



Mahwah Municipal Alliance

Helping our kids make great decisions

A review on an important topic from the MMA...

Social Media Dangers and its Impact on **Cyberbullying**

A guide to cyber safety and responsible social networking strategies.



Today our children are using the internet and social media in almost every facet of their lives. The internet, mobile phones and computers are three of the biggest systems of communications which play a critical role in their daily activities and more importantly the development of their identities. While the internet may make our lives easier and is beneficial in many ways it also comes with many inherent dangers that as parents we must familiarize ourselves with to protect our children.

As a law enforcement agency we have seen a steady and disturbing increase in the number of investigations as a result of cyberbullying, digital bullying and sexting. We take these incidents very seriously because of the impact it can have on the lives of everyone involved. It is important to note that once images are transmitted they cannot be taken back and may be permanently accessible on the internet. They could harm a student's ability to be committed to college, to be hired for a job and much more.

Unlike most other means of communication the internet and cell phones can provide anonymity in communication. Fake profiles and identities can be created to allow others to tease, intimidate and bully people on a number of social media platforms. What steps can parents take to prevent these types of incidents and what can they do if they occur? Communication with our children, and education in understanding how the internet and social media functions are two key components. I hope this newsletter provides a foundation for you to gain a better understanding of these issues and their importance in safeguarding our children from predators.

The Mahwah Police Department and Mahwah Municipal Alliance is pleased to announce a partnership with Valley Hospital in promoting a safe and healthy community. We look forward to working with Valley Hospital on a number of innovative programs in the future. Follow the Mahwah Municipal website www.mahwahalliance.org for future updates. Your feedback on our newsletters and programs is greatly appreciated.

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Legislative Summary

Under the new law teenagers who are caught sending sexually explicit images with their cell phones will not be subject to the State's child pornography laws with respect to their first offense. In general, minors caught sexting would have to attend a state sponsored program where he or she would learn about the potential state and federal legal consequences and penalties associated with sexting, which technically amounts to distribution of child pornography. Teens who are not minors or if it is not a teens first offense will generally not be eligible for the educational program.

Law and Punishment

In general, under the New Jersey Endangering Welfare of Children Statute it is a crime to:

- Permit a child to engage in a prohibited sexual act or in the simulation of such an act if the person knows, has a reason to know or intends that the prohibited act may be photographed, filmed, reproduced, or reconstructed in any manner, including on the internet, or may be part of an exhibition or performance.
- Photograph or film a child in a prohibited sexual act or in the simulation of such an act or who uses any device, including a computer, to reproduce or reconstruct the image of a child in a prohibited sexual act or in the simulation of such an act.
- Knowingly receive for the purpose of selling or who knowingly sells, provides, transfers, publishes, distributes, circulates, exhibits, advertises, offers or agrees to offer, through any means, including the Internet, any visual image which depicts a child engaging in a prohibited sexual act or in the simulation of such an act.
- Knowingly possess or knowingly view any visual image which depicts a child engaging in a prohibited sexual act or in the simulation of such an act, including on the Internet.

It's important that you share photos of yourself safely and appropriately. Exchanging explicit images is not only uncool, it's illegal. It can get you in trouble with your parents, your school, and even the police. Think twice before taking an explicit picture of yourself, or sending one of yourself—or someone else—to another person. You never know where it could end up or what kind of trouble you could find yourself in. Follow these basic principles to keep your privates private.



Social Safety

Assume **EVERYONE** has access to your profile
Parents, teachers, future employers and law enforcement, etc.

Use **DISCRETION** when putting pictures and content on your profile
Friends may think a picture is funny, but think how your parents or future employer may react.

Assume people **WILL** use the information on your profile to cause you harm
Don't put anything online you wouldn't want your worst enemy to know.

Assume there are predators out there trying to **FIND YOU**
Think like a predator. What information on your profile identifies who you are, where you hang out and where you live?

You may be held **RESPONSIBLE** for inappropriate content on your profile
School districts across the country are revising their policies to allow them to discipline students for online behavior.

Advice for Teens

- 1** Ignore or flat-out reject any requests from others for inappropriate images.
- 2** Block individuals who make you feel uncomfortable with how they talk to you.
- 3** Do not distribute explicit images.
- 4** Delete any explicit images.
- 5** Do not support your own objectification.
- 6** Distract the person requesting inappropriate pictures from you.
- 7** Sexting doesn't define a healthy, functional, romantic relationship.
- 8** If you receive (or someone shows you) an explicit image of someone you know, contact that person to tell them their images are being circulated.
- 9** Inform an adult you trust if you are concerned about the well-being of the person in the image.



