sexual imagery online creates a range of challenges and risks.

How do kids find pornography online?

- Your child may actively search for explicit content out of curiosity or perhaps because their friends are talking about it.
- A friend or sibling (or adult) may share inappropriate content.
- Your child could accidentally type the wrong word or phrase into an internet search or click a link to something that looks interesting but turns out to be pornographic.
- They might click on links in phishing, spam emails, or pop-ups (even on harmless websites).

How can I protect my child?

- Set some house rules: Discuss the issue with all siblings and talk about where and when it is ok to use computers and devices.
- Stay engaged: Talking regularly and openly with your child about what they are doing online will help build trust.
- Use the available technology: Take advantage of the parental controls available on devices, and ensure 'safe search' mode is enabled on browsers.
- Build resilience: Talking about sexualised content can help young people process what they come across online and reinforce the importance of consent and respectful relationships.
- Consider raising the subject of pornography yourself, where age appropriate. This will protect your child from the potential impacts of coming across this content accidentally.
- Take a long-term view. Reinforce that if they see something they do not understand, they can ask you about it.

CYBER BULLYING

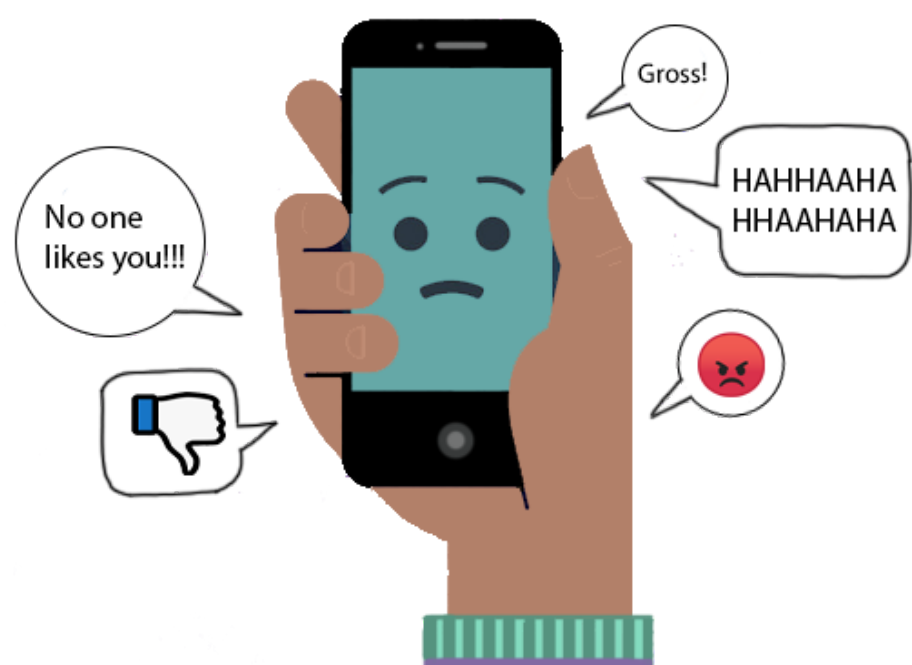
Cyber-bullying is the use of technology to bully a person or group with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically, or even physically.

Cyber bullying can include using instant messaging, social networking sites, blogs, online games, phone calls, video calls and SMS or MMS to:

- Post or share embarrassing videos or images
- Exclude or intimidate others
- Repeatedly send threatening messages
- Harass others online
- Send or share hurtful or abusive messages
- Participate in malicious online gossip or chat.

Signs to watch for:

- Being upset after using the internet or phone
- Changes in personality: becoming more withdrawn, anxious, sad or angry
- Appearing more lonely or distressed
- Unexpected changes in friendship groups
- A decline in sleep patterns
- Avoidance of school or clubs
- A decline in physical health
- Becoming secretive about online activities and mobile phone use.



What can I do?

- Talk with your child about cyberbullying before it happens, creating strategies to address any potential issues and reassure them you will be there to support them.
- Listen, think and stay calm. Try to remain calm, open minded and non-judgemental.
- Collect evidence. Have screenshots of bullying behaviour in case it needs to be reported.
- Block and manage contact with others. Advise your child not to respond to these messages and help block or unfriend the people sending these messages.
- Report to site or service. Many social media, games, apps and websites allow you to report abusive content and request that it is removed.
- Get help and support. Check in with your child regularly about how they feel. If you notice any changes that concern you, seek counselling or other support services.

