

Parents and Caregivers' Information Sheet

Grade 9 - 2024-25

ONLINE SAFETY



THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND ONLINE SAFETY

The online presence of young people is becoming increasingly important. The apps allow young people to connect with their friends, as well as meet other young people in BC and even around the world. With this possibility, also adds the possibility of dangers. Young teenagers are on a quest for identity and so they seek to find people who look like the person they want to become. This quest makes them more vulnerable to online exploitation.

The anonymity offered by social networks and the Internet means that young people can feel comfortable discussing subjects that they, at times, would have difficulty discussing in person. On the other hand, this aspect is also a source of concern and danger since they will not always be aware with whom they are chatting online. How important is it for you, as parents/guardians, to familiarize yourself with the applications that young people use and to discuss the best practices to have online.

Below you will find 6 apps commonly used by young people along with a short description of how they work.

APPS COMMONLY USED BY TEENS :



Omegle: instant messaging and video conference website with random people



Twitch: live video content streaming service (similar to Youtube)



TikTok: mobile video sharing application. It is possible to create videos or only watch them



Instagram: a social network, photo and video sharing service



Snapchat: a photo and video sharing application



Discord: instant messaging software

Inspired and adapted from: https://protectchildren.ca/pdfs/C3P_ParentingintheDigitalWorld_fr.pdf



CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is a scourge that is increasingly important and present in the lives of young people. When we talk about cyberbullying, we refer to any gesture of intimidation that is made in cyberspace (internet, social networks).

It can take many forms, for example, spreading rumors about someone on social media, sending hurtful messages or putting hurtful comments under posts or photos, sharing an intimate image of another person.

The possibility of anonymity offered by the internet and social networks makes cyberbullying difficult to manage and control. Indeed, with the impression of anonymity, some young people feel that they risk fewer consequences. In addition, the fact of not having the other react means that they are even less aware of the impacts that their actions can have.

How do you know if a young person is being cyberbullied?

Young victims of cyberbullying may seem moody when online, avoid computers/devices or turn them off when an adult approaches, are reluctant to go to school, appear withdrawn, anxious or depressed. If you notice any of these signs, it is important to discuss them with the young person in question.

PREVALENCE OF CYBERBULLYING

According to a Statistics Canada survey, 1 in 4 young people (25%) aged 12 to 17 have been the victim of cyberbullying in the last year (Hango, 2023).



This study also revealed that the risk of being cyberbullied was higher among:

Non-binary youth:



Young people who are attracted to people of the same gender:



First Nations youth living off-reserve:



Young people benefiting from academic adaptation measures:



HOW TO REACT IF YOUR CHILD TELLS YOU THEY ARE BEING CYBERBULLIED:

- It's important to stay calm.
- To take the time to thank him for the confidence he has in you so that he can tell you about it.
- Don't make him feel guilty because he didn't tell you about it sooner.
- Do not cut him off from the internet. Although young people are bullied on the internet, they still need to stay connected to the virtual world, since this world is part of their social life. Cutting him off from the internet could have the perverse effect of further isolating him.
- Adopting an open attitude could be reassuring for the young person. By asking him how he feels, how he would like you to help him. He will feel that you support him, that you listen to him without judging him and without acting in his place.

D. Hango, 2023, « Les préjudices subis en ligne par les jeunes et les jeunes adultes : La prévalence et la nature de la cybervictimisation », *Regards sur la société canadienne*, produit no 75-006-X au catalogue de Statistique Canada.

HELPING YOUR TEEN:

RECOGNIZE AN UNHEALTHY SITUATION

- Someone who keeps asking for intimate photos or videos;
- Someone who uses pity or guilt to get something;
- Someone who uses trusted images or information to try to embarrass or harm them;
- Someone who does not seem to be willing to be told no (insistence);
- Someone who seems to share personal things too quickly;
- Someone who offers them money or gifts to convince them to do something that makes them uncomfortable.

TIPS TO HELP ESTABLISH DIGITAL BOUNDARIES WITH YOUR TEEN

Personal boundaries are just as important in person as they are online and on social media. You can set boundaries by talking to your teen about how they interact with people on social media, whom they chat with, share pictures/videos, play video games, etc. In addition, digital limits also include establishing good times for use as well as the amount of time spent on electronic devices. In short, what is important with setting digital limits is that you and your teen are in agreement on the limits decided. We always encourage the power of choice and the development of critical thinking in young people and these conversations give way to them.

GET OUT OF AN UNHEALTHY SITUATION

- Direct: "Never. I don't want my photos everywhere online"
- Use a joke: Humor can ease the discomfort and help change the subject.
- An excuse: Find a false reason for quitting. "I must go, goodbye." "My mom is watching my cell so I can't do this."
- Ignore: No one is forcing you to respond, the person writing to you cannot force you to join the conversation. You do not have to talk to them.
- Assert yourself: The persistence of the other is a sign of unhealthy control. Be firm in your response and, if that does not work, stop responding.
- Block them: The option always exists to block or delete the individual. It is important to record the messages in case you need to show communication to the school and/or the police.
- Make a report: Most social platforms and apps have a reporting mechanism that can be used to report inappropriate behaviour from another user.




WHAT IF I AM UNAWARE OF MY TEENS ONLINE HABITS?

It is always a good idea to familiarize yourself with your teen's online habits. Here are some suggested points to discuss to better understand their habits:

- Adjusting the privacy settings on the apps your teen uses.
- How they met the people who are their friends on social networks and the ways they communicate.
- The main reasons they use the internet? (eg. video games, chatting, photo sharing, etc.).
- What kind of information they should or should not share in their messages, posts, photos or videos.
- The internet is not private. Even if they believe that the videos, photos, messages on Snapchat are deleted, this is not always the case.
- Have they ever felt uncomfortable in an online situation? What did they do ?

Inspired and adapted from: https://protectchildren.ca/pdfs/C3P_ParentingintheDigitalWorld_fr.pdf

Resources

 Important! If you are concerned about your adolescent's health, ask a professional for help, or call the helplines mentioned below.

Do not hesitate to communicate with the school staff: the counselor, the teacher or the principal. Your family doctor can also help, as can the following resources:

- **Kids Help Phone:** to confide in somebody, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anonymous and bilingual. Toll-free number: 1-800-668-6868. kidshelpphone.ca
- **Phobies-Zéro (French only):** support and self-help group for people with anxiety, panic disorders, phobias and agoraphobia. 514-276-3105 or toll-free 1-866-922-0002.



RESOURCES IN FRENCH

- [Être parent d'ados à l'ère numérique](#)
- [Pause ton écran](#)



RESOURCES IN ENGLISH

- [Parenting in the digital world](#)
- [Parents and screen time role-modelling](#)

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