

## e-Safety Tips

- As parents and caregivers, we have a responsibility to be informed and familiar with all technology our teens are using: texting, chatting, gaming, IMing, social networking, as well as cell phone and other digital camera use.
- Today's youngsters have Internet access from many sources, including cell phones, gaming systems, friends' electronic devices and free public Wifi. Regularly discuss how much information he/she shares, how often and what messages they are conveying about themselves.
- **The best tech safety policy between kids and parents is education, communication, supervision and trust.** Set clear expectations of responsible digital behavior and clearly communicate these to your teen.
- If you choose to install parental controls on your teen's electronics, do so openly and remind your teen that it is an act of love and caring.
- Supervise and interact with your teen online and electronically. Become familiar with chat/texting acronyms. (See Box.)
- The most common online/electronic threats to youngsters are peer-to-peer: cyberbullying, textual harassment and sexting (sending or receiving images or text with suggestive or sexual content.)
- Young people put themselves most at risk online by having inappropriate conversations with people they don't know, sending images of themselves or agreeing to an in-person meeting.
- According to a teen survey,\* most adolescents go willingly to meet online acquaintances in-person and are expecting a sexual encounter. Over three quarters of the time, there is more than one meeting.
- If your youngster is taking risks online, find out why. What is happening in their life to cause such behavior? Consider obtaining professional help/counseling, if needed.
- Via social networking sites, gaming systems and webcams, the online offender may expose teens to adult content and even convince them to share intimate images of themselves.
- Online predators become a more serious threat if (1) they succeed in learning a teen's full name, address or other personal information or (2) they manage to arrange a private, in-person meeting with the teenager. Young people who have agreed to such meetings have been abused and harmed.
- Stress to teenagers the importance of telling you or another trusted adult about any threatening or inappropriate messages or images. Save all evidence and report these immediately to [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) and your local police.
- Let your child know that, for their own safety, you will be monitoring their cell phone and Internet use from time to time. Then do so.
- If your teenager abuses any form of technology, consider taking the privilege away for a period of time - like you would with a car. Reward good behavior as well. Education, communication, supervision and trust are key to digital safety.



### Sample Text Acronyms:

**NAZ** = Name, address, zip code

**RU/18** = Are you over 18?

**Zerg** = To gang up on someone

**LMIRL** = Let's Meet in Real Life

**1174** = U r invited to a wild party

**420** = Marijuana

\*Source: Youth Internet Safety Survey by David Finkelhor, Kimberly Mitchell and Janis Wolak; Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire