

Lesson #3: Sexting, Texting, and Cyber Bullying

OPENING – Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a leadership program for preventing violence.

Check in with students:

Remind students who you are. Ask how things are going since your last visit. Have they been bystanders to any situations like the sexual harassment incidents we discussed last time? In any other violent or potentially violent situations?

Remember our MVP goals?

MVP Goals

- Raise Awareness [on the prevalence of violence.](#)
- Challenge Thinking – [because most of this violence is accepted in society.](#)
- Open Dialogue – [have the opportunity to voice your opinion on these matters and get you talking about this issue.](#)
- Inspire Leadership – [or inspire you to take a stand against this violence.](#)
- Emphasize our role as a bystander – stopping violence is up to each of us.

The working definitions for this lesson focus on relationship abuse and the legal repercussions for posting or sending inappropriate images.

Working Definitions

Relationship Violence—Violence that some partners inflict on each other in abusive relationships, including these four types of abuse: verbal, emotional/psychological, physical, and sexual.

Emotional abuse: non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring, humiliation, intimidation, isolation or stalking

Child Pornography (distribution and possession) as it relates to sexting or posting pictures on MySpace or Facebook. **IF YOU FORWARD** a sexual picture of someone underage, you are as responsible for this image as the original sender. You could face child pornography charges, go to jail and have to register as a sex offender

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1. Do you feel like you have a role as a bystander to help reduce sexting, texting, and cyber bullying?
 2. What are some risks for an active bystander? Can you think of a solution to this risk where you could still be a leader?
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Teaching Snap Shot

BACKGROUND

Sending and posting nude or semi-nude photos or videos starts at a young age and becomes even more frequent as teens become young adults.

Discussion Starters

- Why would a girl send a nude or semi-nude picture of herself to her boyfriend?
- What would the boyfriend's reason be for forwarding on a nude or semi-nude picture of his girlfriend?
- Would your willingness to do something about this issue depend on whether or not you know the girl or the guy?
- Do you have a responsibility only to your friends in this type of situation?
- Does the fact that pictures are being sent around from phone to phone make them part of the "public domain" allowing you to freely share them with anyone you wish?
- If the girl is a minor does this constitute trafficking of child pornography?
- What other kinds of things are posted on Facebook or MySpace that are hurtful to others? (posting bad comments, spreading rumors, etc.)
- What should you do if you see negative remarks about someone online?

Common Concerns

Don't assume anything you send or post is going to remain private. Your messages and images will get passed around, even if you think they won't: 40% of teens and young adults say they have had sexually suggestive messages (originally meant to be private) shown to them and 20% say they have shared such messages with someone other than the person for whom it was originally meant.

There is no changing your mind in cyberspace – anything you send or post will never truly go away. Potential employers, college recruiters, teachers, coaches, friends, enemies, strangers and others all may be able to find past posts, even after you delete them.

Sending explicit images is against the law. In most states, teenagers who send or receive sexually explicit photographs by cell phone or computer – known as "sexting" have risked child pornography charges and being listed on a sex offender registry for decades to come if convicted. Circulating pictures on sites like My Space and Facebook can bring federal charges.

Snap Shot

You just received a picture of a naked girl on your phone. You are not her close friend, but she goes to your school, and you know who she is. You hear that she gave the picture to her boyfriend, but they just broke up and now he is sending it out to all his friends.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

My friend is asking for the picture. Do I send it? I heard that if I send it on or even just have it on my phone, I could get in big trouble—legally. What about my friend who sent it to me? Should I warn him that he could be charged with a crime? And what about the girl? She's probably really embarrassed. Should I tell her what is going on? What should I do?

