Parent & Caregiver Presentation

SAFE
IN COLLINGWOOD

Cyber Smart Cyber SAFE

Preventing the sexual exploitation of children and youth

Living in Community

March 2013

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in learning more about how to educate your children about sexual exploitation. Our children live in a world much different from the world we grew up in. They now have an array of ways to interact with their world that is expanding and changing rapidly as technology advances. Daily they connect with friends they know personally and friends they meet in the cyber world. Increasingly most of their interactions occur online. Children are frequently confronted with demands and choices- sometimes in in-person interactions but more often in their cyber domain. These changes are inevitable and exciting but they also present risks that we need to be aware of.

It is our responsibility as adults to ensure our children and youth are safe.

Communities need to work together to address these challenges. It is important we understand the issue of sexual exploitation: what it is, how it happens and what can we do about it. It is our role to educate young people to recognize what is healthy and safe and what is potentially dangerous. As adults we need to keep our children out of harm's way and provide them with the tools to stay safe. We want to nurture their development into healthy, independent and confident young adults.

We all remember being told, "Don't talk to strangers" as children but this message is insufficient for children and youth who talk to hundreds of strangers on the Internet. We are living in a world where the rules of social engagement are changing rapidly. Hopefully we can begin to provide some guidance.

SAFEyouth

SAFEyouth is a local initiative focusing on the prevention of sexual exploitation of children and youth. It is part of a larger initiative called SAFE in Collingwood, a neighbourhood-based project engaging businesses, residents, sex trade workers and organizations in building a healthier and safer neighbourhood with respect to sex work.

The goal of SAFEyouth is to provide young people with information and education on sexual exploitation prevention and to also educate parents about the risks and warning signs of sexual exploitation and the available resources and strategies for supporting their children.

The specific goals of the SAFEyouth are to:
- Inform youth about the growing and changing trends in sexual exploitation
- Promote and incorporate the voice of youth in prevention initiatives
- Remove the "un" from uncomfortable when talking about sexual exploitation

1. Child Sexual Exploitation

This is the sexual abuse of children and youth under the age of 18 years through the exchange of sex, sexual acts and sexual images for drugs, food, shelter, protection, affection and/or money. It can occur anywhere including online. People who exploit children and youth are usually friendly at first and may be known to the child or could be someone they have "friended" online. Often the child or youth sees the person initially as someone they can trust; someone who cares about them and who they want to please.

Sexual exploitation includes child pornography, working in massage parlors or other indoor venues, working on the street and can be online or phone-based.

2. Online sexual exploitation

Online sexual exploitation occurs in many ways.

- Online messaging and chats which sexually manipulate and humiliate
- Website recruitment
- Engaging children and youth in sexual activities online: cyber sex
- Sending, creating, or distributing sexual images

It is important to note that it is illegal to distribute sexually explicit pictures of anyone under 18 years when the person doing it is also underage; young people are often not aware of this when they distribute images of themselves online.

There is no such thing as privacy in the Facebook world. Images now can be circulated broadly and remain indefinitely in the cyber world. The potential for lasting harm and possible targeting by bullies or recruiters is a huge cause for concern.

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3. Social media

Social media are forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking) through which users participate in online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as pictures and videos).

Most people associate social media with positive outcomes yet this is not always the case. Due to the increase in social media websites, there seems to be a positive correlation between the usage of such media with cyber bullying, online sexual predators and the decrease in face-to-face interactions. There are over 400 social media sites but the top 15 are: Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Pinterest, Myspace, Google Plus, DeviantArt, LiveJournal, Tagged, Orkut, CafeMom, Ning, Meetup, myLife and Multiply.

4. Privacy settings

These are settings that allow the user to control the collection, use, and distribution of personal data. Each site is different and some are better than others at providing effective privacy settings.

In the summer of 2012 a group of youth in Grades 8 and 9 created a series of short animated videos on sexual exploitation. The youth attended workshops on sexual exploitation and met with adults who had been sexually exploited as youth or who worked with sexually exploited youth. They also learned about script development and how to create the videos.

The goal was to create an educational tool that would be relevant and meaningful. The youth leaders saw this as an effective way to engage other youth in a process that was safe and comfortable. The videos were fun to make for the youth and are sometimes silly and humorous. Through laughter we often learn best, especially when talking about issues involving sex and sexuality.

The videos are fun but the message is a serious one. SAFEyouth also developed a discussion guide with follow-up questions to probe the meanings and implications within the short vignettes depicted in the videos.

