

Online Safety For Tweens And Teens

— 10-17 Years —



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The Internet and social media have become a much bigger part of our lives in recent years. Whether we're making videos on Tiktok, messaging our friends on Facebook or just using the Internet for work or school, it's important that we know how to stay safe online, recognize possible dangers, and know what to do if something does go wrong.



What Are The Risks?

How can the Internet be dangerous?

Even though we may know enough about the apps and sites we're using to feel safe online, there are people with bad intentions who go out of their way to target youth on the Internet. As a tween or teen, you are likely still figuring out who you are as a person, who and what you like, and (just like anyone else) you probably want to be liked by others. Because of all of this, it can be easy for young people to become victims of cyber bullying, extortion, and other dangerous situations. If this does happen, it can have a lot of negative effects on a young person's life, including their mental health, relationships, and school or work life.



OK – but what do these dangers look like?

Here is a list of some of the dangers that you may come across online. There are some scenarios and questions that go with each one. Each question has more than one right answer, so don't worry if you're not sure; there are also some tips later in this booklet that can help you to answer the questions.



Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying can involve anything from repeated nasty messages to mean comments on someone's social media profiles. It's a deliberate form of harassment designed to cause harm to the person being bullied.

SCENARIOS - 1

15-year-old Jesse receives a text from his friend Jerry asking if he wants to go camping with him and some other friends. The next day he gets a text from an unknown number, and another boy makes a mean Facebook post about him later in the week. Jesse is now worried more kids will make fun of him at school, as the bullying has been spread out across time, and is coming from a few different people. **What would you suggest Jesse do in this situation?**

1



2



3



Extortion/blackmail

In some situations, tweens and teens can become victims of blackmail by people they thought they could trust. This sometimes has a sexual element to it; for example, a person might threaten to harm a tween's family unless they send personal pictures, or a teen's partner may threaten to break up with them if they don't send nudes.

SCENARIOS - 2

Jasmine and her boyfriend Mark are 16 years old. Here is a text conversation between them.

What advice would you give Jasmine if you were her friend?
What about Mark?



SCENARIOS - 3

Madeleine is Jasmine's friend and sees her crying at lunch the next day. Later, she messages Jasmine to ask what is wrong.

What did Madeleine do well in this situation?

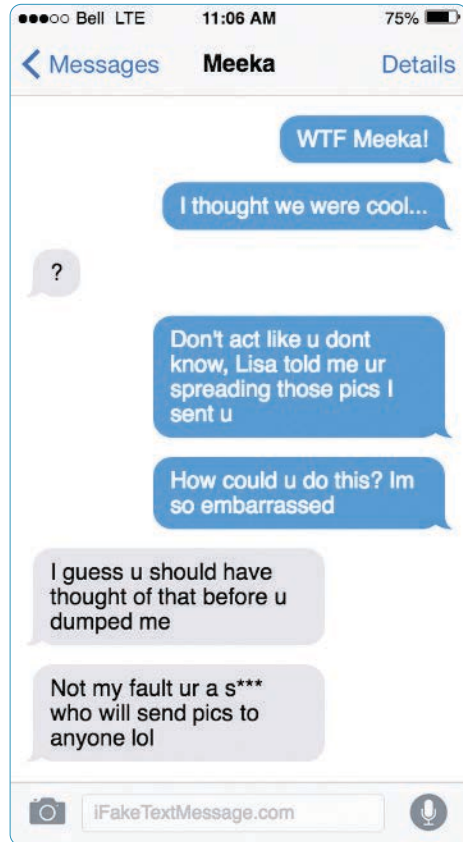


Non-consensual sharing of intimate images/ revenge porn

“Revenge porn” is when a person shares an intimate (naked/sexual) image or video of another person without their consent. This often happens when couples who have sent sexual pictures to each other break up, and one person shares the other person’s pictures as a form of revenge.

