

# SEXTING SOLUTIONS®: PARENT HANDOUT

## WHAT IS SEXTING?

Sexting is the sharing of sexually explicit images, videos, or messages through electronic means.

## Did You Know?



**ONE IN FOUR**  
MINORS REPORTS  
RECEIVING SEXTS



**ONE IN SEVEN**  
MINORS SAY THEY'VE  
SENT SEXTS

**BOYS ARE 4X**  
**MORE LIKELY**  
**TO PRESSURE**  
**GIRLS TO**  
**SEXT THEM**



**ONE IN EIGHT**  
MINORS REPORT  
SHARING THE SEXTS  
THEY'VE RECEIVED

## Weathering the Storm: Facing the Consequences of Sexting

### LEGAL

- ⚡ In many states, minors involved in the exchange of sexually explicit material, even if consensual, could face charges for child pornography, including registration on the Sex Offender Registry.
- ⚡ Schools can suspend and expel students for sexting.
- ⚡ Photos or videos sent to someone in another state may result in federal felony charges.

### PERSONAL

- ⚡ Digital material can be shared and result in receiving undesired attention, bullying, harassment, or being exploited for more photos.
- ⚡ Consequences can come in the form of restrictions or punishment when found by parents or guardians.
- ⚡ Compounding consequences may trigger feelings of depression or anxiety and lead to self-harm or suicide attempts.

### LONG TERM

- ⚡ Activity on the internet or on a digital device creates a "digital footprint" or record that is permanent and traceable.
- ⚡ Digital content from the past may jeopardize opportunities for the future such as military enlistment, college admission and employment.



# MOST COMMON STATEMENTS

## Talking Points for Parents



"He kept asking, so I thought if I sent one, he would leave me alone."

- If you send one, they will keep asking.
- One is all it takes to lead to repercussions.



"Respect her? If I respected her, I wouldn't have asked in the first place."

- Treat all females the way you'd want the people you care about to be treated.
- Asking someone for explicit pictures is never okay.

## Parents Reactions

## Parent Reminders



"I didn't think we were here yet."

- Parents may not always get the cue when kids are ready to talk about things like relationships, sex, and sexting.
- If you're not having these conversations with your children, they will get the information online, or from someone else.



"But I checked my child's phone and didn't see anything!"

Ways kids hide their sexts:  
Photo vaults, Hidden apps, Ghost apps

### THE TOP 5 REASONS FOR SEXTING:

- It's a way to flirt
- The challenge of obtaining photos
- For revenge or retaliation
- Pressure from peers to send or share sexts
- To try and make a relationship stronger

### "WHEN SHOULD I START TALKING TO MY CHILD ABOUT SEXTING?"

- As soon as they have access to technology.

### "HOW DO I START THE CONVERSATION?"

Create technology ground rules.

RULE #1: It is **NEVER** OK to ask for an explicit photo or video.

RULE #2: It is **NEVER** OK for someone to ask you for an explicit photo or video.

RULE #3: If **ANYONE** asks you for these things, notify an adult.

### "MY CHILD RECEIVED A SEXT. NOW WHAT?"

- Do not forward. Forwarding images could result in charges.
- Delete completely. Don't copy, send, share, or show to anyone.
- Decide if you should involve law enforcement or school officials. Reporting the incident could result in legal ramifications for your child and other children involved.
- If necessary, speak to an attorney who specializes in these cases.

### "WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?"

Educate your children about the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, both online, and offline.

- Include sexting in conversations about sex education.
- "The talk" shouldn't be something that only happens once, but as an on-going conversation. Listen as much as you talk.
- To help start the conversation, search online for news media about sexting that shows consequences.

### ★ THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Educate children early and often on "digital citizenship," appropriate and responsible behavior when using technology.
- Teach children not to ask for photos or videos. Requesting is just as bad as sending them.
- Remind children that trusting the recipient is not the only concern. They can't control who comes in contact with the device or account.
- Reinforce the message, "if you wouldn't want your parents to see it or read it, you shouldn't be doing it."

Cheryl A. Kosmerl, MSW, LCSW, a Full Operating Provider for the Sex Offender Management Board, has been working with children who have committed sexual offenses for over a decade. In 2013, at the request of the Colorado 1st Judicial District Attorney's Office, Cheryl created Sexting Solutions®, the state's first interactive curriculum focused on youth sexting. Since its inception, of the 200+ students who have participated in the program, less than 2% have come to the attention of the DA's office for recommitting this offense.

If you are concerned about your child's mental health and are noticing symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression after a sexting incident, contact a therapist or counselor with experience in these areas.