Some of these videos are useful learning tools for adults as well as they highlight some of the issues we need to be aware of and reinforcing with our children.

Prevention of sexual exploitation education is not a one-time activity. It needs to be an ongoing process of discussion and engagement with children and youth as they mature and their social and emotional needs change.

The Videos

Video 3   The Online Friend

In this video we see a youth talking with his friend. He has met Sarah online and is planning to meet her in person. His friend is concerned and is encouraging him to talk to his hockey coach or an adult he trusts before making a decision to meet her personally.

Key Messages:
- Learn about and use the privacy settings on social media sites
- Don't give out personal information
- It is easy for people to lie about who they are online and send false pictures
- Both boys and girls need to be careful when online and when making choices around friends they've only met online
- Don't trust everything you read online

Video 4   The SUPER Friend Talk

In this video we see two friends talking about sexual exploitation. One friend doesn't think he is at risk. His friend tells him that he is at risk because he has many friends on Facebook and knows nothing about them. He learned this in a presentation. He tells his friend that it is important to listen to information that will keep him safe.

Key Messages:
- That they don't know really know anything about their Facebook "friends"
- Anyone is at risk for sexual exploitation.

Video 5   The Parent Talk

In this video a mother talks to her son. She is concerned because he has been coming home very late recently and she doesn't know why. She tells him she is concerned that he is being sexually exploited and describes what she means by this. He explains that he has been studying. We hope that this is the case.

Key Messages:
- What sexual exploitation is and why a parent would be very concerned
- Parents should be concerned if there are changes in your child's behaviours and moods

Sexual exploitation takes many forms and it can happen online, on the street or at parties with peers. When a child or young person is asked to perform any act of a sexual nature in exchange for money or things, a sense of belonging or affection, the child is being exploited.

Video 6 The Strong Girl

In this video we see a young girl approached by someone a little older who introduces himself and asks her name. She gives it. He asks her why she is alone and tells her that her friends suck. He asks her for her number, since they are now friends. She says no and says she has to go even though he tries to persuade her to stay and give him her personal information.

Key Messages about Predators:
- They are initially very friendly and nice
- They quickly establish that they are now friends and therefore it is safe to share personal information like phone numbers
- They often try to show that the person's other friends are not really friends at all
- Youth must be firm and say no without worrying that it might be rude

Children should recognize that these behaviors can happen in person or online. Children are very trusting and believe what someone else is saying. They should not

give out personal information and should tell their parents if they are being asked to.

Video 7   The Big B Man

In this video we see a youth talking to her boyfriend. She learns that he has been bullying other kids at school and his behavior has been posted online. She asks him why he does this and he says he does it to be cool; to do it to others before someone bullies him. He adds that they really don't mind. She is disgusted and does not want to spend time with him anymore.

Key Messages:

How youth explain away their bullying behaviors

- Some of the ways kids are bullied at school
- The girl's bravery in taking a stand. By saying she does not want to see him she is saying he is not cool.
- That the bullying behaviors of the youth are posted and shared online. This will be a permanent record of his behavior and may make it difficult for him to get work or get into college in the future. What seems funny at the time between his friends will still be available when he is an adult.

Children who are bullied are more at risk for sexual exploitation. They become isolated without friends. They are potential targets, as often predators will look for kids who don't have many friends. As well, kids who bully may also be outsiders and not have friends. They are also at risk for exploitation.

Cyber Safety Statistics

4,000,000 children are posting content to the Internet everyday

44% of tweens   (children between the ages of 9 and 12 years) admitted they've watched something online their parents wouldn't approve of. (Only 28% of parents are aware of this.)

17% of tweens surveyed said they received an e-mail or online message with photos or words that made them feel uncomfortable.

Only 15% of parents are in the know abut their kid's social networking habits.

Female teens are far more likely than male teens to post personal photos or videos of themselves online.

22% of teenage girls say they posted nude or semi nude photos or videos of themselves online.

70% of children 7-18 years old have accidentally encountered online pornography, often through a web search doing homework.

The largest group of Internet porn consumers is children ages 12 -17 years.

20% of teenaged Internet users have been the target of an unwanted sexual solicitation (request for sexual activities, chat or information)

41.2% of unwanted sexual solicitation, 29% of unwanted exposure to sexual materials, and 31% of harassment occurred when children were online with their friends

31% of kids 12-18 years lied about their age to access a website

Law enforcement officials estimate that more than 50,000 sexual predators are online at any given moment

65% of 8-14 year olds have been involved in a cyber-bullying incident

📱96% of teens use social networking applications such a Facebook, MySpace, chat rooms and blogs

📱69% of teens regularly receive online communications from strangers and don't tell a parent or caretaker.