Why Do Teens Sext?

There are several reasons that teens sext. When it comes to boys sexting girls, 77% have said that they sext nude photos and sexually explicit photos to girls in order to get them in the mood for sex. When it comes to girls sexting boys, 40% have said that they did it as a joke, 34% have said that they did it to feel sexy, and 12% have said that they feel pressured to do it.

Why Is Sexting So Serious?

When teenagers do something wrong, it is typically because they do not understand the consequences and ramifications of their actions. This is true with sexting. When a teen boy or girl sends a nude or semi nude photo and sexually explicit messages, they believe that these messages will be for the receiver's eyes only. This is not always true. Often times, when teen relationships fall apart, one or both teens will try to hurt their ex. One way that many teens will get back at each other is to use these sexts that were sent when things were good. Teens can send these sexually explicit photos and messages to classmates or post them on the internet. Many teens do not understand that once something is on the internet, these images are there forever. The information on the internet is there forever. Teens do not think of these things when they are sexting. They may have a great deal of trust during the relationship, which makes them feel that there is no danger in sending these messages. When these messages become public, it can be very embarrassing for the sender, and can cause long term effects.

Change in Behavior

When a sexted message gets out it can cause a huge change in a teen's behavior.

- 1 Depression, anxiety or loss of self esteem
- 2 Withdrawn from friends or avoiding social activities, social problems in school
- 3 Loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping
- 4 Alcohol and drug use
- 5 Being bullied
- 6 Become sexually promiscuous
- 7 Fear of going to school or excessive absenteeism from school, poor grades.



How to talk to your child about sexting

HAVE A CONVERSATION – Every child is different, so your approach should be based on their character and your relationship with them. You could:

- Outlining your expectations and explain the rules of having a mobile, tablet or smartphone.
- Ask them what they feel is acceptable to send to people, if they'd be happy for you or a stranger to see certain photos. If the answer is 'no', explain that the image, video or message is probably not appropriate to send.
- Make sure they're comfortable saying no, that they know their body is private and being asked to share explicit images inappropriate.
- Explain to them about the importance of trust and consent in a healthy relationship. Tell them that it is not ok for someone to make them feel uncomfortable, to pressure them into doing things that they don't want to do. Let them know they can speak with you if this ever happens.

EXPLAIN THE RISKS OF SEXTING – Tell them what can happen when things go wrong. Don't accuse them of sexting, but explain the dangers and legal issues.

- You may find it easier to use real-life examples, such as television programmes or news stories, to help explain the risks.
- Ask them if they'd want something private shown to the world. Talk about the Granny Rule – would you want your grandmother to see the image you're sharing?
- Talk about weather a person who asks for an image from you might also be asking other people for images.
- If children are sending images to people they trust, they might not think there is much risk involved. Use examples of when friends or partners have had a falling-out and what might happen to the images if this happens.

Glossary of Internet Terms

Chat Acronym – An acronym used to communicate, usually through instant and text messaging. Some acronyms include:

- ASL - Age/sex/location
- CD9 - Code 9, parents around
- BRB - Be right back
- F2T - Free to talk
- IDK - I don't know
- LGH - Let's get high
- LOL - Laugh out loud
- PRON - Porn
- MorF - Male or female
- LMIRL - Let's meet in real life
- POS - Parents over shoulder
- TMI - Too much information



Blog/Web Log – An online journal or diary where writers, known as bloggers, may chronicle their daily lives or comment on news and popular culture.

Chat Room – An interactive forum where you can talk in real time.

File-sharing Program – Any program that allows many different users to share files, such as movies, music, and image files, directly with each other.

Predatory Offender – An individual who uses the Internet to connect with minors in order to develop a sexual relationship.

Geolocation Services – Users may use these services to share their locations with their friends or with other users. Examples of services that offer location tagging include Facebook® and Foursquare®.

Grooming – This is the process adults use to manipulate minors into sexual relationships or introduce sexual images of themselves. It often includes the giving of compliments or gifts.

Instant Messaging (IM) – Through instant messaging, users can quickly exchange messages with other online users, simulating a real-time conversation or "chat."

Cyberbullying

SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BECOME THE NEW SCHOOL YARD FOR BULLIES

Red Flags that a child may be involved in cyberbullying!

ATTENTION!

