

# **Social Media Awareness**

## **Navigating Changing Relationships and Online Safety**



Resource created by St. Leonard's Community Services in collaboration  
with London Police Service.

# Social Media and The Digital Age



Social media can be a great way for your child/youth to stay connected with their friends, and provides them with a variety of benefits such as:

**Increased access to information** worldwide, enhancing knowledge, understanding, and progress

**Enhanced opportunities for cross-cultural interactions**, social support, and critical thinking skills

**Opportunities for enhanced social communication**, such as connecting with friends and family, engaging in community events, and networking

**Growth of ideas** from access to articles, blogs, podcasts, music, etc.

**Identity exploration** and development

It is important to respect your own boundaries and others' boundaries on social media. Here are some tips:

## Respecting Yourself and Others

- Don't post pictures of others without their permission
- Don't post offensive things
- Keep personal issues off social media
- Don't try to embarrass people
- Never post when you're angry



# Social Media and Conflict

**While the digital age has many benefits, it is important to educate your child/youth on some of the possible risks.**

## **Risks to online activities include:**

- Predators
- Cyberbullying
- Damage to relationships or reputation
- Potential for discipline from School or Parents
- Charges with the Police
- Identity theft



A statistics Canada study found that 25% of teens aged 12-17 reported experiencing cyberbullying in the previous year (Hango, 2023). **The risk of cyberbullying has been found to be much lower when parents are aware of what kinds of activities their child/youth are engaging in online.** We encourage you to have conversations with your child/youth about safe social media use and when to seek help from a trusted adult.

## **The Effects of Conflict May Cause...**

- An increase in anxiety
- Poor academic outcomes
- A person to lash out and become aggressive
- A person to avoid social situations/school
- Low self esteem and self-loathing, etc

## **So have your child/youth consider...**

- Would the adults in my life, (parents, relatives, teachers, coaches and future employers) think this is appropriate?
- Could this get me into trouble at school or with the law?
- Who might be hurt or embarrassed by this content?
- Does this give any information about me or another person that should not be shared?
- How could this impact my future opportunities?

# Social Media and Conflict

**It is very important that you encourage your child/youth to do the following:**

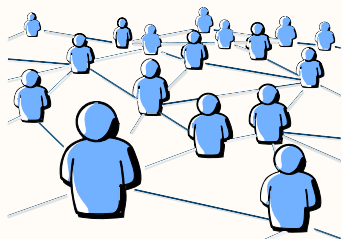
- Seek out and accept assistance from School Staff/Community/Home
- Talk to their parent/caregiver
- Talk to a coach or an adult they trust
- Friends are GREAT but don't always give the best advice



**Believe that we are all capable of positive change!**

- Taking responsibility for our mistakes
- Making amends
- Forgiving someone who has hurt us
- Moving on from old wounds
- Building healthy relationships and more self-esteem

Accept that it is a NORMAL part of life that conflicts happen and that friendships shift and change!



If you would like to learn more about cyberbullying and online conflict, please refer to TVDSB/LDCSB's Family Well-Being Community Workshop Series Session 'Combatting Cyberbullying: Internet Safety for Caregivers' by London Police Service for more information.

# Social Media Safety Tips



**Since conflict is a natural part of life, it is possible that your youth will experience some form of conflict online.**



When a conflict occurs, individuals may use social media to continue the conflict by sending messages, commenting on posts, sharing pictures etc. to fuel the conflict.

It is important to talk with your child/youth about how they can stay safe, and what to do when conflicts arise online.

## **Tips to stay safe online:**

- Have a different password of each account (have a password on your cell phone in case you lose it or someone takes it)
- Do not share your password with anyone
- Use privacy settings
- Don't send anything you don't want becoming public
- Be selective and careful who you accept as friends
- Limit access to can view your location
- Block and/or report accounts and content that are negative or hurtful
- Seek help from a trusted adult when conflict is occurring online



## **Encourage your child/youth to consider these questions before posting or sending something:**

- Is this how I want people to see me?
- Could somebody use this to hurt me?
- Would I be upset if they shared it with others?
- What is the worst thing that could happen if I shared this?

For more resources and information on online safety please see your school's online safety webpage.

# Social Media and Self Image



It is important to recognize that everything that is posted on social media is not necessarily reality.