SCENARIOS - 4

Sara and Meeka are 14 years old and started dating each other after meeting at a summer youth camp. While they were together, they exchanged nude photos. Sara broke up with Meeka a couple of weeks ago because she didn’t feel the same as when they first met. She wanted to stay friends, but Meeka was angry at Sara for breaking up with her and lashed out. Here is a conversation between them about what she did. **What can Sara do now?**



If you were Meeka's friend and she sent you Sara's nude photos, how would you react? **What information could you give her about her actions?**

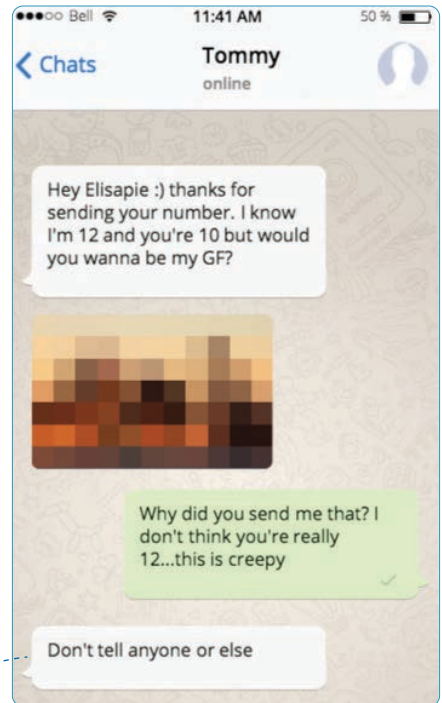
Sexting

Sexual texting, or “sexting”, can lead to extortion or revenge porn among young couples, or even strangers. There is also the possibility that the person you’re talking to is lying about who they are – for example, an adult man pretending to be a teenage boy so he can have sexual conversations with a teenage girl.

SCENARIOS - 5

10-year-old Elisapie is allowed to use her dad’s iPad to play games when her parents are home. She’s not supposed to go on the WiFi, but she knows the password and sometimes sneaks online because the games there are more fun. She finds a really cool game where you can chat to lots of other kids while you play. She’s having a great time, until she gets a weird message from a kid she doesn’t know. He says his name is Tommy and that he’s twelve years old, but something seems strange about him. He keeps asking her to send him her phone number so they can talk privately. Elisapie says no, but Tommy starts to say scary things and she thinks maybe she should send him her number to make him stop. She wants to tell her parents, but she’s afraid she’ll get in trouble for being online. **What should Elisapie do?**

Elisapie decided not to tell her parents, and gave Tommy her phone number. Here is the conversation she and Tommy had. **What advice would you give Elisapie now?**



If you find yourself in a similar situation to any of the characters in this section, the following resources can help you:

For help stopping the spread of intimate images, visit needhelpnow.ca

To talk to someone about online abuse, you can contact Kids Help Phone at **1-800-668-6868**, or by texting **CONNECT** to **686868**.

Visit the Canadian Centre for Child Protection for more information on online abuse, at protectchildren.ca

Scams and false information

Scams and false information (fake news) are a little different to other dangers you might come across online, but it is still worth knowing how to recognize and react to them. This will help you with avoiding being taken advantage of financially, sharing your personal details without meaning to or spreading information that isn't correct.

False information

False information is also sometimes called “fake news”. It is what happens when people spread a post or article, often on social media sites like Facebook, without checking whether it's true or not, and lots of people end up believing it. Sometimes, it's a simple mistake; there are some news websites that only write joke articles (like The Beaverton, The Onion and Walking Eagle News), but some people don't realize they are fake. Other times, the people writing the articles are deliberately trying to convince you that fake news is actually true. Common topics that fake news articles will cover are politics, sicknesses, violence and other things that most people find frightening or worrying.



Scams

Part of using the Internet safely is knowing how to be aware of people trying to trick you. You might have received emails before saying you have won a competition, have an expensive item waiting for you at the post office, or someone saying they have a video of you and that they are going to send it to all your contacts if you don't do what they say. Usually, these kinds of scams, which can be emails, pop-up ads, or messages on social media, just want to get certain kinds of personal information. Maybe they want your email address, your banking information, or other things that you know should be kept private. Some scammers are good at making their messages sound real (for example,

they might pretend to be your bank so they can get your password, or a branch of the government to try and get your SIN number.) Know that real banks and government departments will never ask for personal information this way. If you aren't sure about whether an email or pop-up is real, check with an adult you trust. You can also call your bank or other institution and let them know somebody is sending fraudulent (fake) emails to people, so they can warn other customers.



