

Dating in the digital age

Month 4 Meeting 7

This week focuses on modern issues affecting the way young adults form and maintain relationships in an era where technology has become integrated into daily life.

CYBER SWAT

Objectives

- Discuss issues related to relationships and technology.
- Understand how to report explicit content on major social media applications.
- Continue planning for Cyber Safety Awareness Week.

Materials

- Printable handout
- Cyber Safety Awareness Week preparation checklist

Agenda

This week's team meeting plan covers some heavy content. Rather than suggested activities, this plan will introduce students to resources, key terms, and leave room for student-oriented discussion. SROs should consider the best way to facilitate a discussion with their team that addresses these sensitive issues in a safe and respectful manner. Be ready to jump in and make sure everyone feels safe at all times. Remember, team members with personal or secondary experience with this topic will need an advocate.

Key Terms

Sexting: the exchange of sexually explicit images using cell phones or social media (Rhyner et al.).⁴

Sextortion: the threatened dissemination of explicit, intimate, or embarrassing images of a sexual nature without consent, usually for the purpose of procuring additional images, sexual acts, money, or something else (Patchin & Hinduja).⁵

Teen dating violence (TDV): a type of intimate partner violence that occurs between two people in a close relationship. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological aggression, and stalking. TDV can take place in person or electronically (CDC).⁶

Digital dating abuse: problematic dating behaviors that use social media and mobile phones, which can include monitoring someone's activities and whereabouts, controlling who they talk to and are friends with, threats and hostility spreading embarrassing and sexual photos with others and pressuring for sexual behavior (Reed et al., 2017).⁷

Discussion topics

- Does your school have a specific law or policy that addresses sexting?
- What resources exist in your school/community to help teens who are dealing with TDV and/or digital dating abuse?
- Does this issue affect a particular population in your school more than others?
- How can Cyber S.W.A.T. team members be a good influence on peers who are engaging in risky online and texting behavior?
- Are there way in which technology can improve and/or help relationships?

Things to consider

- Double check the laws and policies in your school and state around child pornography and sexting.
- Some states allow minors to seek protective orders, while others do not. Additionally, some states do not cover digital abuse.
- Assume that at least one of your team members has a personal experience with this content.
- It may be helpful to explain upfront that you are a mandated reporter, and therefore are required to follow-up on any disclosures of abuse that may arise during the discussion.

Resources

- Photo-hiding applications: <https://www.nw3c.org/docs/research/photo-hiding.pdf>
- *NYT Article*: “Teenagers, Stop Asking for Nudes”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/02/well/family/teenagers-stop-asking-for-nude-photos.html>
- State-by-State Differences in Sexting Laws: <https://www.bark.us/blog/state-by-state-differences-in-sexting-laws/>
- Break the Cycle [Real]source Center: <http://www.breakthecycle.org/realsourcecenter>