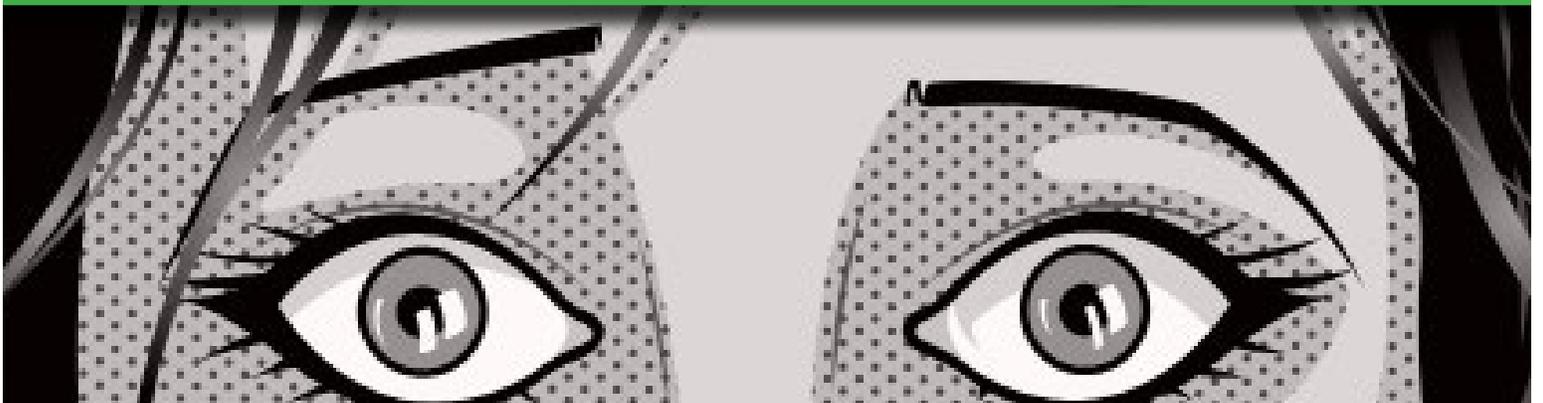


Send me a nudie? ;)...

Promise not to share?



“Send me a naked pic? ;) ...” “Promise not to share?”

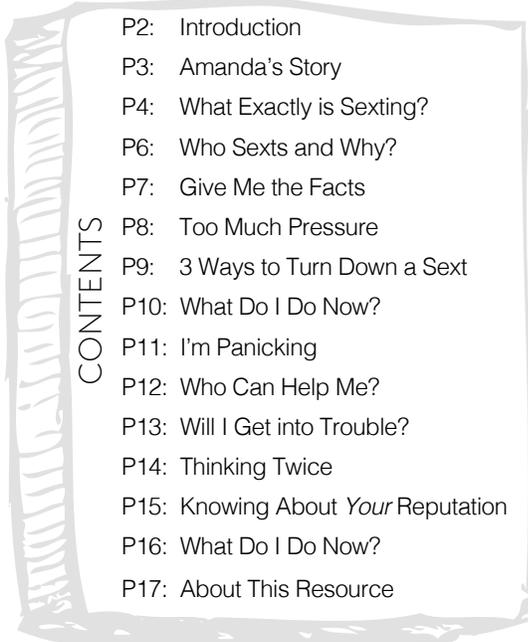
Ok ... So if you picked this up, it's likely that you already know something about sexting. Perhaps you're thinking about sending out an image of yourself or you're thinking of asking someone to send you a picture. Or maybe you've already sent or shared something that you're now regretting. Maybe you know someone else who has and you are looking for resources to help.

We've all done something that we later regretted ... No one is perfect; we've all done something that we've later realized wasn't the greatest idea, especially online. And we've all undoubtedly heard stories about posts that have gone bad or have sprouted wings of their own and got out of control. So if you're feeling alone, we want to start by letting you know that you're not.