## **Common misconceptions of posts/photos:**

- Their life is so amazing that its 'picture perfect'
- Everything in their life is positive

## **The Reality is...**

- Almost every video you see has been touched by an editing software
- MOST photos have used a form of editing software
- Many accounts only post 'good moments'

## **How People Try To Fit In Online:**

- Posting edited/altered images of themselves
- Present ourselves to be perfect (and we don't share when we aren't!)
- Focus on the superficial
- Highly visible sexualization of photos/videos
- Instant judgement and sharing their opinion– usually more harsh than in person
- Posting consistently
- Fear of missing out (FOMO)
- Pressuring yourself to be constantly online
- Answering messages immediately





# Privacy and Location Settings

## Privacy Settings

- Social media has different privacy setting options for who can view your account and content
- Important to look through these settings on your social media
- Consider who you want to be able to see your content or things you share
- Consider making a private account so that you can choose who can interact with your social media
- Having discussions with your youth about the importance of not sharing personal information with individuals they do not know



## Location Settings

- Some social media keeps track of your location
- Others will allow you to share your location with your friends or family
- Consider turning off location settings so that your youths' location is private
- Options to turn off location settings for specific amounts of time

# Privacy and Location Settings



## Instagram

Consider encouraging your youth to create a **private account**. This means that when someone follows your youth online they can either accept or decline the invitation. This means that your youth will have to approve each person they want to view their page.



## Snapchat

Snapchat **tracks the location** of your child/youths' phone and shares it with the friends they have on the app. Consider having a conversation with your youth about disabling the sharing of their location.



*Some parents may prefer to have their child/youths' location shared with them for safety purposes.*

## TikTok

Similar to Instagram, TikTok has a **privacy setting option** to make your youths' account private. This means they will have to accept each person who tries to follow their account, and decline accounts they do not know.





# Other Social Media Considerations



*Here are some ideas of how you can encourage safe and healthy social media use in your household:*

- Encourage your youth to try an offline activity or see a friend in person
- Screen free times - dedicating time to spend with each other without any phones
- Using media together - watching a show or movie together
- Setting reminders to wind down and stop consuming media
- Discussing when social media is inappropriate or harmful for youth so that they can set their own boundaries online
- Discussing social media content that is upsetting
- Talking about the ways social media can impact your mental health
- Asking a trusted adult for help when confused



# We Are All Capable of Positive Change!



- Encourage your youth to pay close attention to how they are feeling in their relationships
- Have them admit feelings like jealousy, envy, anger and hurt. These are normal feelings.
- Recognize when they have handled a conflict poorly, and discuss what could have gone better
- Have discussions that recognize when your youth has handled a difficult situation positively
- Encourage your youth to report incidents to a trusted adult or through their schools anonymous reporting tool
- Encourage your youth to take accountability for their actions and have conversations about how to better handle future conflicts
- Have conversations about additional resources with your youth

## You Have The Right:

- To NOT like everyone
- To have people of your own choosing as friends and to be in relationships with
- To spend your time with a variety of friends
- To not always be available for everyone
- To set your own boundaries
- To find activities that boost our confidence and self-esteem



# About This Resource

This resource was created by St. Leonard's Community Services Restorative Approaches team in collaboration with London Police Service to be provided as a supplemental resource accompanying social media presentations and engagement sessions.



PROJECT **B.U.I.L.D.S**

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# Resources



**Kids Help Phone:** Resources about social media, connections to support.

<https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/social-media-resources-to-support-your-mental-health>

**DIY Digital Youth:** Resources, fact sheets and infographics.

<https://www.diydigitalsafety.ca/>

**Mood Tools:** Mental health check ins and safety planning.

<https://moodtools.org/>

**Right to Be:** Safety guides and information on privacy and location settings

<https://righttobe.org/resources/>

**Need Help Now:** Connections to anonymous support for youth and learning online rights. <https://needhelpnow.ca/en/>

**CyberTip:** Canada's Tipline for reporting online sexual exploitation

<https://www.cybertip.ca/en/>

**Opal:** App used to track and limit screen time

<https://www.opal.so/>

**Mind Your Mind:** Mental health and wellness support

<https://mindyourmind.ca/>