

Talking About Sexting

Worksheet For Teens

Sexting: sending, receiving, or posting images or videos in which the person depicted is nude, partially nude, engaging in sex acts, or wearing revealing clothing.



According to a meta-analysis published in the [Journal of Adolescent Health in December 2021](#), data collected in the last 5 years shows:

- 1 in 5 youth (19.3%) have sent a sext
- 1 in 3 youth (34.8%) have received a sext
- 1 in 7 youth (14.5%) have forwarded a sext WITHOUT consent

Recent studies highlight that older youth are more likely to send sexts and females receive a higher rate of sexts. There are many factors contributing to these statistics—including harmful double standards between boys and girls experiencing different expectations and repercussions. Overall, data suggests that youth sexting rates have likely started to plateau, which may be due to increased awareness of potential risks and education efforts to encourage healthy choices.

Why are youth sexting?

- Trying to be funny or joking
- Peer pressure or threats
- Trying to impress a crush or get someone to like them
- Experimenting with relationships, sexual behavior, or testing boundaries

Teens typically send sexts to flirt, as a joke, or because they feel pressured. Social media messaging apps and “disappearing” messages also contribute to creating a culture where youth engage in risky behaviors. Older youth can mistakenly think everyone is sexting so they may disregard potential consequences because they don’t see it as a big deal. Safe, supportive friends are very important because youth are more likely to sext if it’s normalized within their social circle.

What are potential risks of sexting?

- It is always one click away from being public and permanent
- “Disappearing” photos or videos can be saved by screenshots or third-party tools
- Bullying, cyberbullying, embarrassment, harassment, or trouble at school
- Trouble with the police (in extreme/severe cases, youth can even face criminal charges because it is illegal to possess, create, or share sexually explicit images of minors)

What can you do about sexting?

If your image is already out there, there is support available. You are not alone! Talk to a safe adult for help reporting it, stopping it from spreading, or removing it from an app or website. It’s never okay to pressure someone into sending a sext, and don’t share or forward a sext that is sent to you. In addition to telling a parent or safe adult, youth can make a report to the [CyberTipLine](#) (1-800-843-5678) themselves or on behalf of a friend who needs help.

This worksheet is designed to educate youth about sexting and help them think through different situations you might encounter—along with the potential risks and consequences.

Review the following scenarios and answer the questions below.

1. Someone you have a crush on is sending you messages and pressuring you into sending a nude image of yourself.

How would you respond?

2. A friend forwards you a sexually explicit picture of someone else who goes to your school.

How would you respond?

3. Someone you're romantically interested in sends you a nude image of themselves.

How would you respond?

4. A person is trying to blackmail you into sending a sexually explicit picture—threatening to share an inappropriate photo of you to other people at school in an act of “revenge.”

How would you respond?