For more resources visit NetSmartz.org.

**For Teens**

**Tips to Prevent Sexting**

- You are uncomfortable with it, probably not trustworthy.
- If anyone pressesures you, image to anyone, you do not need to say it, but you do need to say it.
- Remember that you can control what image or video is sent.
- Before hitting send, consider if someone else wants everyone to see the image or video.
- Never take a picture of someone without their consent when you are violating their trust.
- If you forward the image, be sure to no one.

**Before Hitting Send**

- Consider if you want everyone to see the image or video.
- Remember that you can control what image or video is sent.
- Before hitting send, consider if someone else wants everyone to see the image or video.
- Never take a picture of someone without their consent when you are violating their trust.
- If you forward the image, be sure to no one.

**How likely is it that images and messages intended for one person will be seen by others?**
- How likely is it that images and messages intended for one person will be seen by others?
- Why?
- Why?
- What could happen to you if you send or forward a naked picture?
- Do you think it’s ok to send “sexy” messages or images?
- Have you ever received a naked picture on your cell phone?
- If so, how did you react?
- What is sexting?
- Are parents pressured to send them?
- Are parents pressured to send them? Do they receive embarrassing photos or text?
- Are parents pressured to send them? Do they receive embarrassing photos or texts? Do they pressure their children to send and receive these types of messages?
A: What are the consequences of sexting?

Sexting may spread very quickly and widely. Don’t think about the implications of how quickly and widely digital information can spread. Consider the emotional and psychological development of children and young people. You should discuss these issues with your children and equip them to use their phones safely.

A: Why do teens sext?

Some teens are responding to a social pressure to do something that they’re not ready to do.

A: What can I do to help prevent my child from sexting?

Talk to your child and agree on the rules for using their phone. Make sure they know the consequences of sexting and how to deal with it.

A: How can I protect my child from online predators?

There are a lot of things you can do. Help your child understand the risks and the potential consequences of online predators. Teach them to be wary of unknown people and how to protect themselves.

A: What is the risk of sexting?

Sexting can have serious consequences for both the people involved and their friends and family. It can also affect their mental health and lead to depression and anxiety.

A: How can I help my child with sexting?

Help your child understand the risks and the potential consequences of sexting. Teach them to be wary of unknown people and how to protect themselves.

A: What should I do if my child has been sexted?

Talk to your child and agree on the rules for using their phone. Make sure they know the consequences of sexting and how to deal with it.

A: How can I help my child with sexting?

Help your child understand the risks and the potential consequences of sexting. Teach them to be wary of unknown people and how to protect themselves.
THIS IS HARD, BUT YOU’RE ALREADY DOING GREAT BY BEING HERE.

Your children are safer because of your support and guidance through all of life’s challenges. Safety in the digital age is new, and chances are your children feel more comfortable navigating digital communities than you do, while knowing less than they need to stay safe. There are a few things you can do to help your child avoid getting into tricky, and sometimes dangerous, situations like sextortion.

YOUR NEXT STEPS
TALK ABOUT IT WITH YOUR CHILDREN, THEN TALK ABOUT IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

#1 TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY

Talking about sexting is an easy entry point, plus it is language kids get.

PROTIP:

Sexting is sharing/receiving sexually explicit messages or nude/partially nude images usually via cellphones. Check out these conversation starters below and visit www.netsmartz.org/Sexting for more.

Has anyone ever sent you a sexual picture or sext? [You can probably just say sext if you’re comfortable.]

Has anyone ever asked or pressured you to send a sexual picture or sext? [Explain that somebody trying to pressure them into sending intimate images isn’t somebody they should trust.]

Do you think it is okay to forward sexual or embarrassing images? Why? [Emphasize the importance of not forwarding these images. It could be really hurtful for the person in the image, and your child could get in trouble for forwarding. Plus, nobody has the right to decide who should see someone else’s body.]
YOUR NEXT STEPS... CONTINUED
TALK ABOUT SEXTORTION AND THE COMMON WAYS IT HAPPENS

#2 BE THERE UNCONDITIONALLY

Kids experiencing sextortion are so scared of getting in trouble. They’re worried about shaming their parents, that they’ll get suspended from school, judged by friends or in trouble with the police. These fears can even be suggested by the abuser to maintain control over them, and sadly these things do happen. These fears keep kids silent, and that has led to terrible tragedies. Your fear and frustration is normal, but they need to know you’ll always get through tough situations together. Even if you think they know you’ll support them, having these conversations can make a big difference in them sharing their experiences with you when something feels off or goes wrong.