OPTIONS

1. Don't do anything. She shouldn't have sent it out. It's her own problem.
2. Delete the picture. Make sure friends have deleted it too. Tell the friend who sent it to me that it's not appropriate, and he could get into trouble.
3. Talk to my parents or a trusted adult and get their advice on what to do.
4. Warn the girl what is happening with her picture and let her know that I'm are trying to help her...maybe get her to a counselor or the SRO and report the issue.
5. Talk to the guy who sent the picture and warn him that he is already in trouble, and it could be even worse if he goes further to MySpace or Facebook, which would make it a federal offense.
6. Personal Option: _____

Teaching: Time Out

BACKGROUND

This scenario introduces the subject of relationship abuse. It provides an opportunity to discuss the issue of controlling behaviors such as using obsessive texting to determine the whereabouts of your dating partner. This scenario can open up talk about healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, stalking, and obsessive texting, in general.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

→ What constant texting and calling abuse? How so?

→ Why might a girl or guy want to be texted so much? Do girls also try to control their partners with calling and texting?

→ Can a cell phone number be blocked? How does that work?

→ What might happen if you refuse to answer a text or call or if you turn off the phone? How can a parent or other adult help with this problem?

COMMON CONCERNS

X While cell phones can be great for keeping in touch and even for getting help in potentially violence situations, they can also be used in negative ways. Cell phones are commonly used as way for an abuser in a relationship to control and monitor their girlfriend or boyfriend day and night. The constant contact of a cell phone through calling and texting can contribute to dating abuse.

X “A new survey on teens and dating abuse reveals that an alarming number of teens in dating relationships are being controlled, threatened and humiliated through cell phones and the Internet with unimaginable frequency. The research also reveals disturbing data that a significant majority of parents are completely unaware of this type of dating abuse and the dangers facing their teens. The survey was conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU) for [CAEPV Member Liz Claiborne Inc.](#) Teens surveyed range in age from 13-18. Key Findings Include:

Teens report dating abuse via technology is a serious problem

- 71% of teens regard boyfriends/girlfriends spreading rumors about them on cell phones and social networking sites as a serious problem.
- 68% of teens say boyfriends/girlfriends sharing private or embarrassing pictures/videos on cell phones and computers is a serious problem.

Cell phone calls and texting at unimaginable frequency mean constant control day and night

- Nearly one in four teens in a relationship (24%) communicated with their partner via cell phone or texting HOURLY between midnight and 5:00am.

- One in three teens (30%) say they are text messaged 10, 20, 30 times an hour by a partner inquiring where they are, what they're doing, or who they're with.”

End the scenario by reminding kids to ask for help from an adult if texting or calling is becoming a problem. Sometimes it takes a parent or other adult to get involved to end controlling cell phone behavior.

TIME OUT

Every time you hang out with your friend, her boyfriend is constantly texting to see where she is and who she is with. She seems upset sometimes and says she has to answer right away, or it just gets worse. It's really frustrating for you because she can never really enjoy the time you spend together.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

I know she doesn't like this constant texting. I'd hate it if anyone did that to me. I think she's afraid to put her foot down, that he'll break up with her. Should I tell her that it's unhealthy and controlling for him to text her so much? Will she get mad at me for interfering? What should I do?

OPTIONS

1. Do nothing. She'll probably just get mad at me for sticking my nose in her business.
2. Talk to her about it and ask her if she wants help talking to him about the problem.
3. Talk to him. He should know that he's being controlling.
4. Talk to an adult, parent, school counselor and get some help.
5. Show her a web site like thatsnotcool.com or loveisrespect.com.
6. Personal options: _____

Agree/Disagree/Unsure Statements

Follow the instructions in lesson 1.

If a guy pressures a girl to send him a naked picture of herself, that is abuse.

There's nothing wrong with forwarding a dirty joke.

It's okay to post an unflattering picture of a classmate online without their permission.

It's OK for a man to hit a woman if she hits him first.

Yelling at your boyfriend or girlfriend every once in awhile is not necessarily abuse.

It's acceptable for a male to be with more than one person when in a relationship.

It's acceptable for a female to be with more than one person when in a relationship.

Juan sternly tells his girlfriend, Julie, that she is not allowed to go to the movies with her friends. Juan is abusing Julie.

Note that this web site has good stuff for middle school kids on cyber issues:

Thatsnotcool.com