



SIGNS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING SEXTING/SEXTORTION TOOLKIT

WHO WE ARE

JTM (Join the Movement Events, Inc. a 501(c)3 non-profit) works together with all our communities to protect our neighborhoods from human trafficking. Education and awareness were our intended mission when we formed JTM in 2017. We now provide advocates through our CARE Team who assist all victims of violence. We work with law enforcement, health care professionals, hospitality professionals, schools, libraries, government, non-government, civil organizations, clubs, LGBTQ+, addiction support groups and private organizations. **Education is the key to prevention!**

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THIS PACKET?

What does sexting look like to our youth? What is the conversation you need to have now before they are asked? Maybe it's too late? What do you do now? What is Sextortion? How do we protect our youth?

WHAT IS SEXTING?

The Dictionary definition of sexting: Early 21st century: blend of sex and text. the sending of sexually explicit digital images, videos, text messages, or emails, usually by cell phone.

(<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/sexting>)

DID YOU KNOW?

- The average age of our children's exposure to pornography is 8.
- Nearly 3 in 4 teen respondents (73%) have been exposed to pornography, either accidentally or on purpose.
- Percent of teen respondents who have seen online pornography, by age:
 - 15% AGES 10 OR YOUNGER**
 - 54% AGES 13 OR YOUNGER**
 - 73% AGES 17 OR YOUNGER**

(Methodology: Benenson Strategy Group (BSG), on behalf of Common Sense, conducted a demographically representative national survey of N = 1,358 teens age 13 to 17 in the United States, including n = 1,007 teens who have been exposed to online pornography and n = 259 LGBTQ+ teens. The survey was fielded from September 12 to September 21, 2022.)

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TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- *When we delete something, it's gone! (pewh!)*
 - Posts made on the internet can last forever. **Everything we put on the internet stays on the internet.**
- *Social media doesn't pose a serious threat.*
 - Social media has become the new mall. It is easier for predators to gain access to our most vulnerable.
- *We owe it to our youth to provide them with a cell phone. It will help to keep them safe.*
 - Cell phones/tablets are a privilege and **not** a right. Boundaries and healthy parameters are necessary to keep our youth safe. **The greatest threat to our youth is ACCESS.**

WHY ARE TEENS SEXTING?

- Peer Pressure.
- Lack of understanding of consequences.
- Dating/to express love.
- Curiosity.

IMPORTANT FACTS TO KNOW!

- Sending, possession, or taking a naked or sexually explicit picture of someone under 18 years of age is illegal regardless of it being consensual.
- Girls are just as likely as boys to send or receive sext messages.
- The older kids get, the more likely they are to send or receive sext messages.
- Sexting can also lead to SEXTORTION.
- Kids sexting at younger ages is most likely due to the fact kids are also getting phones at a younger age.

TIPS FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH!

- The pandemic has seen a dramatic rise in our youth and their online activities which also includes self-generated sexually explicit material.
- This can include sexting nudes or child pornography. Talk to your youth about what they have seen and help them understand it. Open communication is key as we want our youth to talk to us. Be a safe place.
- Parents need to have age-appropriate conversations as soon as they have access to any technology.
- Your conversations should include sentiments with a clear follow-up explanation as to why it is so important to NOT SEND, NOT ask others, and NOT share sexually explicit images or videos.
- 12% forwarded a sext without consent.

*(JAMA Pediatrics Prevalence of Multiple Forms of Sexting Behavior Among Youth,
April 2018: 14.8% teens sent and 27.4% received a sext)*

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WHAT'S NEXT?

- The time to decide if you'll send a nude is long before you are asked. The decision is NO.
- Plan and practice your response to the requester.
- Remember, once shared, you no longer control the material.
- Support friends that don't ask, share, or forward images/videos.
- Show respect and avoid blaming or bullying others.
- Report incident to CyberTipline, school resource officer, law enforcement, counselor, and social media provider/host.