📱Only 1 in 3 households with Internet access are protecting their children with filtering or blocking

📱95% of parents don't know common chat room acronyms teens use to warn of a parent watching or other comments. Examples are POS (parent over shoulder), P911 (parent alert), and A/S/L/ (age/sex/location)

📱48% of students K-1st grade level interact with people on websites. 50% indicate their parents watch them

📱63% of teens said they know how to hide what they do online from their parents

📱52% of teens have given out personal information online to someone they don't know offline including personal photos and/or physical descriptions of themselves. Double the number of teen girls have shared photos or physical descriptions of themselves online as boys (34% girls vs. 15% boys)

📱20% of teens had engaged in some form of cyber bullying including posting mean or hurtful information or embarrassing pictures, spreading rumours, publicizing private communication, or sending anonymous e-mails

Excerpts from www.guardchild.com and www.enough.org.

How can I protect my child online?

Potential predators often target children online. Parents have a responsibility to monitor the websites their child is visiting and the contacts they are making. Here are some tips for parents to help keep children safe online:

1. Talk to your child about online dangers and the risks of sharing personal information.

2. Create family rules for Internet use and have your child sign a downloadable online safety pledge.

3. Set limits at a young age on how much time your child spends online.

4. Set browser security settings and ask your Internet service provider what parental control software it offers.

5. Ensure your home computer is set up in an open, family area, where you can monitor online activity.

6. Remember, online safety doesn't only apply to computers. Children access the Internet through a variety of devices, including smart phones and electronic gaming devices.

Rules of the Road for Parents

Common Sense Media (www.commonsensemedia.org)

1. **Model good behavior.** If we're on our Blackberries or iPhones at dinner, why will our kids listen to us when we tell them to turn theirs off?

2. **Pay attention.** We have to know where our kids are going online -- and what they're doing there.

3. **Impart our values.** Cheating, lying, being cruel -- they're just not OK. Right and wrong extends to online and mobile life.

4. **Establish limits.** Phone time, video download time, and destinations. There really is a right time and place for everything.

5. **Encourage balance.** Get kids involved in offline activities, especially activities that don't require or allow cell service.

6. **Make kids accountable.** Using digital media is a privilege. Your kids must earn it.

7. **Explain what's at stake.** Remind your kids that what they do today can be abused by someone tomorrow.

8. **Find ways to say "yes."** This means that you have to do some homework and know the sites your children visit, the songs they download, etc. -- and find ways to use technology that lets us say "yes" more often than we say "no."

9. **It's not rocket science.** Learn to text, send a mobile photo, set up a Facebook page, and upload a video. Or have your kids show you how. It's impossible to guide what you don't understand. Not only that, but think of all the anxiety you can avoid by knowing how things work.

10. **Lighten up, embrace their world, and enjoy the possibilities together.** None of us want digital divides in our relationships with our kids. It's up to us to learn something new, join the fun, and help our kids make the most of digital technologies.

Rules of the Road for Kids

Common Sense Media

(www.commonsensemedia.org)

1. **Guard your privacy.** What people know about you is up to you.

2. **Protect your reputation.** Self-reflect before you self-reveal. What's funny or edgy today could cost you tomorrow.

3. **Nothing is private online.** Anything you say or do can be copied, pasted, and sent to gazillions of people without your permission.

4. **Assume everyone is watching.** There's a huge, vast audience out there. If someone is your friend's friend, they can see everything.

5. **Apply the Golden Rule**. If you don't want it done to you, don't do it to someone else.

6. **Choose wisely.** Not all content is appropriate. You know what we mean.

7. **Don't hide.** Using anonymity to cloak your actions doesn't turn you into a trustworthy, responsible human being.

8. **Think about what you see.** Just because it's online doesn't make it true.

9. **Be smart, be safe.** Not everyone is who they say they are. But you know that.

Sample Safety Pledges

The following provides two sample family contracts that you can use or adapt for you and your child. The first is related to Internet usage and the second is for telephone use. Discuss each point with your child; make sure he or she understands what is expected, and sign to indicate everyone agrees. Review the contract regularly, i.e. every six months, to make sure there is still mutual support and understanding.