PROTIP:
Use them with your kids - ask them to show you how! Just know that if you follow their account, they may create a second account to post things they don’t want you to see.

#3 KEEP LEARNING

Keeping up with the fast-paced changes in today’s technology is hard. Download new apps and try them out. Ask your kid what their favorite apps are. The more you talk about this with your child, the easier it will be to understand if something bad is happening, and the easier it will be for them to share uncomfortable situations with you. Some of our favorite apps [www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews] that kids are using today [October 2017] are musical.ly, Snapchat, Kik, WhatsApp and Instagram. These will definitely change, so ask your kids what is cool now! Go to the app store on your phone, search for them in the search bar and sign up.

#4 SPREAD THE WORD

By educating each other, we create a stronger safety net for all of our children. Share our video with your kids and your friends. The more people know about some of the ways sextortion happens, the better equipped they’ll be to handle these situations. You can also bring FOSI’s “How To Be A Good Digital Parent” Program to your school [www.fosi.org/gdppresentation] and teach other parents how to confidently navigate the web with their kids [full toolkit provided].

#5 ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

We can all take small steps to push for a better future for our kids. Ask school officials if there are policies in place to address sextortion. If you want to go bigger, learn more about the revenge porn laws in your state [www.cagoldberglaw.com/states-with-revenge-porn-laws]. In many cases, these laws will cover sextortion as well. Don’t see your state? Call your lawmaker and ask them to consider legislation. Follow these instructions [www.cybercivilrights.org/educate-lawmakers] to make a call today.

www.stopsextortion.com
Many teens believe that anything they want to do with *their* bodies and *their* phones is *their* business. They enjoy the privacy and freedom that cell phones give them from their parents and guardians, but what happens when they use their cell phones to explore their sexuality?

Sexting is the sending or distributing of nude or partially nude images. Scary headlines may lead you to believe this is a common practice among teens with extreme consequences. Although the actual numbers vary, many researchers agree that most teens are not sexting, and those who are usually aren’t subjected to harsh penalties. However, there are still risks to consider for teens who sext. These tips will help you talk about sexting with your teen so you’re both prepared if it ever becomes an issue.

### The Risks
Teens who take, send or forward sexting images may face:
- Embarrassment if their picture is shown to family, friends, classmates and even strangers.
- Bullying or harassment from peers who judge them for sexting.
- Trouble at school if they have violated a school policy. Some teens have been kicked off of athletic teams or suspended from school.
- Future consequences if the image follows them for a long time. It may be seen by college admissions officers or even potential employers.
- Trouble with the police. In extreme cases, kids can be charged for sending or forwarding nude images of minors.

### How to Talk About It
- Ask questions to make it clear you’re comfortable discussing it. “Has anyone ever asked or pressured you to sext? Have you ever received a sexy picture from someone?”
- Discuss what characterizes a healthy relationship. “Any person pressuring you to sext isn’t someone you should trust. Boyfriends and girlfriends come and go, but a sexual image of you can stay around forever.”
- Explain how quickly images can spread online. “Once the photo is sent, it’s out of your control.”
- Emphasize the importance of not forwarding sexts they receive. “You do not have the right to decide who should see someone else’s body. Forwarding images is a major violation of trust and exposes the person in the picture to potential ridicule. Imagine how you would feel if someone betrayed your trust by sharing a nude photo of you.”

### IF YOUR CHILD’S IMAGE IS ALREADY OUT THERE
- Help them report it to the websites/apps where the image is posted. Make it clear your child is a minor, and it was posted without his or her consent.
- Talk to school officials so they can help stop the spread of the image and any harassment that may be happening.
- Contact the police if your child is being blackmailed, harassed or if it involves an adult.
- Above all, offer support. Assure them that you’ll get through this together. Consider seeking professional counseling if they need help coping.

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Dr. Abigail Judge, Harvard Review of Psychiatry, 2012

### Talking to Teens About Sexting

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A program of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

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THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES of taking, sending, or forwarding a sexual picture of someone else, even if it’s of you. You could face embarrassment at school or home, and in some cases, even a police investigation.

IF YOU FORWARD a sexual picture of someone without their consent, you are violating their trust and exposing them to potential ridicule. It’s not up to you to decide who should see their body. So don’t forward it. If you receive a sexual picture of yourself without your consent, don’t give in and send it to anyone. Remember that anyone who tries to get you to do something you are uncomfortable with is probably not trustworthy.