We wrote this handbook for teens because we know that sexting can be a hard topic to navigate, plus, adults are panicking about teens' sexting. So what's the big deal? Some teens think sexting is horrible, stupid, and sure to ruin your future. Others don't get what the fuss is all about. So which is it -- **and what do you really need to know about sexting?**

Read on and you will discover:

- What others have done when faced with the **decision** to engage in sexting
- How the technology works and what the actual **risks** are
- What steps you can take to gain back some **control** over a situation that feels out of control
- Whether your **fears** of getting into trouble are realistic
- The **impact** on your future and what you can do about it
- How to get **support** and **advice** from organizations that are there to help with just this sort of issue



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Look, you don't have to read this whole thing, but it does help to browse each section to get a really **good understanding of how and why sexting can be problematic**. The more knowledgeable you are, the better decisions you are going to make for yourself (and the better advice you'll be able to give to a friend).

Amanda's Story ...

Amanda Todd committed suicide at the age of 15 at her home in British Columbia, Canada. Before she took her life, Amanda posted a video on YouTube in which she used a series of flash cards to share **her experience of being blackmailed into exposing her breasts via webcam and being bullied and physically assaulted**. The video went viral after her death, resulting in international media attention. As of September 2015, the video has been watched more than 19 million times. Her mother Carol Todd has since dedicated her time to raising awareness about the issues that affected Amanda. The following is part of a letter written by Amanda's mom, Carol Todd.

"Knowledge is power"

Amanda Michelle Todd

(November 27, 1996 - October 10, 2012)

My daughter, Amanda Michelle Todd, took her life at the age of 15. **It all started with a topless photo**. She didn't know the person at the other end of her computer was taking a picture. She didn't know that he was showing it to other men. Then she started to get blackmailed into showing more of herself via her webcam. And if she didn't, then her image would be sent throughout the Internet. What Amanda didn't do was tell an adult that this was happening to her. She kept it to herself. **This image and what happened thereafter was the start to the emotional breakdown of Amanda**. The loss of her confidence, her spirit and her friends. The embarrassment that followed was unbearable as was the name-calling, the slutshaming and the bullying online and offline that occurred. Eventually Amanda retreated into a shell, not being able to re-emerge as the girl she once was. As a parent and Amanda's mother, it is important to me that young people understand what can happen online and also how to protect themselves online ...

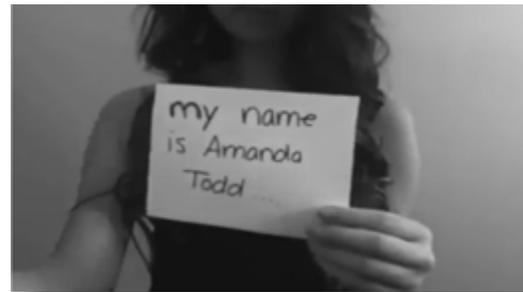


... We need to always tell our young people that it is okay to admit to making a mistake and then also to support them in talking to an adult. This action is so very important before things escalate. **We all need to remember that making mistakes is normal and a part of growing up**. The teen years is when a lot of these happen. Also that these experiences become learning experiences for the future years...

Sincerely, Carol Todd (Amanda's mom)

For more information on Amanda's story, please visit:

<http://amandatoddlegacy.org>



Need a moment to debrief?

Take a moment and think about Amanda's story and her mother's letter. Discuss with a friend or write down your thoughts.

What is your gut reaction? Why do you think Amanda showed her breasts via a webcam? What do you think prevented Amanda from seeking help or support when the situation started spiraling out of control? What would you have done in this situation if you were Amanda's friend? What if you were Amanda herself?

So, what does Amanda's story have to do with sexting?