HOW TO BEGIN THE CONVERSATION FOR PARENTS!

- Have you ever been asked or pressured to send nude images?
- What would you do if asked?
- Do you know kids who have sent nudes?
- How do you feel about that?
- Have you heard of kids sharing nudes without consent?
- What do you think about that?
- Have you ever received nudes?
- What did you do with it?
- What do you think happens to kids if a nude is found on someone's phone?

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

- What can happen if you send a sext message, and it gets discovered?
- Legally: Sexting can result in fines or having to go through diversion programs, but in most areas of the country that is not the case. Technically, if you have sent, taken, or possess a nude or sexually explicit picture of a child under the age of 18 you are illegally possessing, creating, and/or distributing child pornography and you could be prosecuted and arrested (for minors this is very rare but possible.) Along with this, you could be forced to register as a sex offender and parents may also be exposed to legal consequences. This is decided on by your local District Attorney.
- Socially: If you send an explicit picture, it may be shared. If this happens, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children has supportive resources to help you figure out how to cope with and possibly erase images if your picture is exposed.
<https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/isyoudisplayexplicitcontentoutthere>
- ***The phone will not be returned.*** If it was used to take nude images of themselves or used to view nude images of someone else the statutes consider the phone to be contraband (since it contains child pornography) and the phone can be collected by law enforcement and destroyed because there is no way to guarantee that the nude images can be completely removed from a phone, even with a factory reset. The other penalties or charges for a child greatly depend on the facts of the situation and the ages of the people involved. Two kids consensually exchanging photos with only each other is treated less seriously than a kid who obtains and sends nude photos of another student out to the whole school without their permission.



WHAT IS SEXTORTION?

The Dictionary definition of sextortion is: *The practice of extorting money or sexual favors from someone by threatening to reveal evidence of their sexual activity.*

(<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/sextortion>)

Sextortion is blackmail. This is when a predator threatens to send sexual images or videos of you to others. This could be parents, classmates, church leaders, or employers for money or providing them with additional sexual content. This sextortion definition applies to any gender, and although attacks can be directed at anyone of any age, attackers tend to target younger individuals.

A sextortion predator uses the fear of embarrassment against their victims. They know that their targets do not want any embarrassing content on the internet so, they use threats to motivate young people into giving them what they want.

HOW DOES SEXTORTION HAPPEN?

Sextortion typically begins with what will begin as a conversation online. The predator then moves the conversation in a romantic or sexual direction before the victim is asked to send nude videos or pictures.

Predators will try to trick their victims, these predators will likely flatter the target or give them a lot of attention and compliments to make them feel valued, special, or unique. The predator may also try to make the victim feel bad for them by using a sad story hoping to attract the victim's sense of compassion. If the target is emotionally vulnerable, the predator may pretend to understand and offer an open ear.

Unfortunately, after the victim sends the predator explicit content, the predator then will ask for more content or demands payment in exchange for not sharing the sexual content the victim sent then. The sad truth is, in many circumstances, the attacker will pretend to be a teenager with the hope of gaining the victim's trust.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU CAN TRUST?

This is the hard part. It can be very difficult to know whom you can trust. You can only reduce the risk of being sextorted by only interacting with people you physically know online. But the reality is, even if you have met the person, it is important to verify their profile. Check the details, what is their date of birth, are their recent posts seem genuine? In today's world stealing an online identity is very common so check who their friends are, what their past posts were. If it is just a few memes or photoshopped images stay away. Check with mutual friends to see if they have had their own face-to-face conversations with the person.

Be aware that some of your friends may feel that talking to someone on the phone is enough to prove their identity but that can only work if the person is the same gender they are pretending to be. So, offer video chatting and if they say no, then ask yourself why that is? They can certainly claim that their camera doesn't work or they don't have enough bandwidth or it's too low a connection to turn their cameras on. Don't take everything they say as truth. Second guess their reactions.

