



Peer to Peer Abuse: Sexting

What is Sexting?

Sexting is the sending of **sexually suggestive pictures, video, or messages** through the use of information and communication technologies. Most sexting occurs **voluntarily between two individuals** but sexting can also be a **form of cyber-bullying or sexual harassment**. Sexting can have significant **negative consequences** for the individuals involved including **emotional distress, social consequences,** and potential **LEGAL CHARGES OF PRODUCTION / DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**. Sexting promotes the child pornography industry by making sexually explicit images of children and youth more easily accessible and makes **youth more vulnerable to exploitation.**

Warning Signs

Sudden increase or decrease in the use of computer, cell, or other communication technologies
Changes in mood or behavior — especially after connecting online or via cell
Avoidance of discussions about what they are doing on the computer
WITHDRAWAL FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY
Avoidance of school, parish, or other peer activities
General signs of distress: changes in academic performance, depressed mood, sleep / appetite problems, somatic concerns, thoughts of self harm...

What I Can Do

Educate your children about the potential consequences of sexting. **TALK** about the qualities of **right relationships, signs of risk,** and **WHAT TO DO** if they are involved in sexting. **Model appropriate use of technology.** **MONITOR** your child's behavior **Set clear expectations** for your child's behavior toward others and their **use of communication technology.**