So how can you tell if an article with a scary, shocking, or unbelievable headline is true or not?

Here are a few tips:

- **Read the article.** Lots of articles will have headlines, sometimes called clickbait, that make the story sound different than it actually is. The headlines are designed to catch peoples' eyes and shock them, but the real story is actually quite different.
- **Check other news websites.** If a story is real, it's likely that a lot of news outlets will be reporting on it, not just one or two.
- **Is the site trustworthy?** If the story is posted on a personal blog, is a YouTube video, or isn't posted by media sites you've heard of before, it might be fake news.
- **Use critical thinking skills.** This means using knowledge you already have, and your own research, to make your own decision about things. If you woke up one day and saw an article on Facebook that said "Ancient volcano erupts in Naujaat", but none of your friends and family there had said anything about an eruption, and none of the Nunavut news outlets had posted anything about it, it would be unlikely that the article was true.



Practice using your judgment by playing fakeOut at newsliteracy.ca/fakeOut, a game where you have to decide whether a post is true or not. It's harder than you might think!



How do I know that I'm at risk online? How can I recognize the warning signs?

There are a number of red flags that can warn you of online dangers. You should tell a trusted adult if you are approached online by someone who:

- Doesn't seem to be who they say they are, and seems "off" or weird
- Shares violent, disrespectful or sexual content with you
- Pressures you (constant messages, won't take no for an answer)
- Asks for your personal information
- Compliments you or tries to use flattery to get you to do things for them
- Admits that they are much older than you or talks about how mature you are for your age
- Threatens you if you say no to sending them pictures or personal information

It can be really hard to know what to do in these situations, and young people often feel afraid, guilty, and worried that they will get in trouble if they tell anyone about what is happening.

The three most important steps to take when somebody is harassing you online are:

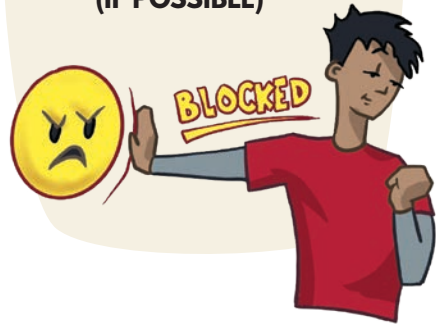
1

**STOP
ENGAGING**



2

**BLOCK THE
PERSON ON THE
APP OR SITE
YOU ARE USING
(IF POSSIBLE)**



3

**KEEP SCREENSHOTS/RECORDS OF
INAPPROPRIATE CONVERSATIONS IN
CASE LAW ENFORCEMENT NEEDS TO
GET INVOLVED.**



How do I know when I need help?

It's important to ask for help whenever you feel uncomfortable online, but especially in these situations:

- If someone starts making offensive or sexual comments about you or others
- If a situation that used to be fun starts making you anxious or scared
- If you see personal pictures or videos of somebody being shared without their consent
- If someone much older than you is trying to have a romantic or sexual conversation with you
- If you are being threatened or blackmailed by someone

These situations can be illegal, especially if there is an age gap between you and the person you're talking to.



Age of consent for sexual activity in Canada

AGE OF TWEEN OR TEEN	CAN THEY CONSENT?
Under 12 years old	No
12 or 13 years old	Sometimes - only if the age gap is less than 2 years*
14 or 15 years old	Sometimes - only if the age gap is less than 5 years*
16 or older	Yes - with some exceptions*
18 or older	Yes

Exceptions

* The exception to this rule is if the older person is in a position of trust or authority over the teen, if the teen is dependent on the other person, or if the relationship is exploitative. Examples of this could be coaches, teachers, people you rely on for housing or food, ministers/priests, or someone who is using a young person for financial gain.

What are the legal consequences of unsafe online behavior?

Child Pornography – This includes nude or semi-nude pictures or videos of someone under 18, or someone under 18 engaging in sexual acts. In Canada, watching, keeping, sending, posting, or taking pictures and videos like this is illegal, EVEN IF you are the one in the picture or video.

