

Sextortion: a real risk.

What You Can Do to Help Keep Your Child Safe

- ☐ Make education mandatory in order for a child to use technology. Think of it as important as learning to drive a vehicle, how to stay safe in severe weather, practicing intruder drills, or practicing fire escape routes. Kids are being ambushed online and they don't know how to handle it. It is our job as adults to give them the tools to stay safe!

- ☐ **Have the Necessary Conversations! By showing them you are willing to wade into uncomfortable territory, you are helping them understand the seriousness of online risk.**
 - ☐ Role model safe online practices. Role play or talk through scenarios with them in order to give them lived experiences. Asking something like: "how would you handle xyz situation?" can give youth practice in problem solving.
 - ☐ Keep yourself educated about the technology, sites, and games your kids are using. If you do not understand the ins and outs of the site/game, do not allow them to use it. To understand, try using the following sites, as well as searching yourself.
 - ☐ commonsensemedia.org
 - ☐ protectyoungeyes.com/apps
 - ☐ Honor age restrictions for tech use
 - ☐ Monitor their tech use, ensure privacy settings are tight. Use parental controls if available.
 - ☐ Have ongoing conversations about what they are doing online. Be curious, do not act judgmental/accusatory. Be Curious!!
 - ☐ Play the same games they are playing. Follow them on social media.
 - ☐ Utilize NCMEC education resources: missingkids.org (specifically search "sextortion" under "the issues" tab).

- ☐ Utilize escape room as practice: noescaperoom.org
 - ☐ Utilize Thorn as an educational tool: thorn.org
 - ☐ Teach them to be cautious if someone randomly begins DMing them.
 - ☐ Teach them to recognize red flags: if someone you are talking to asks you to move the conversation to a different platform than where it started.
 - ☐ Share that any content they put online can be manipulated with AI
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- ☐ **Teach them what to do if they are targeted. Maybe create a plan with them on how to handle these situations.**
 - ☐ PAUSE. Take a few deep breaths.
 - ☐ Do not delete the account and conversation. Save screenshots
 - ☐ Block and report the person.
 - ☐ Do not send them pictures or money. If you have already sent these things, do not send more.
 - ☐ The criminal WILL harass and threaten. Teach them to stay calm, to not make impulsive decisions.
 - ☐ The criminal WILL likely send out the picture; even if they say they won't. This is part of the game.
 - ☐ If a picture gets shared, there are options to get it removed: takeitdown.ncmec.org
 - ☐ Find an adult they can trust
 - ☐ If they do not have an adult to go to - help them identify safe friends who can get them to an adult
 - ☐ Remind them this is a hard moment in life, but it CAN be sorted out. They can and will be able to move on from this. Killing yourself is permanent.
 - ☐ Remind them you love them no matter what mistakes they make.

☐ **What do I do if my child is targeted? Or what do I do if a child reports this crime to me?**

- ☐ **Stay Calm.** Your child is scared, panicked, and believes they have no hope. They desperately need your support and unconditional love.
- ☐ **Don't judge them.** Remember they made a mistake and are the victim of a crime. Mistakes are a part of everyday life.
- ☐ **Call the police**
- ☐ **Report the crime on the CyberTipline** [www.missingkids.org \(report.cybertip.org\)](http://www.missingkids.org/report.cybertip.org)
- ☐ **DO NOT** leave the child alone. The child is feeling very vulnerable and anxious right now. They need connection and compassion.
- ☐ **DO NOT** lecture the child. **THANK** them for coming to you for help. **PRAISE** them for keeping themselves safe. **VALIDATE** their emotions.

☐ **Phrases to use when speaking to kids about online risks, hard situations and suicidal thinking:**

- "You did the right thing by coming to me."
- "I'm so proud of you."
- "This is a really scary situation. We will get through it together."
- "You must have been so scared!"
- "We will figure this out. I have learned about sextortion and know what to do."
- "Can I stay with you while we call the police together?"
- "I don't want you to be alone right now, let's go watch a movie together."
- "Sometimes when people get really scared like this, they have thoughts of suicide. Have you had any?"
- "It is normal to have hard thoughts when our brain is so overwhelmed."
- "It is okay to be scared. This is a scary situation."
- "The most important thing is that you are safe. Thank you for keeping yourself safe."