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HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

Education is the key to prevention. Here are a few simple tips to make when you are communicating online:

- Do not share personal details online. If you do over share personal things, don't be surprised when someone mentions something you have posted. Predators use algorithms to search out specific words and will use that against you or as an opportunity to gain your trust. They can pretend to be someone in a school not far from the victim.
- Be aware of anyone you meet online for the first time. If you receive messages from strangers just block or ignore them. It is difficult to verify their identity if they exist only online.
- A red flag is if the person contacting you is only available online! It is easy for a predator to steal an identity online, they will steal photos or neighborhoods, streets, restaurants and even stores they claim to visit. Nothing but face-to-face communication is proof of who they are.
- If you do meet a new person on an app or by playing a game online and they ask you to meet on another online platform, be aware that they may have only been using the app to try and lure a new victim.
- Everything that you put on the internet stays on the internet. It's never actually deleted! If you are sharing messages, photos, or videos know that you have no control over what happens to this information once it's shared online. Anyone can access this and share it. You have NO CONTROL once it's shared.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Talk to someone you trust. It could be a family member, friend, neighbor, school administrator or law enforcement. Someone will listen and if they don't know how to help, they may have resources available. Allow law enforcement to investigate and you may be protecting the predators next victim.

STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU ARE BEING SEXTORTED!

Tell Someone Close to You

It will be hard to do but admit that you are being sextorted. Yes, you may feel embarrassed for missing the warning signs, you may not have even known what they were until now, but by telling someone what is going on will also take the power away from your predator. You may also feel that others, even those close to you, cannot possibly understand what you are going through. You may even worry that the attacker will follow through on a threat to hurt you or someone else if you tell.

Your silence is the predator's most powerful weapon. Confide in someone close to you and explain the entire situation. Often, they may be able to help you out or at least provide emotional support, which ends the feeling of isolation you may be experiencing. You can also reach out to a sextortion helpline for assistance and support.

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Remember that everyone has a story and is just waiting for someone to listen. Share your burden and know you are not alone.

Stop All Contact with the Offender

The predator will have power over you if you stay in contact. When you stop contact it removes that power and protects you from further attacks. With each communication, the attacker becomes bolder, feeling they are tightening their grip on you.

Whether you have given in to a demand or not, it is important to stop all communications. You may have to block the attacker on all social media apps as well as on your phone. Also, be aware of a new friend popping up soon after you block the predator. Predators often have many social media accounts used to manipulate their targets.

Do Not Delete Anything

You do not have to play a key role in the investigation and prosecution of your attacker, and you should feel no pressure to. Your well-being is the priority. However, if you do not delete the communications, the authorities can use that information to track down and prosecute the predator. Every communication and time stamp is used as evidence that can be used against them.

Tell the Authorities

At this point, there is no federal law that specifically names sextortion as a crime. However, the more the police know about these kinds of incidents, the more likely it is that legislation will be introduced that can make it a federal-level offense. Reporting what happened to the police can therefore prevent others from being harmed in the future.

SEXTORTION RED FLAGS:

- Your new friend does not have a working camera. The person you are talking to does not have a working camera, but they still want you to share yours.
- Your new friend turns the conversation “adult” right away.
- Use of fear tactics. The person you are talking to uses fear tactics to attempt to get you to pay them money.
- Social media profile has low followers/friends. The profile is new and does not have a lot of followers/friends.
- Conversation does not add up. There are many inconsistencies in their story.
- Profile has limited photos. The person’s profile has only a few photos available.
- Misspelled words in profile. The person’s profile has common words misspelled.
- Fast-paced contact. Your “relationship” has an urgency, and you are asked to share photos or a video call.

RESOURCES FOR SEXTORTION EDUCATION:

<https://www.fortinet.com/>

<https://dpps.msu.edu/news-and-alerts/news/what-is-sextortion-and-how-to-prevent-it>

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