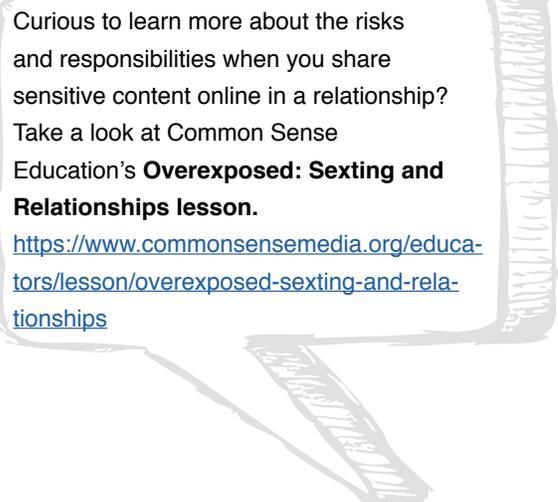
Although Amanda's story is an extreme case of what can go wrong, it does **highlight the pressures many people can feel when they want to gain another person's trust or fit in**. It also serves as an illustration of the aftermath that can occur when an image of oneself gets onto the Internet. But before diving in, let's step back and cover some specifics about sexting.

What Exactly Is Sexting?

“Teen sexting is a very rational act with very irrational consequences.” -danah boyd

“Sexting” is a term used to describe the sharing of intimate images or video with another person.

The content can range from sexually driven texts and partial or full nude photos to sexual videos or pornography. **Very often, sexting occurs between couples or people who are dating, but it can also happen between friends or groups**. Sexting can happen via a whole range of devices, technologies, and online spaces. Most commonly, sexting occurs through text, private message on social networks, or apps such as *Kik*, *Oovoo* and *Instagram*; FaceTime or Skype.



Curious to learn more about the risks and responsibilities when you share sensitive content online in a relationship? Take a look at Common Sense Education's **Overexposed: Sexting and Relationships** lesson. <https://www.common sense media.org/educators/lesson/overexposed-sexting-and-relationships>

Deliberate and Accidental

Sexing isn't defined by any one fixed term. **Sexting can be wanted or unwanted, and the exposure can be deliberate or accidental.**

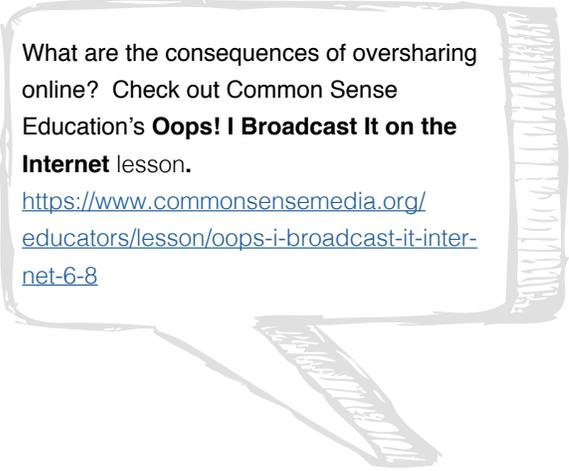
Most sexting is deliberate, meaning that the person who sent it meant for it to be sent. The sender will pose or act in a sexual way and make a direct effort to send it to the person they want to see it, usually a boyfriend or a girlfriend. There are plenty of risks with deliberate sexting, and we'll get to those soon. But sometimes it isn't deliberate -- as in Amanda Todd's case, when she didn't know the pictures were being taken and saved. In these cases, **when the sexts happen accidentally, the larger consequences and privacy issues really come to the surface.**

The media has been full of stories of leaked personal photos of celebrities, such as the iCloud incident where actresses including Jennifer Lawrence and Kirsten Dunst had their images hacked and posted onto 4chan. Another example is the "Snappening," where a third-party app hosting thousands of *Snapchat* images was hacked and the pictures were released. Many of the hacked snaps were nude or risqué images of teenagers that were then re-posted onto sites such as Facebook and Tumblr.

It's fair to say that sexting has become a **part of our everyday pop culture**. We see references in popular culture such as the 2014 "comedy" film *Sex Tape* starring Cameron Diaz or the song Dirty Picture by Taio Cruz and Kesha. **Although the media tends to normalize sexting and minimize the consequences, we want to make sure you know that sexting is not "no big deal" -- and the aftermath is far from normal or desirable.**

Revenge Porn

Aside from deliberate vs. accidental texting, we also want to separate both from another, even more concerning kind of issue: revenge porn. **"Revenge porn" describes the act of sending out another person's nude pictures and/or videos of the person naked and/or involved in a sexual activity as a way to get revenge or express anger.** Think: A couple breaks up, and an angry ex decides to release, send, post, or share sexual content to humiliate the other person. In some cases of sexting, the major issue is whether or not you're a minor -- meaning that adults who engage in the same behavior might not get in trouble. In other cases, such as revenge porn, **it's a HUGE issue and not ok, no matter who or how old you are.** Around the world, governments are starting to take action and consider revenge porn a criminal activity that can land you in jail.