SafeKids.Com
Family Contract for Online Safety

Kids' Pledge

1. I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' permission.

2. I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.

3. I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.

4. I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.

5. I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do I will tell my parents right away so that they can contact the service provider.

6. I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

7. I will not give out my Internet password to anyone (even my best friends) other than my parents.

8. I will check with my parents before downloading or installing software or doing anything that could possibly hurt our computer or jeopardize my family's privacy.

9. I will be a good online citizen and not do anything that hurts other people or is against the law.

10. I will help my parents understand how to have fun and learn things online and teach them things about the Internet, computers and other technology.

I agree to the above terms

I will help my child follow this agreement and will allow reasonable use of the Internet as long as these rules and other family rules are followed.

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Child Sign Here

Parent Sign Here

Janell Burley Hofmann, a writer and mom in New York, wrote the article below "To My 13-Year-Old, An iPhone Contract From Your Mom, With Love" which was published in the Huffington Post blog and can be viewed here: www.huffingtonpost.com/janell-burley-hofmann/iphone-contract-from-your-mom_b_2372493.html

Dear Gregory

Merry Christmas! You are now the proud owner of an iPhone. Hot Damn! You are a good and responsible 13-year-old boy and you deserve this gift. But with the acceptance of this present comes rules and regulations. Please read through the following contract. I hope that you understand it is my job to raise you into a well rounded, healthy young man that can function in the world and coexist with technology, not be ruled by it. Failure to comply with the following list will result in termination of your iPhone ownership.
I love you madly and look forward to sharing several million text messages with you in the days to come.

1. It is my phone. I bought it. I pay for it. I am loaning it to you. Aren't I the greatest?
2. I will always know the password.
3. If it rings, answer it. It is a phone. Say hello, use your manners. Do not ever ignore a phone call if the screen reads "Mom" or "Dad." Not ever.
4. Hand the phone to one of your parents promptly at 7:30 p.m. every school night and every weekend night at 9:00 p.m. It will be shut off for the night and turned on again at 7:30 a.m. If you would not make a call to someone's land line, wherein their parents may answer first, then do not call or text. Listen to those instincts and respect other families like we would like to be respected.
5. It does not go to school with you. Have a conversation with the people you text in person. It's a life skill. *Half days, field trips and after school activities will require special consideration.
6. If it falls into the toilet, smashes on the ground, or vanishes into thin air, you are responsible for the replacement costs or repairs. Mow a lawn, babysit, stash some birthday money. It will happen, you should be prepared.
7. Do not use this technology to lie, fool, or deceive another human being. Do not involve yourself in conversations that are hurtful to others. Be a good friend first or stay the hell out of the crossfire.
8. Do not text, email, or say anything through this device you would not say in person.

9. Do not text, email, or say anything to someone that you would not say out loud with their parents in the room. Censor yourself.

10. No porn. Search the web for information you would openly share with me. If you have a question about anything, ask a person -- preferably me or your father.

11. Turn it off, silence it, put it away in public. Especially in a restaurant, at the movies, or while speaking with another human being. You are not a rude person; do not allow the iPhone to change that.

12. Do not send or receive pictures of your private parts or anyone else's private parts. Don't laugh. Someday you will be tempted to do this despite your high intelligence. It is risky and could ruin your teenage/college/adult life. It is always a bad idea. Cyberspace is vast and more powerful than you. And it is hard to make anything of this magnitude disappear -- including a bad reputation.

13. Don't take a zillion pictures and videos. There is no need to document everything. Live your experiences. They will be stored in your memory for eternity.

14. Leave your phone home sometimes and feel safe and secure in that decision. It is not alive or an extension of you. Learn to live without it. Be bigger and more powerful than FOMO (fear of missing out).

15. Download music that is new or classic or different than the millions of your peers that listen to the same exact stuff. Your generation has access to music like never before in history. Take advantage of that gift. Expand your horizons.

16. Play a game with words or puzzles or brain teasers every now and then.

17. Keep your eyes up. See the world happening around you. Stare out a window. Listen to the birds. Take a walk. Talk to a stranger. Wonder without googling.

18. You will mess up. I will take away your phone. We will sit down and talk about it. We will start over again. You and I, we are always learning. I am on your team. We are in this together.

It is my hope that you can agree to these terms. Most of the lessons listed here do not just apply to the iPhone, but to life. You are growing up in a fast and ever changing world. It is exciting and enticing. Keep it simple every chance you get. Trust your powerful mind and giant heart above any machine. I love you. I hope you enjoy your awesome new iPhone.

xoxoxo,
Mom