Non-Consensual Distribution of an Intimate Image – If you post or share a sexual picture or video of another person without their consent, or knowing that they wouldn't want you to share it, you could get in legal trouble. If you receive a picture or video like this, you should let the person who sent it to you know that spreading it is illegal, and delete it without passing it on to anybody else.

Harassment/cyber bullying/blackmail – People who engage in any of these behaviors online can be charged with a crime.

If you are experiencing, or think you are experiencing, any of the crimes listed here, you can report them to Canada's national online abuse tip line at [cybertip.ca](https://www.cybertip.ca)

Uttering threats – Threatening to hurt someone, damage their property, or cause harm to their friends, loved ones, or pets can be a criminal offence.

Online Luring – If someone communicates with a young person through technology to make it easier for them to commit a sexual offence against the young person, that is a criminal offence. An example of online luring could be an adult messaging a teen on Facebook and trying to convince them to send nude pictures.

Making Sexually Explicit Material Available to a Person Under 18 – If someone shows or sends sexual material like porn to a person under 18 to make it easier to commit a sexual offence against them, that is considered a crime.

Sexual Exploitation – If a 16 or 17 year old is touched, made to touch themselves or made to touch another person by someone who is exploiting them, someone who is in a position of trust or authority over them (like a parent, guardian or teacher), or someone who they are dependent on, that is sexual exploitation.

What can I do about the risks?

What are some precautions tweens and teens can take to stay safe online?

Think about your privacy. Personal information (like where you live/work/go to school, and other information like phone numbers) should ideally not be part of your social media profile. If it is, you should think about making it private, so that only your friends can see it. Make sure you know who your online friends are, and avoid accepting requests from people you don't know.

Remember that once you have posted something online, or sent it in a text message, you have lost your control over it. Think twice before sending a personal picture

to someone, or making a post that could hurt or embarrass another person. Would you want your parents to see it? An Elder? Your siblings? If not, it might be a good idea to keep it to yourself.

Are any of your online interactions making you uncomfortable? It could be a friend, a family member, or a stranger; if someone is talking to you in a way that makes you feel unsafe, you don't have to continue the conversation. Tell someone you trust if anyone online is behaving towards you in a way that feels wrong.



What are some ways to defuse uncomfortable interactions online?

Ignore them – Nobody can force you to keep talking if you don't want to. If anything about a conversation makes you afraid or uncomfortable, you have the right to stop replying. If they keep going, you can block them, and report them on the app you're using to chat.

Use humour – Sometimes, if you don't feel like you can leave the conversation, you can make a joke to try and change the subject.

Be direct – If you feel comfortable, be direct with the person. “No”, “I'm not interested” and “That's not a good idea” are all examples of things you can say to someone who is trying to get you to do things you don't want to.

Stay true to yourself – It doesn't make you weak or uncool if you don't want to do something that makes you uncomfortable. Let the person know that harassing you is not going to make you want to keep talking and that you won't change your mind.



If something goes seriously wrong

No matter how careful they are, anyone can become a victim of abuse online, and it is never their fault. If you are in a situation where something has already happened, or is still happening to you, and none of the advice in this booklet so far has helped, there are still steps you can take to help put a stop to the abuse.

- If you are the victim of any of the illegal actions mentioned above, you can contact your local law enforcement authority (RCMP). If possible, have a trusted adult or friend come with you to make the complaint and to help you through the process, which may involve making a statement or recording an interview about the abuse.
- If you are a youth under 18 and someone has sexually abused or exploited you online, you are also able to report the abuse at cybertip.ca.
- Experiencing any kind of abuse at any age is mentally draining and difficult, so be sure to take care of yourself. Talk to people you trust about what has been going on and they can help you take the steps you need to heal and keep safe.
- If you feel stuck, or like there's nobody you can talk to who would understand, you can also try talking to a counselor, social worker, or calling one of the helplines at the end of this booklet for advice on what to do.
- Remember that no matter what anybody may have told you, you are not at fault for the abuse, and you can heal from it.