What are the consequences of oversharing online? Check out Common Sense Education's **Oops! I Broadcast It on the Internet** lesson.

<https://www.common sense media.org/educators/lesson/oops-i-broadcast-it-online-6-8>

Who Sexts and Why?

LOL or OMG?!

For people in relationships, sharing nude photos with each other is not actually a new thing.

What has changed is the speed with which a photo can go viral and the size of the audience that can see it. This makes the stakes much, much higher. The digital world brings with it a **new set of challenges**. Now, with the use of front-facing cameras on many smartphones, taking and sharing a mobile photo can be a spontaneous decision. Sharing directly through social networks, even privately,

makes it especially hard to regain control. Just think about it: Social networks and apps are designed to make publishing and sharing quick and easy. **It's hard to know where the image has gone, who has received it, and who has re-posted it already.** A post can leave your social circle very quickly and spread to a large, public audience. **Once you press send, that picture is out of your control forever.** Period. You have no control over what others may think and how they might re-share that image to their "other" audiences by simply pressing send.



A study by the Internet Watch Foundation showed that up to **88 percent of self-generated images have been collected and put onto other sites without the sender's knowledge or consent!** That means that even if the person to whom you send a picture doesn't save or share it, it might live on forever in someone else's hands, and it could pop up in the future when you least expect it.

In your parents' younger years, the embarrassing stuff they did was rarely seen by anyone else. Today, with mobile phones and the Web, that scenario has changed. The World Wide Web means the potential of a huge audience, and, of course, if a photo is uploaded and shared, it can be online forever. **Pretty scary thought that something you did at age 14 can potentially affect your life 5, 10, or 15 years down the road.**

Give Me the Facts

How many people are really sexting?

The numbers are in. A recent study out of the University of New Hampshire found that **less than 16 percent of teens have created, appeared in, or received a sext.**

“Estimates varied considerably depending on the nature of the images or videos and the role of the youth involved. Two and one-half percent of youth had appeared in or created nude or nearly nude pictures or videos. **However, this percentage is reduced to 1.0 percent when the definition is restricted to only include images that were sexually explicit** (i.e., showed naked breasts, genitals, or bottoms). Of the youth who participated in the survey, 7.1% said they had received nude or nearly nude images of others; 5.9% of youth reported receiving sexually explicit images. Few youth distributed these images.”

So we can say, based on real data, that no matter how it might feel, it's just not the case that *everyone* else is sexting.

To sext or not to sext?

Most of the time, intimate pictures are shared between partners who trust each other. And there are probably many images shared that are never seen by anyone except the intended recipient, even when the relationship ends. The trick is, it's hard to predict the future. **If you have a bitter breakup, can you be sure the person will respect you enough not to share your pictures?** It is important to think about the fact that sometimes during a breakup or during the heat of the moment that someone can act in an irrational or thoughtless way. Unfortunately, that's all it takes -- if someone has a naked picture of you, two seconds of feeling angry or hurt might cause them to do something that neither of you can take back.

You hope you can trust the person you text. But do you need to send them pictures of your body in the first place? If someone is pressuring or guilt-tripping you, is it someone you can really trust? Honestly, a good partner is someone who will accept your answer without question if you find the courage to say, “No, thanks.”

Even if you decide you totally trust the person, it's worth it to really think about a few **“what if's”** ...

- *What if* the recipient loses his or her phone?
- *What if* a friend scrolls through his or her messages and sees it?
- *What if* a parent checks the recipient's phone and sees it?
- *What if* the recipient changes his or her mind?
- *What if* the relationship circumstances change?