A Child May Be A Target of Cyberbullying If:

- Unexpectedly stops using their device(s)
- Appears nervous or jumpy when using their device(s)
- Appears uneasy about going to school or outside in general
- Appears to be angry, depressed, or frustrated after going online (including gaming)
- Is oversleeping or not sleeping enough
- Becomes abnormally withdrawn from usual friends and family members
- Shows increase or decrease in eating
- Seems regularly depressed
- Makes passing statements about suicide or the meaninglessness of life
- Loses interest in the things that mattered most to them
- Avoids discussions about what they are doing online
- Frequently calls or texts from school requesting to go home ill
- Desires to spend much more time with parents rather than peers
- Becomes unusually secretive, especially when it comes to online activities

WARNING!

A Child May Be Cyberbullying Others If:

- Quickly switches screens or hides their device when you are close by
- Uses their device(s) at all hours of the night
- Gets unusually upset if they can't use their device(s)
- Laughs excessively while using their device(s) and won't show you what's so funny
- Avoids discussions about what they are doing online
- Seems to be using multiple online accounts or an account that is not their own
- Is dealing with increased behavioral issues at school or elsewhere
- Appears overly concerned with popularity or presence in a particular social circle
- Demonstrates increasing insensitivity or callousness toward other teens
- Starts to hang out with the "wrong" crowd
- Demonstrates violent tendencies
- Appears overly conceited as to their technological skills and abilities
- Is increasingly withdrawn or isolated from the family

Top 10 Tips for Parents:

What To Do When Your Child is Cyberbullied

- Make sure your child is (and feels) safe
- Talk with and listen to your child
- Collect Evidence
- Work with the school
- Refrain from contacting the parents of the bully
- Contact the content provider
- Contact the police when physical threats are involved
- If the bullying is based on race, sex, or disability contact the office of civil rights
- If necessary, seek counseling
- Implement measures to prevent it from reoccurring

What To Do When Your Child Cyberbullied Others

- Acknowledge the issue
- Remain Calm
- Keep an open line of communication
- Stop the bullying
- Understand the root of the problem
- Investigate
- Make children understand how targets feel
- Set up parental controls
- Share your concerns
- Stay educated



83%

OF VICTIMS FELT THAT BULLYING HURT THEIR SELF ESTEEM

30%

OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN BULLIED HAVE SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

10%

OF CHILDREN HAVE ATTEMPTED TO TAKE THEIR OWN LIVES DUE TO BULLYING

19%

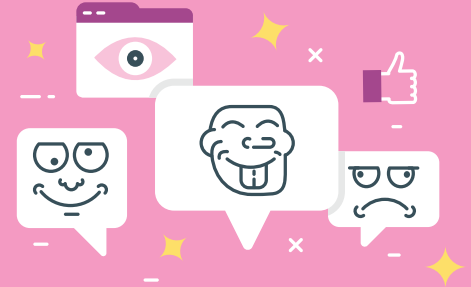
OF CYBERBULLYING ENTAILS THE SPREADING OF RUMORS

72%

OF CHILDREN REPORT THEY ARE CYBERBULLIED BECAUSE OF THEIR LOOKS

26%

OF VICTIMS ARE CHOSEN DUE TO THEIR RACE OR RELIGION



87%

OF TODAY'S YOUTH HAVE WITNESSED CYBERBULLYING

24%

OF CHILDREN DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN THEY ARE HARASSED

39%

OF OUR CHILDREN DO NOT ENABLE PRIVACY SETTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Kai-Ping Wang, M.D.

Medical Director of Pediatric Psychiatry



Preventing bullying is crucial, but emphasizing mental health helps prepare our children for facing future adversities, including bullying. Mental wellness involves fostering self-esteem, empathy, competence, emotional insight, optimism, connection, morality, and coping skills. Being mentally healthy is essential for resilience – the ability to adapt to life's stresses. In contrast, poor mental health is evident in many of the risk factors for bullying: poor self-esteem, depression, anxiety, isolation, inadequate family and peer connection, and poor social facility.

Additionally, fostering mental wellness may decrease the likelihood of youth becoming bullies. Many bullies struggle with poor self-esteem. For some, this fuels an excessive preoccupation with popularity or need to exert dominance. Others have difficulty managing aggression, frustration, and violence. Limited or permissive parental involvement, alcohol, and substance use are likely risk factors. Peers and role models demonstrating intimidation and aggression can model bullying type behaviors like yelling, excluding, and demeaning.

Promoting good mental health complements our efforts to create a safe and nurturing environment for our kids.

Far Reaching Consequences

While cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon, the consequences are far-reaching and with the advent of apps like Facebook, SnapChat, Twitter, etc., it's becoming more prevalent than ever. Everyday over 150,000 kids nationwide stay home from school because of bullying; and it seems like every week there's a story in the news about a child committing suicide because they were bullied, which is one too many. Victims may experience psychological and emotional damage, severe depression, anxiety, anger-and even suicidal behavior.