Positive Inuit-focused online content

SIKU app

SIKU is an app created by Inuit with a focus on sharing and maintaining traditional knowledge, especially around hunting and the land. SIKU can be used to share information about weather conditions, sea ice, and sightings of animals, as well as hunting stories and the Inuktitut names for natural features like specific fissures in the ice. It is a great app for young people who want to keep up or expand their cultural knowledge and stay in the loop about what hunters are doing in their own and other communities. SIKU is available in the App Store for iPhones, and in the Google Play Store for Android users.

Inuktitube

Like Youtube, Inuktitube “inuktitube.com” is a website for watching videos. Unlike Youtube, all of the videos on Inuktitube feature Inuit content. There are several different categories, including Music, Children, Inuit Knowledge and Community, and all videos have been vetted and approved by the site creators. Inuktitube can be a great resource for youth who want access to more Inuk media.

Tusaalanga

tusaalanga.ca is a website created by Pirurvik and is an excellent resource for learning Inuktitut. It is a great tool for anyone who may not speak Inuktitut at home, or who wants to brush up on their skills. Tusaalanga offers lessons in a range of dialects and includes vocabulary, grammar, recordings, conversations and the option to learn Inuktitut in English or French depending on what is most helpful for you.

iNaqittaq

iNaqittaq is an app available in the App store for Apple products, and allows you to add a syllabics keyboard to your device. It includes syllabics used in Nunavut as well as those used in Nunavik.

For a list of more great apps available in Inuktitut, see “**Apps Nunavummiut should know about**” (handout.)



Information for parents

1. General online safety

A. How can parents of tweens and teens start conversations around healthy online behavior?

- It's normal for young adults and children to sometimes have crushes on older people, but healthy adults know not to take advantage of these crushes. Explain that it is wrong for adults to have romantic/sexual relationships with teens and tweens. If someone is being inappropriate with your child, make sure your child knows it's not their fault. Adults behaving this way towards children and teens will often try to blame the child, saying that the child "started it" or "chased after them", but it's our responsibility as adults not to take advantage of young people.
- Let your child know that they can tell you about anything that makes them uncomfortable online, even if it's embarrassing. Everyone makes mistakes, and making a poor choice doesn't mean they deserve to be abused or harassed.
- Remind them of the importance of privacy and keeping their accounts visible only to people they know in real life. This helps to cut down on the amount of exposure your child is getting to inappropriate content.

B. As a parent, how can I tell if my child needs help?

There are some signs you can look out for which your child may exhibit if they are being abused online. You might instinctively feel that something isn't right; again, make sure your child knows you won't blame them if they have been abused, and that you are a safe person to tell. Some of the signs that your teen may have been abused are:

- Being more withdrawn, sad, secretive or angry than usual
- A noticeable change in the amount of time they spend online (it could be more time or less)
- Losing interest in activities they used to enjoy
- An increase in physical problems, like headaches or stomachaches
- Difficulty sleeping, or sleeping too much

These signs don't necessarily mean that your teen is being harmed online, but they should be taken as a sign that you need to communicate with your child in case something is going on with them.



C. What your teen/tween ultimately needs from you

A lot of the information in this booklet may seem intimidating or scary to parents and caregivers of youth, especially if you are not someone who uses the Internet much yourself. It's important to remember that your child will be safest if they feel like you are a trusted person to talk to honestly about their life and activity online.

Every family has its own set of rules around what is and is not acceptable content for youth to access online, but you can still take an interest in what your child is doing. Try to learn a little bit about the sites they visit and why they like them, the games they play, and what they do on social media. Being involved in your teen or tween's online life is just as important as being involved in other aspects of their life, and will help to make sure they develop healthy online habits. If any problems do arise, providing a safe, non-judgmental space for your child to express themselves is key.

Even if your tween or teen is doing something that you have told them is unsafe (like talking to strangers online), any harassment or online

abuse that they might experience are NOT their fault. You should continue to have conversations around safety, but blaming a tween or teen who discloses online abuse to you will not help them, and will make it less likely for them to come to you if something happens in the future.

2. Online gaming

Many computer, console and mobile games now have an online multiplayer mode, or rely on playing in online groups to work. Some popular examples of these games among young people are PUBG, Fortnite, Minecraft and Roblox. While it's always possible to play these games safely, it's a good idea for parents to have a basic idea of what the games are like and any risks that might come with them.

