

02 SEXTING

This section discusses the challenges that come with young people and sexting. Sexting involves taking photos of yourself in a sexually provocative manner that contains nudity and semi nudity alike and sending it via a multimedia device or using social media to send content another person. It also details:

- ▶ How this has become a social norm for young people through increased accessibility and usage of the internet.
- ▶ The reasons why young people may sext are discussed including peer pressure, being in a relationship and having insecurities.
- ▶ The legal consequences for people under the age of 18 sexting are considered. It is illegal: to take, permit to be taken, or to make any indecent photograph, or pseudo-photograph, of a child or young person under the age of 18 even if that image is of you. It is also an offence to distribute or show to another such a photograph (PSNI - The law on sex in Northern Ireland). The emotional, social, and occupational consequences of sexting are also analysed, including bullying and receiving unwanted attention, as well as the long-term future implications for employment and travelling abroad. The overarching message is that once you press send you cannot get this image back.

SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is an application that allows picture and video sharing that can last from 1-10 seconds and then the picture “disappears”. As the pictures are thought to be momentary in nature there has been considerable controversy regarding its usage by young people for the purpose of sexting. The reality is that these pictures do not always disappear momentarily. Many smartphones and other multimedia devices can take “screenshots”. This means you can save a photo of what is on the screen of your device. Snapchat have also introduced a new feature called “stories”. A story is a snap that can be viewed by all of your friends and can be viewed for an unlimited amount of time within 24 hours. You can send multiple snaps to your story in one day. The concern here is that some young people are taking screen shots of pictures that were meant to be private and accidentally adding these photos to their stories. In addition, it is worth noting that applications such as SnapHack let you save any snap that you receive to your device without the sender knowing.

GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

▶ QUIZ AND DISCUSSION

Ask the young people to sort these statements into “A crime is being committed” and “A crime is not being committed”

1. An 18 year old girl sending a picture to her 17 year old boyfriend that shows her cleavage. This couple are sexually active. *(Discussion on legalities of the age of consent and sexting being different)*
2. A 15 year old girl sends a nude photo to her 15 year old boyfriend. *(Crime has been committed by the 15 year old girl)*
3. An 18 year old male screen shots a picture of a 17 year old girl that is of a sexual nature and sends it to his friends. *(2 crimes have been committed, initially by the 17 year old girl and then by the male for distributing the picture)*
4. Two 17 year old males have a text conversation about oral sex but not with each other. *(No crime has been committed as it has a sexual reference rather than details)*

SEXTING continued

5. A 35 year old male asks a 15 year old female to meet him and to have sex. *(Discussion regarding age of consent and sending sexually explicit texts to people under age of 18)*
6. A 23 year old female sends a nude to a 25 year old male. They are not in a relationship and the female has no reason to believe that the male wants to see this photo. *(Discuss sexual harassment)*
7. A 25 year old male sends a nude photo to his 21 year old girlfriend. They both willingly do this on a regular basis. *(No crime, both are willing and over the age of 18)*
8. An 18 year old male has a sexually explicit image of his 17 year old girlfriend on his phone. *(Discussion on possession of child pornography)*
9. Two 16 year old boys exchange pictures of topless women who are over the age of 18. *(No crime as the pictures are of an adult, however depending on the content of the picture it may be a child protection concern)*

▶ ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION

Blue String Game – Sexting activity

Aim

To show how quickly information can be spread around by technology.

Equipment

2 balls of blue string or wool
(you can use other colours)

Small section of plastic pipe or some other simple strong ring/short tube

Method

Give one ball of string to a person at the front of the room and the other ball to a person at the back. Now instruct the group that they are going to pass/throw the ball around the room. Instruct them to keep hold of the string/wool when they throw the rest of the ball on. Explain that in the end everyone should be holding onto at least one string. You should have a complicated web of string all over the room. This could descend into chaos so keep a close eye on the group.

Teaching point

We live in a world full of quick and easy connections. Communication is quicker and more convenient than it ever has been before. Information can be spread around very quickly by text, Bluetooth, email, picture messaging, instant messenger, Facebook, twitter, blogs and individual websites. Once you have passed on some information you have no way of knowing where it will end up. This piece of wool or string could have easily been a sensitive photo of you.

Accompanying Videos

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sch_WMjd6go
(aged 11-13 or young people with learning difficulties)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WriTyc-uW-M> (13+)

▶ REVENGE PORN

Revenge Porn is the act of sharing explicit images or videos of a person without their consent with the intent to cause distress.

This not only covers images that show the genitals but also anything that could reasonably be considered sexual, like someone engaging in sexual behaviour or posing provocatively. Often these images are posted after a relationship has ended. Both men and women of all ages can be victims of revenge porn, the effects of which can be devastating. Many suffer bullying and harassment and unwanted sexual contact, as a result of an image or video being shared. The invasion of their privacy has left individuals feeling violated and humiliated. These feeling are compounded by the fear of not knowing who has seen the images or how it may impact their future. Revenge Porn is illegal in England and Wales and campaigners are lobbying to have the new law introduced in Northern Ireland.