Source: PEDIATRICS Volume 129, Number 1, January 2012

http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/sexting%20prevalence%20proof%20-%20do%20not%20cite%20without%20permission_km.pdf

Too Much Pressure

But what if you can't or don't want to say no . . . We have all been there: that feeling of being torn between doing something because we feel the pressure (or even just the temptation) and that feeling of uneasiness because we aren't sure of the outcome. More and more, sexting is used as a sign of collateral for trust within a relationship, a way to mark one's status or a way to fit in. But this notion is based on the false assumption that everyone is doing it. The reality is that not everyone is doing it, and more importantly there are better and safer ways to show someone you trust them and that they can trust you.

What if you want to say no, but you just feel **So. Much. Pressure?** It's totally normal to want to be liked and be accepted -- whether it's by your friends, your crush, or just a group of people you like hanging out with. **For some people, the pressure to sext isn't even coming from the person on the receiving end of the nude photos; it's a more complicated kind of pressure coming from all around.** For guys, it might be the pressure to have girls sending you photos to prove to friends that girls are basically throwing themselves at you. For girls, it might be the pressure not to seem like a "prude" or even just the pressure to look or act like your friends do. We know the reality is that you may know sexting isn't the wisest decision, but the short-term consequences (like how you're going to say "no" to the guy or girl you like or how you're going to deal with your friends taunting you) can feel much more stressful than the longer-term potential risk that the photo is leaked. **But trust us: If the photo is leaked, it's much, much worse than being called "lame."** It can ruin people's lives. So, we want to arm you with a few tips for how you can navigate sticky situations without giving into the pressure.

3 Ways to Turn Down a Request for a Sext ... without losing the relationship

1. Use humor. Using a lighthearted response, such as referencing the latest star tabloids drama and telling them, "I wouldn't mind striving for Jennifer Lawrence's freebies, great wardrobe, and chill attitude, but getting involved in an accidental leak of nude photos is one thing I don't really want to have in common."

2. Keep it offline. There's a difference between online and offline, and someone's argument may be that they have already seen you exposed offline, so it shouldn't be a big deal. Remind them that you like to have control over who sees your image and how they see it.

3. Don't fall for "I'll show you mine if you show me yours." We want to be perfectly honest about something: **There is a really ugly double standard.** The consequences for girls of sharing naked pictures can be way worse than the consequences for boys. So, it's not really an even trade. Also, **plenty of teens say they will find a picture online or send someone else's and pretend it's their own.** So if you're sending your own picture, you might not even realize you're taking a much bigger risk than the person on the other end of the conversation.

3 ways to take the conversation outside of the classroom

1. Share: Feel like you should clue in the adults in your life? Pass along this resource and tell them you're interested in talking.

2. Discuss: Open the discussion to your peers. Take the Amanda Todd case and ask your friends or classmates if they have ever felt the pressure to do something similar. Are there any aspects of the Amanda Todd story that stood out to them? What would you advise a friend who was in Amanda's situation and had been "exposed" by having her photos sent out to classmates?

3. Reflect: Take a moment to reflect on your thoughts on sexting, especially now that you've read this guide. Did you learn anything that you didn't know before? Do you ever see incidents in your school or among your peers that sit uneasy for you? What are two ways you can handle future situations that make you uncomfortable? It's time to be honest -- you can't change what you don't acknowledge.



What Do I Do Now?

The Power and the Reach of the Internet

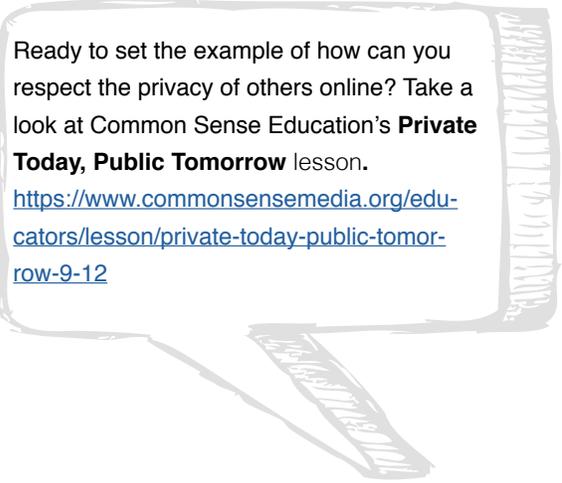
Sharing directly through social networks, even privately, makes it especially hard to regain control. Just think about it: Social networks and apps are designed to make publishing and sharing quick and easy. **It's hard to know where the image has gone, who has received it, and who has re-posted it already.** A post can leave your social circle very quickly and spread to a large, public audience.

