

Chapter 3:

Sexting and Peer Exploitation

EDUCATOR FACILITATION GUIDE

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

To provide practical tips and instructions for engaging students and handling difficult discussions on the topic of sexting and peer exploitation.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To define sexting as a form of sexual activity.
- ▶ To convey the laws around intimate image sharing and the line where it becomes exploitation.
- ▶ To convey that significant harm can be done with non-consensual intimate image sharing.

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Use inclusive language and terminology that acknowledges these issues can affect individuals of any gender, and ensure the tone remains non-judgmental.
- ▶ Emphasize respectful communication and confidentiality. It is important to listen and value each other's perspectives even if we don't agree with them.
- ▶ If your students have lots of questions or seem restless, take breaks in between the videos to debrief.
- ▶ Offer emotional outlets such as doodling or colouring sheets during the videos and discussion.
- ▶ Let your students know that if they feel triggered, they can go to the school office or speak with the school counsellor.
- ▶ Identify any local support resources and organizations on the issue ahead of time, so that you can readily refer students who may need additional support.

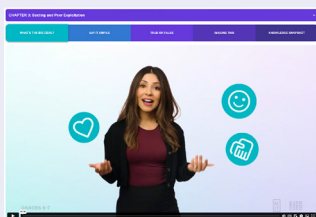
MODERATING DISCUSSIONS

- ▶ Ensure that all students have the opportunity to speak.
- ▶ Providing the class with an anonymous question box might help the students who may not feel comfortable asking important questions.
- ▶ If a question is inappropriate or derails the discussion, gently redirect it back to the main topic.
- ▶ If you don't know the answer, it's okay to admit it! Provide additional resources or take note to look into the question later.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

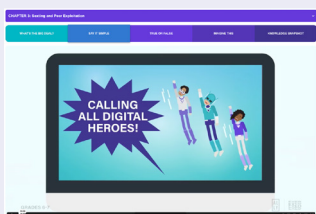
- ▶ Sexting describes any digital communication amongst two people that involves the sharing of sexual photos, videos or messages.
- ▶ Sexting is a form of sexual activity and therefore, consent must be involved from all aspects. However, children under 18 years old can not legally provide consent to engaging in sexting.
- ▶ When sexting occurs between minors, the material being sent, kept, or exchanged is legally referred to as “Child Pornography”, even if both minors were providing consent.
- ▶ “Child pornography” is defined as any visual representation that shows a person who is or is depicted as being under the age of 18 years and is engaged in explicit sexual activity or any written material or audio recording that advocates or counsels sexual activity with a person under the age of 18 years. It is an offence to produce, distribute, transmit, make available, or sell child pornography. It is an offence to possess child pornography. [Section 163.1]
- ▶ Typically, youth sexting occurs in three contexts:
 - Instead of sexual activity for younger adolescents who are not yet physically sexually active.
 - To show interest in someone a teen would like to date.
 - For sexually active youth, as proof of trust and intimacy.
- ▶ If there is any pressure, breach of trust, coercion or exchange, sexting becomes exploitation. When it is committed amongst peers, it is referred to as peer exploitation.
- ▶ Young people’s perceptions of how common sexting is have been identified as one of the strongest factors influencing whether they send sexts. Although 93% of youth think people their age send sexts at least occasionally, just 41% have ever sent one. (<https://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/publication-report/full/sharing-of-sexts.pdf>)
- ▶ Boys and girls are equally likely to send nudes of themselves, however, boys’ nudes are more likely to be forwarded.
- ▶ Sexting is most likely to have negative consequences when the person sending the sext has been pressured into doing it.
- ▶ Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images is an offence committed when someone knowingly publishes, distributes, transmits, sells, makes available, or advertises an intimate image of a person knowing that the person depicted did not give their consent to that conduct. [Section 162.1]
- ▶ In 2020, Statistics Canada reported an 80% increase in incidents reported to police of non-consensual sharing of intimate images across the country compared to the previous five years. (<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024AG0004-000096>)
- ▶ There are three main factors that influence non-consensual sharing behaviour:
 - **Gender stereotypes:** Boys are cool if they have girls falling at their feet, girls have to be sexually desired to be of value.
 - **Moral disengagement:** Agreeing with statements that justify sharing nudes.
 - **A culture of sharing:** Together, gender stereotypes and moral disengagement contribute to a culture of sharing among roughly a third of youth who see sharing sexts non-consensually as normal, acceptable and even positive.
- ▶ Whether done consensually or not, sexting can result in emotional or psychological consequences. There can be feelings of regret, fear, shame, guilt, and anxiety, especially if images are shared non-consensually.
- ▶ It has become increasingly common for kids at this age to engage in sexting. Often, these images are shared in group chats without understanding how violating it is to share someone’s body without consent.

FACILITATION TIPS FOR CHAPTER 3



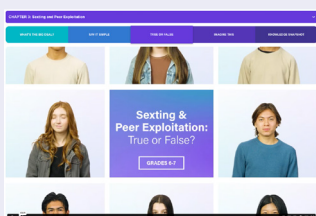
What's the Big Deal?

Encourage open discussion with students using questions such as: How did the information about sexting resonate with you? Can you identify potential complications when sharing intimate images, as highlighted in the video? What are your thoughts on the legal aspects of sexting, especially considering age restrictions?



