



## rape and abuse crisis center

advocacy. counseling. education.

### Sexting and You...

#### **What is Sexting?**

*Sexting* is when sexually explicit messages (including photos or videos) are sent via cell phones, the internet, or instant messaging services.

#### **Did You Know...**

- Twenty percent of teens ages 13-19 and 33% of young adults ages 20-26 have shared nude or semi-nude pictures of themselves via text message or online posts<sup>2</sup>.
- Teen girls are slightly more likely to sext than boys<sup>1</sup>.
- Eleven percent of the teen girls reported having sent seductive pictures of themselves<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Why is Sexting a Problem?**

- Photos or videos sent online, with the intent of being private, can easily be shared with others.
- Once digital images are out there, they leave a digital footprint, especially online. You can't "take it back"<sup>1</sup>.
- Sexting is currently illegal under federal law. It falls under the creation, distribution and possession of child porn and is a felony offense<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Steps to Prevent Sexting<sup>3</sup>:**

- **Think about the Consequences:** If you take, send, or forward a sexual picture of someone underage, even if it's of you, you could get kicked off of sports teams, face humiliation, lose educational opportunities, and even face legal consequences.
- **Never take images of yourself** that you wouldn't want everyone--your classmates, teachers, family, and employers--to see.
- **Before sending, REMEMBER:** you can't control where this image may travel. What you send to a boy/girlfriend could easily end up with their other friends, who could send it to their friends, who could send it to their friends...
- **If you forward a sexual picture of someone underage,** you are just as responsible for the image as the original sender. You could face child

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pornography charges, go to jail, and be required to register as a sex offender.

- **Report any nude pictures you receive** on your cell phone or over the Internet to a trusted adult. Don't delete the message and images. Instead, get your parents or guardians, teachers, and school counselors involved immediately.

References:

1. About.com—Family Computing  
[http://familyinternet.about.com/od/computingsafetyprivacy/a/sexting\\_what.htm](http://familyinternet.about.com/od/computingsafetyprivacy/a/sexting_what.htm)
2. CBS News.com  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/01/15/national/main4723161.shtml>
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