Devices such as smartphones, tablets, or personal computers nowadays allow for easy screen capturing. Even if a snapchat is disappearing, someone can capture it with a quick click or two before it goes “poof” and disappears. So where could your picture be?

Photo-sharing sites such as **Flickr** or **Instagram** allow open and unrestricted (as well as private) sharing of pictures. Your data could be on a company's server or copied to users' personal devices.

Webcam sharing sites also can cause problems when people record your actions. Sites such as Omegle and Chat Roulette often attract criminal behaviors due to their anonymity. Sometimes these “anonymous” services encourage people to be more adventurous and risky, **but being online is never completely anonymous.** It only takes screen or webcam capturing software to allow a copy to be made, thus making that private incident all of a sudden not so private.

Cloud storage sites such as iCloud, OneDrive, GoogleDrive, or Dropbox allow server space for people to store material, such as images, virtually. Other users, with permission, then can access the files. Once again, it is difficult to know where your content actually sits and where the cloud servers are based. Those that are based outside of the United States often don't have the same laws about personal data, and your content could be sold and shared with other networks globally.

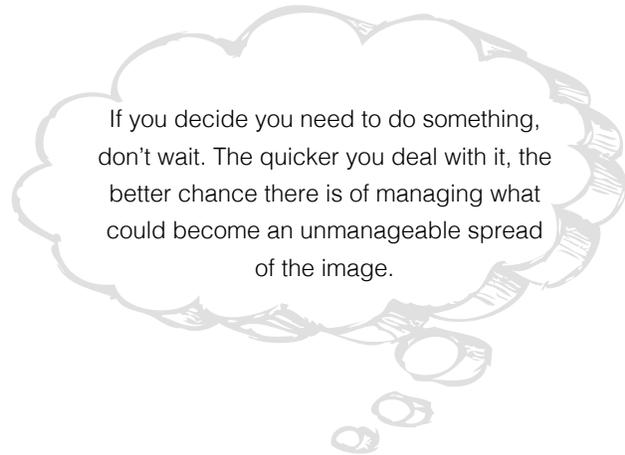


Ready to set the example of how can you respect the privacy of others online? Take a look at Common Sense Education's **Private Today, Public Tomorrow** lesson. <https://www.common sense media.org/educators/lesson/private-today-public-tomorrow-9-12>

I'm Panicking ...

Now what? What are the first things I should do when something goes wrong?

It might seem like the end of the world if your image has gotten out to the rest of the world when you didn't want it to, but try not to panic! Take a deep breath and give yourself a chance to think about how this might affect you.



First off, are you ok? You don't have to shoulder this alone. **Find a trusted person to support you right now: an older sibling, a family member, a teacher, or a coach.** You choose. Check out the list of some organizations that can help on the next page.

If you've sent something directly to someone's cell phone and then had second thoughts, **you need to have an honest conversation with them as soon as possible to get them to delete it.**

Sometimes, that first step of asking for help is a difficult one. But you have to be honest with yourself. Real friends and professionals trying to help are only able to do so when they know all the facts. If you know of a friend who is trying to deal with this, help him or her get the support he or she needs.



Who Can Help Me?

Family members and caregivers

It may be your worst nightmare, thinking of telling your parents or caregivers you shared intimate pictures. And yes, they may be less than pleased at first, but they need to know; how are they going to support you if they don't know what's going on? Remember, you are not alone. A family member may have encountered similar trying situations too.



Feel like you need to clue in your parents to what the digital world looks like? Point them to **Common Sense's Connecting Families**.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/connecting-families>

Yes, they will probably be very upset and disappointed, but **they will likely respect you more for being up-front about it ... and they can be an important source of support** while you're managing this stressful and complicated situation.