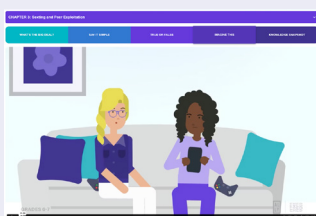
Say It Simple

Encourage open discussion with students using questions such as: Can you think of real-life situations where respecting digital boundaries is crucial? Reflect on the analogy of digital actions as a superhero code—how can we be superheroes championing respect in our online interactions?



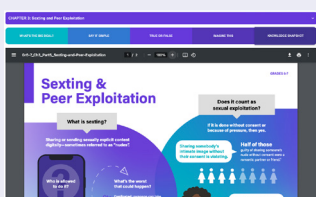
True or False

Use this video as an opportunity to discuss the issue of sexting and how the students are treating one another. You can pause the video after each question, to have discussion about what everyone thinks their answer would be, and discuss if you agree with what Camille, Kevin, Nate and Kara share.



Imagine This

Encourage students to engage in a reflective discussion after watching the video, focusing on the concepts of consent and the legal implications of sexting. Provide them with scenarios to discuss how they would respond if they ever felt pressured to engage in sexting or if they became aware of someone sharing intimate images without consent. Emphasize the importance of setting boundaries and seeking support from trusted adults or resources if needed.



Knowledge Snapshot

Print out the page to keep in the classroom or at home as a summary of the key learnings from this chapter. Encourage students to use the reflection page as a tool for practice and applying what they've learned.

FAQ'S AND RESPONSES TO GET YOU THINKING

Q: What should I do if I receive a nude?

R: If you receive an unsolicited nude, delete it right away. This is to protect yourself against being accused of possession of 'Child Pornography' in the event that someone reports the nude and law enforcement asks to see your device. If the sender continues sending unwanted messages, block the sender and tell a trusted adult. If you receive a wanted nude, never share or forward it to anyone to avoid being liable for distribution of 'Child Pornography.' For more information, check out the Teacher's Resources from Media Smarts under supplementary materials in this guide.

Q: What if someone sends a non solicited nude and then accuses me of having it in order to get me in trouble?

R: Technically, by law, if police ask to see your device and there is a nude on there, you could be held responsible for possession. That is why the best thing to do is to never keep and always delete any content of that nature off of any device or social media platform. Note: Police can check more than just text messages, they can also look into your social media history and applications. If you are ever concerned or have questions about a situation, it is best to tell a trusted adult.

Q: What if it is a photo I took of myself, would I get in trouble?

R: While legally, that photo in itself would be considered Child Pornography, unless you shared it with someone who did not ask for it or you were not reported on, you will not get in trouble. If you are a victim of exploitation where you have been pressured to send your nude or it was shared or kept without your consent, you will not get in trouble.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Present students with different scenarios involving sexting and have them develop action plans on how to handle each situation responsibly.
- ▶ Have students create posters that illustrate the concept of digital consent and the importance of respecting boundaries online.
- ▶ Continue learning—build on the material from the previous chapters and introduce [Chapter 4: About the Internet and Information Sharing](#) to understand how sexual exploitation can be facilitated digitally.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS



To access the following resources, scan the QR code or [click here](#).

More Videos

- ▶ Sexting: What Should You Do?

Articles and Cases

**Please review beforehand and provide an age appropriate summary to students*

- ▶ Quebec Teens Arrested for Possession and Distribution of Child Pornography
- ▶ Nova Scotia Teens Charged with Child Pornography

Other Educational Resources

- ▶ Teacher's Resources from MediaSmarts

DISCLOSURES AND REPORTING

As a teacher, you may be one of the first trusted adults a student confides in about these topics. While some may be brief personal stories shared casually, others may require a more serious intervention.

- ▶ Be calm. Reacting with your own shock or disapproval creates further emotional distress.
 - ▶ Listen attentively and without interrupting the student.
 - ▶ Validate their feelings and acknowledge their courage in speaking up.
 - ▶ Avoid making any promises about keeping things confidential or how their parent/ guardian may react. Provide them with comfort that you will continue to be a support and be sensitive to their worries.
 - ▶ Ask them if anyone else knows about this already. If a trusted adult in their life already knows, you can simply engage in empathetic listening and ensure that you follow your school/organization's protocols. If a minor is currently at risk of harm or is being harmed, it is your duty to report it to your local child welfare services.
 - ▶ Document the disclosure per your school/ organization's best practices.
 - ▶ Provide continued support by checking in or providing them with other resources that are available to them.
- ▶ There may be times where a student does not feel comfortable coming forward or is not yet aware that they are experiencing a form of sexual exploitation. The following are signs to look out for as possible indicators:
 - Skipping class or school;
 - A change in grades or participation in classroom or school activities;
 - Appearing more tired than usual;
 - Device addiction;
 - Dressing more provocatively or having items they may not be able to afford;
 - Not hanging around their usual group of friends;
 - Isolating themselves;
 - Having profiles on apps that are not age appropriate;
 - Being involved in intimate image sharing; or
 - Having newfound mental health struggles.
 - ▶ If you notice any of these behaviours from a student, make sure to take note and voice your concerns to a school counsellor or administrator.

KIDS HELP PHONE (24/7)

- ▶ Call 1-800-668-6868
- ▶ Text "CONNECT" to 686868

NEEDHELPNOW.CA

- ▶ Help with removing sexual pictures/videos

CYBERTIP.CA

- ▶ Report about shared intimate images