

Parents and Caregivers' Information Sheet

Grade 9 - Workshop 6 - 2022

ONLINE SAFETY



THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND ONLINE SAFETY

Youth's online presence is becoming increasingly important. Social media allows youth to communicate with their friends and make new acquaintances with other young people from B.C., and even around the world. These possibilities also add an element of danger. As youth go through their teen years, they are on a quest to build their identity, constantly searching for a sense of belonging by looking for people who are similar to them. This quest makes them more vulnerable to online exploitation ([source](#)). The anonymous aspect offered by social networks and the internet means that youth can feel comfortable discussing topics that they may normally have difficulty with in person. On the other hand, this aspect is also a source of concern since they will not always be aware of whom they are talking to online. For this reason, it is important to have discussions with teens about having healthy relationships online, as well as in person. It is equally as important for you, as a parent/guardian, to familiarize yourself with the platforms that teens use in order to have a better understanding of the different functionalities. Below, you will find 6 applications commonly used by teenagers and brief descriptions.

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



HELPING YOUR TEEN NAVIGATE PEER INFLUENCE

In adolescence, it is completely normal for peers to have an influence on each other. These influences can be positive, such as prompting them to study, the clothes they wear, the music they listen to, and more. However, this influence can also be negative.

Here are some ways to help your teen navigate peer influences:

- Helping them develop their self-confidence: as your teen gets older, it is good to include them in family decisions and show them that their voice is heard. By developing their self-esteem, this allows them to have confidence in their decision-making skills and ability to make the right choices without being influenced.
- Assuring them that they can be open with you when they are not comfortable.
- Demonstrating openness is extremely important in ensuring honest communication.
- Listening without judgment: listen to the concerns or things your teen is discussing.

INFLUENCERS

Increasingly, youth idolize the influencers they see on social media. These influencers can be people of all ages who share different information about video games, make up, lifestyles, and more. Just as there are negative and positive influences among peers, the same can be said of influencers.

Here are some suggestions for ways to assess your teen's judgment with regard to the influencers they follow:

- What are the differences between a positive and negative influencer?
- How did you find this influencer?
- What inspired you to follow this influencer?
- Tell me about this person, show me videos or Instagram/TikTok posts. Show interest in the people they follow.
- Question their critical thinking: Do you think their life is realistic? Do you agree with everything they say or do?
- Do you follow them because you find them cool or because you would like to become like them?

TECHNOLOGY USE AMONG PARENTS

Technology is an important tool for bonding, sharing/finding resources, as well as entertainment. However, technology can sometimes take a big place in the lives of youth as well as adults. Parents have an influence on the use of technology of their teens. By showing them your own use of your electronic devices you are teaching them how to use these tools. When your teen is on their phone a lot, it can make you feel like they think their phone is more important than what's going on at home. This perception can also be observed by your teen as well if you spend a lot of time on your phone at home. modelling good habits in the use of technology shows your teenager that it is possible to have a healthy relationship with technology and their family.



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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