School

You might want to consider telling someone at school, as your welfare is their no. 1 concern. Trained staff have access to a whole range of help. Reach out to someone you feel comfortable confiding in such as a school counselor, a teacher, or a coach. It will be much more effective dealing with this together than on your own.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children can help provide advice to you and your family when something like this happens. Visit their site at <http://www.missingkids.com/home>. There also is a great film about sexting called "Exposed"; it's on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/hePkDE>.

Local police

Police sometimes are involved if an incident involves the well-being of minors. However, they are also trained to support before, as well as after, something occurs.

Which organizations can help me?

Love Is Respect www.loveisrespect.org

Crisis Text Line www.crisistextline.org

ThinkUknow www.thinkuknow.co.uk

There are lots of places you can go to for support and advice. Consider who is the best person to support you. **it could be a trusted adult from a youth club, job, sports team, or faith-based organization.** Anyone who is trained to support young people should have some ideas for you.

I'm just the recipient!!!!

What do you do if you get someone's picture or you see someone else's embarrassing picture being sent around? **What would you do?** If you see someone's picture going around -- or it gets sent to you -- the best thing to do is "delete and don't repeat." Delete the message from your phone and do your best not to repeat it or join in on the gossip. We know it can be tempting to get caught up in the gossip and share the image, but it is important to withstand the temptation and let a trusted adult know about the situation. It's also important to **remember that there is a real person behind the image**, who may not enjoy what is being said or done regarding his or her photo.

Will I Get into Trouble?

Although the law was not designed to punish young people for making mistakes, when it comes to minors and naked images, the law draws a stern line. And although each state's laws can differ, the majority of them have severe penalties, intended to protect minors from exploitation. Exploitation can lead to the trade of or profit from sexual pictures of minors, even those that were taken and shared with consent. **This means that if you are under 18 and you create, send, or receive sexually explicit images of another minor, under current federal laws, it could be considered child pornography. This includes taking a picture of yourself.**

Whether it makes sense or not, those who that consensually share intimate photographs of minors with one another face the same punishment as those who maliciously send naked pictures of minors. **Even those who receive the picture of a minor, even without asking to see it, can be prosecuted.** That could mean being charged with a misdemeanor or worse. One could face felony charges, prison time, and mandatory sex-offender registration. So it is important to ask yourself, is it really worth it? Do I want to take that chance?

More information on sexting laws in your state can be found at:

http://mobilemediaguard.com/state_main.html.

Is this going to affect things for me in the future?

Hopefully, in most cases, your continuing digital life will "bury" your mistakes as time goes on with positive content that you would want the world to see. There is, however, no guarantee that the pictures will not be seen by others later. Your reputation could be affected if future employers or college admissions officers come across the incident. Be prepared to be honest and open to admitting a mistake whether it's with future relationships, new friendships, or potential career connections.

Thinking Twice

Sexting isn't the only kind of content to think twice about sharing.

We're talking a lot about sexting because it's a really easy way that teens can end up in sticky situations, but there are other behaviors and actions that can get you in a similarly undesirable situation if you aren't paying attention. **The next few sections share a few tips that apply to EVERYONE** -- whether you've ever sent a sext or never will. If you're a kid with a cell phone or a social media account (or you might ever have one), there are a few things you should know.

So before you post, tweet, text, or press that send button, take a moment and think:

- Could this photo get me in trouble?
- Could this get my partner or friend in trouble?
- Is this photo going to cause drama?
- Am I aware that anyone can share it?
- Would I be ok with my grandma seeing it?
- A year from now, will I feel good about sharing this image?

Knowing who your "friends" are ...