NEVER TAKE images of yourself that you wouldn’t want everyone—your classmates, your teachers, your family, or your employer—to see. If explicit content of you or someone you know is online, visit MissingKids.org/GetHelpNow to learn how to contact various online platforms about removing your content.

REPORT EXPLICIT ONLINE CONTENT TO CYBERTIP.ORG. If explicit content of someone you know is online, visit MissingKids.org/Resources to learn how to contact various online platforms about removing your content and reporting explicit online content to CyberTipline.org.

BEFORE HITTING the image to anyone, think about the consequences. Friends, and so on… who should see their photo? Friends, and their friends, and their friends’ friends, and their friends’ friends, and their friends’ friends’ friends, and so on… Don’t give in and send it to a boyfriend or girlfriend. It could end up with their friends, and their friends, and their friends’ friends, and their friends’ friends, and so on…

BEFORE HITTING images of yourself, think about the consequences. You could face embarrassment at school or home, and even if it’s of someoneelbe, even if it is of someone you don’t know, forwarding a sexual picture of someone else is probably not trustworthy. If anyone pressures you to send a sexual picture, don’t give in and talk to an adult you trust. Remember that anyone who tries to get you to do something you are uncomfortable with is probably not trustworthy.

THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES.
or that your family will be.

Now your photo or video is out there.

Maybe it felt like you didn’t have a choice at all.

Get it removed from websites.

Help stop it from spreading.

Get emotional support.

Deal with bullies.

NetSmartz.org/TipSheets

But That’s Not True!

You may feel like there’s nothing you can do to escape this situation.

You may be worried that peers who bully you, see it will judge and be angry and disappointed.

You may be bullied and feel it will be your family who will be worried that you put your image out there.

And you don’t know what to do.

Maybe you fell in love.

Only It Didn’t.

While you can’t get your image back, you can take steps to:

Stay private.

No matter why you decided to sext, you probably thought that it would stay private.

No matter why you decided to sext, you probably thought that it would stay private.

At all.

A choice.

Don’t have like you maybe it felt.

Joke or dare.

Maybe it was a love in you fell.

Maybe it was a love in you fell.
What if I’m being blackmailed?

Blackmail is when someone tries to threaten or scare you into doing something. For example, teens may share sexual images with people they trust, only to have those people turn on them. They may threaten to send the images to teens’ families unless the teens share more images.

If you’re being blackmailed, you may feel helpless or guilty. You may think you don’t have the right to say “no” because you shared the first image willingly.

Wrong! Blackmail is illegal and you don’t have to take it.

You should:

• Stop any communications with blackmailers. They’ll try to use your conversations to threaten and manipulate you – don’t give them the chance. Even if you have already started communicating with them, it’s never too late to stop and report it.

• Block or remove the blackmailer from your contact list. If you decide to deactivate your accounts, contact the websites/apps for help.

• Make a report to the police and CyberTipline.org right away. Seriously. They can help. They may want to see any messages you’ve received from the blackmailer.

To a teacher:

Teachers can remind your classmates and code of conduct rules on bullying and help put a stop to any bullying behavior.

To the police:

They can help stop your image from spreading by working with websites/apps and law enforcement.

To a trusted adult:

An adult can offer advice, help you report, and coordinate your communications and responses.

To your school:

Your school can stand up for your rights and help put a stop to any bullying.

To your friends:

Your friends can stand up for you by not repeating or spreading the image.

To yourself:

You’re not alone. Other teens have been in the same situation and beaten it. You are not powerless. You can take charge of your situation and stand up to the person who is doing this to you.

If your pictures are being shared around school, your teacher and school administrators can help stop it by making clear there are consequences for sharing them.

REPORT IT:

• To the website or app. If you can, make a report to the website or app. They can help by removing the image and blocking the person who shared it. If they aren’t helping, contact the police or CyberTipline.org.

• To the police. They can help stop your image from spreading by working with websites/apps and law enforcement. If you feel the police are ignoring the bullying, ask your mom, dad, or guardian to champion your case at your school, with your teachers, and other adults.

DON’T GIVE UP

Having a nude or sexual image of yourself is embarrassing. It can make you feel vulnerable and isolated. But remember, other teens have been in the same situation you are – and they have beaten it. The people who have taken advantage of you want you to feel powerless. But you are not powerless. You are strong. You can take charge of your situation and take back control of your life.

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