

Respect! Conversation Starters: Digital Dating Abuse

Use these conversation starters to talk to your teen about digital dating abuse.

Digital Safety: *How do you decide who to share your cell phone number with? Who do you become “friends” with on Facebook? How can you respond if someone you don’t know very well asks for your cell phone number, or to be “friends” online?*

Talking Points:

- Be careful about giving out personal information such as your cell phone number to people you don’t know very well, regardless of whether you meet them online or in person.
- Check your privacy settings on Facebook and other online accounts to make sure your personal information can only be shared with people you trust.
- If you’re ever uncomfortable with someone you’re in communication with online or by phone, let me know. We can figure out a way to handle the situation together.

Textual Harassment: *Do you ever feel like someone is over-texting you? What crosses the line for you – the number of messages or the content of the messages? What can you do if you feel overwhelmed by text messages?*

Talking Points:

- It’s not okay for someone to constantly send you messages that interrupt your regular life. For instance, if you can’t study or sleep well because of texts coming in all night, that’s not okay.
- It’s never okay for someone to try to control what you do. If someone texts you asking who you’re with, what you’re wearing, or demanding that you respond ASAP, that’s not okay.
- Even when dating, it’s important to have your own personal time with friends and family. If someone you’re seeing sends you controlling messages that cut into your private time, that’s not okay. Let him or her know you need some space.
- It can be hard to tell someone to stop texting you, but it’s really important to be clear about how you feel. Let the person know when it is okay to text you, how often, and what types of messages make you upset, overwhelmed, or uncomfortable.
- Remember to be self-aware! If you think you might be over-texting someone else, give yourself some space. Ask the person directly how they feel about how often and what you text. Treat others online and by cell phone the way you would treat them in person, with respect.

Privacy Violations: *How would you feel if your boyfriend or girlfriend was constantly checking your Facebook page or sneaking a peek at your cell phone log to see who you talk to? Why might that make you uncomfortable?*

Talking Points:

- You have the right to be friends with people outside your dating relationship. It’s not okay for someone you’re seeing to control who your friends are and who you hang out with.
- A respectful relationship is built on mutual trust. It’s not okay for someone to constantly monitor where you are, what you’re doing or who you’re talking with.
- Keep your passwords a secret to help protect yourself.

THE RESPECT CHALLENGE

Sexting: *Have you heard about kids at school talking about sharing nude or private pictures? How do you feel about sexting? What would you do if you received one of these pictures?*

Why do you think people might send or ask for these pictures? Do you think people might feel pressured to send a nude picture, maybe to their boyfriend, for instance? How would you handle the situation if someone asked you for a nude or private picture?

Talking Points:

- There are serious consequences to sending nude or private pictures, including possible criminal charges. Unfortunately, photos that were meant to be private often end up being public because they are sent out as revenge during a break-up, to show off or brag, or even just by accident. Private information can go viral in a matter of seconds.
- It is NEVER okay for someone to use pressure or threats in a relationship, especially in a sexual situation or to get someone to send a nude or private picture. When you tell someone NO or that you're feeling uncomfortable, he or she should stop the situation and respect your decision.
- You have the right to make decisions that keep you safe and comfortable and you deserve to be in relationships where your decisions are honored and respected. If you're feeling uncomfortable, trust your instinct.
- If someone shares a nude or private picture with you, do not pass it on. Spreading private information can be embarrassing and even harmful. Tell an adult immediately.



That's Not Cool: *That's Not Cool* is a national public education campaign to prevent teen dating abuse that uses digital examples of control, pressure and threats to help teens decide for themselves what's okay, or not okay, in their relationships.

Check out the interactive videos, online forum and games at www.ThatsNotCool.com and share this website as a resource with your teen!