Sexting: What Every Parent Needs to Talk About Before It's Too Late

Address the topic of sexting before your child learns from someone they shouldn't trust:

- Know what sexting is
- Recognise how it can affect your child's safety and well-being
- Learn how you can respond calmly and effectively if your child is in a sexting incident
- Learn 3 tips to protect your child from sexting

What is Sexting?

Sexting is the sending, receiving, or forwarding of sexually explicit content (sexts) of oneself or others, usually through messages, photos, and videos.

Sexting with persons below the age of 18 may carry legal ramifications,and can be seen as committing a criminal offence under Singapore law.

Sexting Can Affect Your Child's Safety and Wellbeing

Your child's reputation and mental health may be harmed, as sexting may lead to:

- Sharing of intimate content without permission e.g. **revenge porn**
- Content being used for blackmail e.g. sextortion

I Found Sexts on My Child's Phone!

Stay Calm

DO:

Stay calm and have an open and non-judgmental conversation about the incident. Assure your child that you're there to listen and not lecture. This will create a safe space for them to be truthful.

SAY:

"I came across something on your phone that I want to understand better. Can you tell me what happened?"

"Help me understand this situation. I'm not upset, I just want to hear your side."

Understand the Issue

DO:

Start a frank conversation about relationships, intimacy, and respect. Highlight the risks of sexting and reassure your child that it is okay to reject sexting requests.

SAY:

"Sexting can be very risky. How can we show care and respect in relationships without taking risks like sexting?"

"If this ever happens again, remember you can always say "no". Let's think of some ways you can say "no" confidently."

Delete the Sexts

DO:

Ask who received the content and where it was shared. Guide your child to remove all sexts from their devices and cloud storage. If you are still concerned, discuss activating **parental controls.**

SAY:

"Who has seen this and where was it shared? Let's work together to remove it from your phone and cloud storage."

"What do you think about setting up some parental controls to help keep you safer online?"

Note: If you suspect your child is being groomed, learn how you can help your child **here.**

3 Tips to Protect Your Child From Sexting

The best way to deal with sexting is to prepare your child in advance.

A Educate your child about respectful relationships and sex, starting with these tips from HealthHub: Tip One | Tip Two | Tip Three

B Stay involved with your child's online activities. Set up parental controls together to keep them safe and empowered.

C Create regular opportunities for honest conversations with your child about online safety and relationship. Encourage them to share openly, and listen without judgement.

Be present, stay involved, and build a trusting relationship with your child. Your support and guidance will help them make safer online choices.

Visit www.digitalforlife.gov.sg for simple tips and tools to keep your child safe online.