According to the website, StopItCyberbully.com, types of cyberbullying include:

FLAMING: Using inappropriate or vulgar language to attack or fight with someone.

OUTING: Sharing a victim's secrets or personal information in a public forum.

HARASSING: Repeatedly sending inappropriate, hurtful or hateful messages.

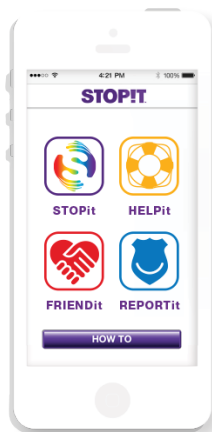
EXCLUSION: Intentionally and publicly excluding someone from a group, and tormenting them after exclusion.

IMPERSONATION: Posing as someone for the purposes of damaging their reputation, inviting an attack, or sharing real or fabricated information about them.

STALKING: Electronically "following" someone and sending them targeted messages with the intention of scaring, harming or intimidating them.



A simple, fast and powerful solution to report inappropriate behaviors, deter unethical or illegal activity, and mitigate financial and reputation risks to schools and corporations.



STOP! App

Real-time reporting, messaging & awareness

- Mobile app for quick, easy and anonymous reporting
- Empowers students to send photo, video and other evidence
- Serves as a deterrent and facilitates the "Upstander Effect"
- Add talk or text Get Help Resources for students
- Quickly gain first-hand knowledge of cases enabling early intervention
- Schools have seen up to a 50% reduction in reported incidents
- Receive push notifications from your organization

DOCUMENTit

Incident Management System

- Instant alerts for early intervention
- Two-way anonymous communication to gather information and improve investigations
- Cloud-based solution stores evidence and supports safe handling of sensitive and illegal material
- Evidence and investigative actions are automatically time and date stamped
- Powerful reporting dashboards, alerts and analytics turn data into actionable intelligence
- Schools have seen up to a 70% reduction in time spent investigating incidents



ReThink

before the damage is done.

ReThink has been honored with several national and international awards - including the Google Science Fair - Global Finalist, MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Aristotle Award, Illinois Innovation Award, Health Hero Award and International Diana Award. ReThink was also featured at the White House as part of White House Science Fair program. As a Social Entrepreneur, Trisha Prabhu was invited by the White House as an Honored Guest at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit 2016 hosted by President Obama. The ReThink app is available for free on both the Google Play Store and iOS App Store.

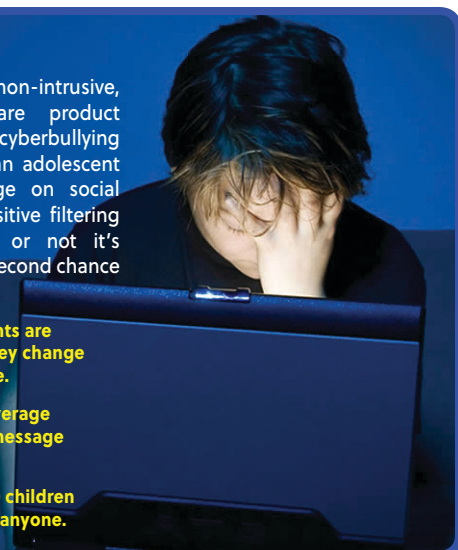
What is ReThink?

ReThink is an award-winning, non-intrusive, innovative, patent-pending software product created by Trisha Prabhu, that stops cyberbullying before the damage is done! When an adolescent tries to post an offensive message on social media, ReThink uses its context sensitive filtering technology to determine whether or not it's offensive and gives the adolescent a second chance to reconsider their decision.

Research shows when adolescents are alerted to ReThink their decision, they change their minds 93% of the time.

The overall willingness of the average adolescent to post an offensive message reduced from 71% to 4%.

Research has found that 9 out of 10 children suffer in silence - they do not tell anyone.



KNOW YOUR APPS & THEIR DANGERS!

You may think your kids use an app because it's a simple way for them stay in touch with their friends.

This is certainly true for most kids, but unfortunately, most of these apps have hidden dangers.



Facebook: Users post photos, videos, comments, updates and personal information for others to read and share.

Facebook: Info, pics and videos shared to many (friends of friends) leaving personal info exposed.



Instagram: Users post videos and pictures often displaying locations with comments for others to read & share.

Instagram: Can send inappropriate pics through direct messages. It can direct message anyone.



Twitter: Users can read and send short messages, pics & videos known as "tweets".

Twitter: Permits nude and sexually explicit content on the site. Often used to send threats/hateful messages.