NUDES AND SEXTING

"Sexting" is a term that the adult and media world use to refer to sending photos of sexual nature using digital technology. Depending on the age, nude photographs can constitute child pornography.

49%

Report by The Australian Institute of Criminology

of 13-18 year olds have sent a sexual video or image of themselves.

What is it?

- The creating, sharing, sending or posting of sexually explicit messages or images via the internet, social media, mobile phones or other electronic devices.
- Other terms used to describe sexting include 'sending pics', 'nudes', 'N00dz' and 'dick pics'.
- Young people may engage in this behaviour for various reasons including intimacy with their partner; in the hope to gain a partner; the belief that it is the 'norm' in young relationships, gained from seeing other young people to do it in the media; or through exposure to pornography.
- Ghost, decoy or vault apps can be used to hide images. These include Secret Calculator, Hide It Pro, and NQ Vault.
- Apps such as SnapChat are used for sharing as they use 'erasable' images that 'disappear' after a short period of time, although entire deletion is not guaranteed.

Images based abuse.

Commonly referred to as 'revenge porn' within media, nude or sexual images are shared without consent of those in the picture.

'Sextortion' is when someone threatens to share an individual's private images if victims do not provide images of a sexual nature, sexual favours or money.

What do I do?

- Do not panic.
- Talk to your child calmly and try to find out as much about the matter as you can.
- Use your discretion to manage the issue and avoid judgement and labelling.
- Encourage open discussion with your child about what content they might be sharing, why they do it or why they would do it.
- Consider seeking advice from support services or your child's school.
- Understand the police may be involved.

HAVING A CONVERSATION

Plan

- Work out what you want to say and how you want to say it, depending on the issue.
- Go somewhere together where you can talk privately. Being within an environment where you can talk without interruption can make things more comfortable for everyone.
- Talking while doing something together, such as a walk or a car trip.
- Think of some positive examples of good behaviour that you can use to contrast negative or harmful behaviours.

Listen, don't judge

- Let your child know you are there to help them, no matter what. Listening will also help you understand their attitudes and respond to specific issues.

Ask questions

- Asking questions about how they feel and what they know helps you to gauge your child's level of knowledge and keeps you from lecturing.

Get help if you need it

- You could seek advice from a counsellor.
- Your child's teacher may also be able to point you towards suitable resources to help you explain things.

Talking about sexting and pornography with your child

These tips might provide some useful prompts, but you should tailor the discussion based on your knowledge of your child and their level of maturity and development.



- *'Do any of the kids at school ever talk about it?'* Sometimes asking questions about your child's peers feels safer; sometimes questions about your child may be too confronting.
- If they have seen it, ask *'Did someone show it to you, or did you find it yourself?'* This can open a conversation to help find out what you can about how they have found it and why they were searching for it.
- If you know your child has been exposed to (or is viewing) pornography, it is better to say, *'When I found you looking at pornography the other night...'* rather than act as if it didn't happen.
- If they have seen it, reassure they are not in trouble. Ask, *'When you saw it, how did it make you feel?'* Discuss those feelings.

Check if your child has any other questions and that you have explained things enough for them. Let them know any question is OK to ask, nothing is off limits and that if you are unable to answer one of their questions, that you will find out the answer. Then use this as an opportunity to have another talk.

For kids under 8 years old

- Finding a balance between protecting your child and avoiding increasing curiosity.
- Discuss pornography as a broader discussion about sex.
- Focusing on the child's feeling rather than on what they saw.
- Responding to your child's curiosity with honesty and candour.

For pre-teens (8-12 years old)

- Kids may be curious about sex and sexuality as they enter puberty and adolescence.
- They may hear things in the playground or at a friend's home.
- It may be a good time to start planning conversations if you haven't already.

For Teenagers (13+ years old)

- Discussing underlying messages about power and relationships within the media.
- Equip them with skills about what they can say and do to protect themselves and their wellbeing.
- Inspire them by engaging in just and respectful gender relations in different settings.