

How can youth protect themselves online?

- Youth get to be in charge of the online spaces they create for themselves
- Be realistic! Not everyone has good intentions online and youth may be subject to bullying, catfishing, racism or stereotypes.
- Youth can always block & report someone online—Google how to block/report on the platform of use.
- Have conversations with youth about how they & their peers are being treated online.
- Sharing too much personal info online can reduce anyone’s privacy and safety.
 - Don’t post your full name, phone number, address, or where you work or school.
 - Use your first name or a nickname/username—share general info about your interests/hobbies.
 - It’s common to have a false sense of security that an app’s features can fully protect you. Having boundaries and keeping info private is still essential.
- Remember to engage in critical analysis in online interactions.

Be aware of these red flags while online dating:

- Little/no info on their profile.
- The info on their profile is changing often or the person has multiple profiles.
- Pushing for personal info.
- Changing plans last minute (ex. like the location or time of a meet up).

Helpful Websites & Apps

NeedHelpNow.ca

Help removing a picture from the internet, dealing with cyberbullying, and supporting friends

ICanBeSafeOnline.com

Tips for people with developmental disabilities to safely navigate online spaces

CyberTip.ca

Age-appropriate internet safety resources for parents/caregivers

Kitestring.io

Checks up on you while you’re out and alerts your emergency contacts if you don’t respond

Signal (Android, iOS)

Uses end to end encryption, no data collection of messages and phone calls

Vaulty (Android) or Private Photo Vault (iOS)

Allows you to password-protect pictures in a separate gallery

Burner (Android, iOS)

Generates a local phone number so you don’t have to share your real number with strangers



Questions? Text us anonymously

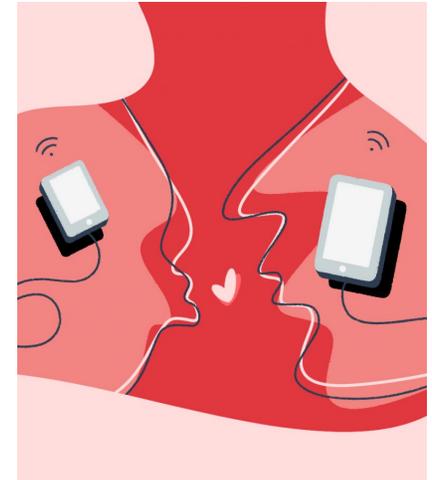
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Talking to Youth About Safer Sex & Tech



A guide for parents, guardians and youth-serving professionals to talk about using technology to connect. Covering risks and rewards, as well as tools for supporting youth to more safely navigate online interactions.

Talking about sex & technology **does not have to be it's own conversation.** Try adding supportive statements or discussions about sex in more common and comfortable conversations.

Let's understand the context of talking to youth about safer sex & tech use:

- Adults born after the year 2000, have grown up with internet access as their norm.
- Technology allows us to connect & communicate in many different ways (social media, emails, video or voice calls) and different relationship types (school or work, with family and friends or partners).
- Sex is constantly evolving as the internet and how we use it evolves. Everyone will have a unique approach to internet use within their relationships.
- Your relationship with youth will change as they age and as they gain more autonomy. Respecting their choices and privacy is key.
- Shame-based messaging does not discourage a behaviour, it discourages youth to be open about that behavior.
- Remember that just because something makes you uncomfortable doesn't mean it makes youth uncomfortable, or that it is inherently unsafe.
- Talking about safer sex and tech can be incorporated into other chats about technology.

Tips on Talking to Youth about Sex & Tech:

- Be proactive, get curious about tech use before issues arise. What do they already know about online safety?
- Ask what they enjoy about it. Validate the parts that make them feel good.
- Communicate that you or another designated trusted adult are there for help without blame if an issue arises.
- Instead of saying "should" statements turn to "if ____ then ____" statements to encourage safety behaviours:
 - If you're going to talk to people you don't know, then...
 - If you're going to send nudes, then...
 - If you're going to meet up with someone then...
 - If someone is harassing you, then...
- Use affirming messages like; you are allowed to set boundaries and limits, you do not have to respond/re-engage with every message, comment, or like.
- Verbalize the obvious: "you can say no to friends and strangers", "be kind", "respect boundaries".
- Help them assess appropriate vs. inappropriate online interactions.



Sexting can be a fun, exciting, and empowering way for people to experience their sexuality with others. In order to talk with youth about the risks of sexting, it is important to talk without judgement, shame or panic.

Why are they sexting and online dating?

- Dating apps allow simple ways to show interest in others by liking or interacting with their profile. The profiles that don't interest you, you don't have to engage with.
- You can flirt at a distance and in the comfort of your own environment which can help with shyness.
 - Be cautious because you can't read body language online.
- Get to know common interests or find out if there's a lack of compatibility before meeting up.
- You can meet people outside of your usual spaces or social circles.
- Sexting can be an additional means of connection in relationships where they also see each other in-person.
- Sexting or online interactions have no risk for pregnancy or STI's.
- Communicating about STI testing, boundaries, and all other sexy things might just feel more comfortable to start online.

Meeting up in-person with someone you met online:

- Meet in public where other people are around.
- Have your own way to the meet up/ date and your own way home.
- Tell someone where you're going, with whom, for how long, and when you'll be home. Make a safety plan!
- Check in & follow through with a friend or family member during the meet-up.
- Double dates can increase the safety and the fun!