The first two games mentioned above are battle royale (fight to the death) shooting games. Fortnite is more age-appropriate than PUBG and has less gore, but if you are a household that does not allow violent video games, you should talk to your tweens and teens about using them. Minecraft and Roblox are world-building games, but can be played on online servers, which means strangers may be able to contact your child; this is also the case on PUBG and Fortnite. As

always, your child should be aware of the risks of talking to people they don't know online, and you can discuss your families' boundaries around this topic, such as using chat blocks or only interacting with people they already know, to help keep them safe.

Game currencies and real money

All of the games mentioned above have some kind of in-game currency that players can use to buy virtual game items. It is possible to earn this currency just by playing the games, but most of the time, games offer players the option of using real money to buy the currency. If

this is something you are OK with your child doing, you can have a discussion with them about how often and how much money they are allowed to spend in the game. If not, make sure your credit card details are not saved on any of the platforms (mobile, consoles, computers) that your child uses to play games, as sometimes they can bill you automatically. Whatever your approach to spending money on online games, it's important to make sure your child knows and agrees to the rules.



Resources for parents, caregivers and educators

Online safety

Unicef

Online safety tips for parents of children who are spending more time using the Internet because of COVID-19

[unicef.org/coronavirus/keep-your-child-safe-online-at-home-covid-19](https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/keep-your-child-safe-online-at-home-covid-19)

Canadian Centre for Child Protection

A national charity dedicated to reducing the abuse and exploitation of children. This link provides resources to do with preventing online abuse and exploitation.

protectchildren.ca/en/resources-research/

Need Help Now

A site to help stop the spread of intimate images, with support along the way, as well as downloadable information sheets.

needhelpnow.ca/app/en/downloadable_resources-youth

Think U Know

This website is based in the United Kingdom, but has a lot of great information relevant to Nunavummiut, including games and videos to help educate youth of all ages about online safety.

thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/

Cybertip

Canada's national tip line for reporting the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

cybertip.ca/app/en/

Childnet International

An international organization which aims to educate children, youth, parents and educators about how to be safe online.

childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals

Media Smarts

This link provides information for caregivers and educators about how children and youth may internalize and express their experiences with fear in the media.

mediasmarts.ca/tipsheet/dealing-fear-and-media

Kids in the Know

Kids in the Know is the national safety program developed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and offers resources for youth of all ages, as well as caregivers.

kidsintheknow.ca

Pauktuutit

A series of short videos developed by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada addressing online safety for Inuit.

[youtube.com/c/Pauktuutit_Inuit_Women_Canada#p/u](https://www.youtube.com/c/Pauktuutit_Inuit_Women_Canada#p/u)

Playlist - I'm Happy Because I'm Safe

Representative for Children and Youth

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth works to support young Nunavummiut by representing their voice and ensuring the Government of Nunavut protects their rights.

rcynu.ca • contact@rcynu.ca

1-855-449-8118

Umingmak Centre

The Umingmak Centre, located in Iqaluit, helps families and children who have been affected by sexual abuse. If you have reported online sexual abuse of your child to the RCMP or other authorities, they may refer you and your child to Umingmak for follow-up care.

umingmakcentre.ca

General mental health and well-being

We Matter

We Matter is a national organization, led by Indigenous youth, with the goal of Indigenous youth support, hope and life promotion.

wemattercampaign.org

Kids Help Phone

Free, 24/7 online or phone counseling for children and youth in English or French. An app, "Always There", is also available for download via the App Store or Google Play. Youth who would rather receive counseling via text can text **CONNECT to 686868**.

kidshelpphone.ca • 1-800-668-6868

Kamatsiaqtut – Nunavut Help Line

Anonymous, confidential telephone counseling for Northerners in crisis or needing a listening ear. Services are available in English, Inuktitut and occasionally French.

nunavuthelpline.ca • 1-800-265-3333

Hope For Wellness

A helpline for Indigenous people across Canada. Services are available in English and French, as well as Inuktitut on request.

hopeforwellness.ca • 1-855-242-3310



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