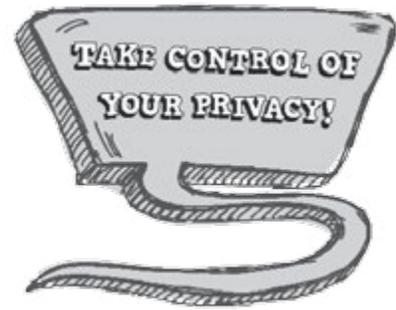
Social media is part of your everyday life, and it's probably not going away anytime soon. Since it is here to stay, it's important to ensure it is working for you and not against you. **There are two important steps that everyone should take to help make sure their social media pages are in good shape.**

First, think carefully about who you approve to follow or friend you. What is your definition of a "friend" or a "friend of a friend"? We often add "friends" because our other friends know them or because we feel that having a larger following will help in having more likes. Ask yourself, "Who would stand beside me when things go wrong?" **Take a moment to think about how an online-only friend differs from a friend you know offline. Is having a bigger following or more likes worth the risk if something does get out?** Bottom line is, it is difficult to track who has seen what and how they might react and share going forward.



Check out this poster for some quick tips on how to determine if you should send out an image or not: https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/should-i-share_24x36.pdf

Second, take ownership of your profiles ... There are several ways in which you can choose who sees what on your profile by controlling your privacy settings. **Controlling your privacy settings helps reduce the chances of an image getting into the wrong hands.** Keep in mind: Just because you have a private profile doesn't mean that once the image has been sent to another person they have the same settings. That is a big what-if. Remember, once the image is up online or in the cloud, it has the chance to go public, which leaves it as fair game for anyone who comes across it.



So although making something private isn't completely fool proof, it's a really important step to make sure you're doing whatever you can to choose privacy settings that make sense for you. Here's a link to a "down and dirty" guide to how you can take control of your privacy on Facebook: www.swgfl.org.uk/FacebookChecklist.

Rule of thumb: If you wouldn't want your grandmother seeing something, don't post, share or take it!

Knowing About *Your* Reputation

Do you know what's online about you?

You should first check what others can see about you. Search for your name using Google or other search engines to see what information already exists about you. Although you may not have added anything new, your friends and family might have.

If you find anything offensive or require anything to be removed, report it to the hosting site immediately. Remember, the image will need to break the site's terms and conditions. If it is a naked or semi-naked image of you, the legal implications will mean that the site host is likely to remove it quickly.

Not sure exactly how to take down those embarrassing or inappropriate photos? Take a look at this infographic from Who Is Hosting This on How to Remove Your Embarrassing Photos from Social Media: <http://www.whoishostingthis.com/blog/2014/09/16/remove-photos/>

Increase and curate your positive online presence ... If you feel as though your online presence is not what you want it to be at the moment, proactively create a positive online presence that, over time, may overshadow those past online mistakes. **Think before you post.** Take a moment to imagine those "what if's" to determine whether that post or that text is really worth it.



What Do I Do Now?

There are ways that **you can challenge content published by others using a site’s “report abuse” option**. It’s important to draw these sites’ attention to the content as quickly as possible and to indicate why you think it should be removed. It’s not enough to say, “I don’t like it”; your request needs to show that it breaks their terms and conditions of use. Sites such as Facebook and Instagram don’t allow nudity, so be concrete and direct when reporting. We’ve included some links to these reporting routes at the end of this booklet. **Noting “this content contains nude images of a minor” is more clear and more likely to get the site to take action** than just saying, “I don’t want this image online.”



It is also important to understand how *you* can change or remove content that you have posted. **That profile pic of you in your underwear was funny at the time, but now you’ve changed your mind**. While you can’t be sure if others have saved it or if copies will live on in other servers, **taking it down is a really important and valuable step**.

About This Resource

This resource is a derivative of “So You Got Naked Online” by South West Grid for Learning and UK Safer Internet Centre. This resource has been adapted by [Common Sense Education](#).



The South West Grid for Learning Trust is a not for profit, charitable trust company, providing schools and many other educational establishments throughout the United Kingdom with safe, secure, and reliable broadband Internet connectivity; broadband-enabled learning resources and services; and help, support, and advice on using the Internet safely. Find more resources at www.swgfl.org.uk.

[Common Sense Education](#) is the nation's leading independent non-profit organization dedicated to empowering kids to thrive in a world of media and technology. Families, educators, and policy makers turn to Common Sense for unbiased information and trusted advice to help them learn how to harness the positive power of media and technology for all kids. Find more resources at www.common sense media.org/educators.