SnapChat: Regarded as most used social app by kids today, full featured texting, pics, video and entertainment.

SnapChat: Encourages sexting sending of inappropriate, nude, explicit pics/videos.



WhatsApp: Users send texts, documents, images, video, users' location and audio messages without using cellular data.

WhatsApp: A leading App that sends text, pics, videos "under the radar" without using cellular text plan.



Blendr: Exchange photos, videos and messages with new people at will to forge new relationships.

Blendr: "Chat, flirt and meet new people" is the slogan for this app, encourages hook ups.



Kik: Instant messaging app that can send pictures, videos and sketches on any smart or WiFi device to anyone.

Kik: Send text, pics and videos to strangers. Works on any Wifi device, not just phones. Linked to child sexual exploitation.



Omegle: Allows and encourages users to chat and "video cam" with others at will.

Omegle: "Talk to Strangers!" is the slogan for this app, which has been linked to child sexual exploitation.



Musical.ly: Short music videos where users lip-sync on camera, which are posted, commented on and saved

Musical.ly: Public settings publish videos for all to see, explicit music lyrics, suggestive dancing, nudity and sexually explicit content.



YikYak: Allows users to post up to 200 characters. Messages are viewed by the 500 closest Yackers determined by GPS tracking.

YikYak: Users are exposed to and are contributing sexually explicit content, derogatory language and personal attacks.



Whisper: An anonymous confession app. It allows users to superimpose text over a picture in order to share their thoughts anonymously.

Whisper: Due to the anonymity, kids are posting pics of other kids with derogatory text superimposed on the image.



Ask.FM: Ask and answer anonymous questions randomly

Ask.FM: Used to send hurtful messages, commonly linked to cyberbullying and inappropriate content.



Tinder: Dating and romance app with GPS locations to suggest matches nearby with chat features.

Tinder: Intended for adults ONLY to locate and message each other for casual romance. Displays accurate location!



Bumble: Online dating and romance app that uses GPS locations to match users with others who are nearby.

Bumble: Random people are able to locate and message you. Shows where you are at all times.



Down: Users can categorize their Facebook friends. They can indicate whether or not a friend is someone they'd like to hang with or someone they want to date.

Down: Although identifying someone you are willing to date doesn't mean you actually will, it creates a hook-up norm within a peer group.



Vaulty: Private media gallery, pic and video file storage app that blocks/locks access to only the user by pin code.

Vaulty: Intended to hide nude/sexual pictures from parents view. Prevents access from anyone who is not a user.



Calculator%: Appears as a calculator app on a phone or Wifi device, but it actually stores media (like Vailty).

Calculator%: An app in disguise! Used to store nude/sexual pictures hidden from parents.



Venmo: Online payment method and money transfer app that can be linked to credit card(s) or bank account(s).

Venmo: Money transfer App that does NOT provide same protections as PayPal and used in fraud schemes.

MAHWAH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

The Mahwah Municipal Alliance (MMA), a nonprofit 501c3 organization, is a group of community volunteers and law enforcement officials working together to provide programs and initiatives that will help our youth make good decisions. We offer programs that focus on the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse, addiction, teenage anxiety and depression, bullying, teen dating abuse and internet safety.

The MMA has sponsored several Town Hall Meetings addressing teenage drug and alcohol use. Other programs have included: Chris Herren, Remembering TJ, A Partnership for Change, Dr. Bradley, CyberBullying, Ryans' Story, Rachels Challenge, Jeff Yalden, Jesses Journey and many more.

The Mahwah Police in conjunction with the MMA offer two outstanding leadership academies: the Junior Police Academy and the Youth Leadership Academy, an innovative one of a kind Academy where students work together with law enforcement officers to develop positive self esteem and leadership skills. The objective of the Academies is to promote an environment where students learn the principles of respect, discipline, teamwork, motivation, and leadership. The MMA is fortunate enough to have volunteers and police officers who care deeply about these critical issues and strive to provide information. This is a collaborative effort from all components of our community and we appreciate your support. We are grateful for the support of our local Board of Education, Township and Business Community.

Your ideas are important to us. We welcome your ideas and are always looking for suggestions and new programs that can help make a difference. Please contact us at mahwahalliance@mahwahpd.org and visit our website.

MMA MEMBERS

Chief James Batelli

Captain Steve Jaffe

Mayor Bill Laforet

Carolyn Blake

Valerie Tzaneteas

Joan Stewart

Victoria Shaw

Todd Van Duren

Chris Howard

Jim McQueeney

Liz Skrod

Sam Alderisio - Past Chief

www.mahwahalliance.org