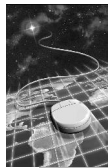# Providing Safe Cyber Paths for Teens with Autism

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Internet Safety
Why It Is So Important?

Teen abducted by internet contact: In 2004 a 14 year-old teen with Asperger Syndrome, was held captive for two weeks by a 47 year-old man she had met on the internet and had been communicating with for over a year.

The police officials investigating the case had difficulty because she had visited many adult chat rooms and websites that they could not breach due to firewalls on their computers. They also thought that Kylie had runaway because she had been portraying herself as a nineteen year-old on adult chat rooms and had been missing before. When located in the abductor's home, she was found in a fetal position and unresponsive having been subjected to repeated sexual assaults and psychological abuse from the time of her abduction.

Teen pleads guilty to cyber crimes: In April 2006, A New Zealand teenager who masterminded an Internet crime spree that caused millions of dollars in damage but netted him just $40,000, has pleaded guilty. Authorities allege Walker, who was home-schooled and has Asperger's Syndrome, worked with other cyber criminals to infect more than 1.3 million computers with adware, from which he collected payments. Walker reportedly stated he didn't realize what he was doing was illegal.

How Much Information Is To Much

"Tracking Teresa" Video

Even though Teresa has tried not to reveal personal information online, she's left enough clues that she could find herself in danger.

MySpace, Friendster, Xanga, and Facebook are terms and sites you need to know about.

Resource: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Internet Safety - MySpace

"People are going to find nefarious things to do with anything that draws such a huge audience."
Allen Weiner, internet analyst

◆ MySpace, which began as a site for music fans, has grown rapidly in popularity among teens as a social networking hub.

◆ Just over one fifth of the website's users are registered as under 18 and in 2006 registered <u>67 million</u> visitors.

◆ Although it forbids minors under 13 from joining, and provides special protection for those aged 14 and 15, children are still able to lie to get around the restrictions.

Internet Safety - MySpace

"One of the things we're trying to persuade kids to do is not to give out personal details online, don't advertise where they are and who they are," said Ernie Allen of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. www.missingchild.org

"The person with whom they may be interacting may not be who they say they are."

How would this have even a greater impact on a teenager with ASD who may not understand social norms, nor realize they may be committing a crime by interacting with a person who is portraying themselves as another teen?

Internet Safety - MySpace

What is currently happing:

◆ Kids are interacting with people they shouldn't

◆ They are seeing things they shouldn't

◆ Kids are saying things on MySpace that they would never say in person

◆ Teens are taking more risks than they would if in face to face encounters

◆ Teens are posting things without the realization it could be shared anywhere in cyberspace

◆ Teens do not realize what they are doing is criminal in nature at times

Internet Safety - MySpace

Auditorium and Kitchen Video Clips

What we need to instill in our teens about the harm their words and pressing that send key may do to others.

Would the words be said if they were saying them directly to the person?
Internet bullying is dangerous and very prevalent today, especially amongst teens.

Internet Safety - MySpace

What Parents Can Do

◆ **Set boundaries.**
Children under the age of 14 are not allowed to register, so that should be a non-negotiable point. Once they turn 14, it's up to the parents to create the rules. If they are allowed to register, consider setting aside a time of day for spending on MySpace. Make sure that you are present during this time to keep an eye on your child's activities.

◆ **Create your own MySpace or FaceBook profile and add your children as friends.**
First of all, it's important for you to learn how the site works, what type of content is available, and how to navigate the system. It will help you understand what your children are doing and gain a better sense of how to keep them safe.

Internet Safety - MySpace

◆ **Talk with your kids about Internet safety and explain why you're concerned.**
Have them agree to a set of guidelines and let them know that their Internet privileges are at stake. Also, make sure that they understand that you will be watching their activities

◆ **Follow through.**
It is important that you follow through on your own commitments to your children. If you say you'll be monitoring their activities, make sure you do so regularly. Not only does it help you keep them safe, but it lets them know how serious you are.

Internet Safety - Facebook

The Facebook Web site lists the company's safety and privacy policy, which has the following provisions:

◆ Children under the age of 13 are not permitted to use Facebook.
◆ Facebook cannot guarantee that members will not be exposed to inappropriate content while on the site. Content considered inappropriate includes nudity, pornography, and offensive material.
◆ Any violations of this policy should be reported to Facebook. Facebook undertakes to launch an investigation into any claims of abuse within 24 hours, and the person reporting the inappropriate content will receive an e-mail within 72 hours to bring them up to date on what steps Facebook has taken to resolve the situation

Internet Safety
What is Happening Online

Internet offenders manipulate young people into criminal sexual relationships by appealing to young people's desire to be appreciated, understood, take risks, and find out about sex.
Teens and parents need to be warned about these crimes and understand about the real dynamics, and how naïve romantic illusions make some young people vulnerable to adult offenders who use flattery and seduction.

Be very careful what you do with social networking sites or personal web pages.
It is useful to remind young people that many things they post for their friends may end up being viewed by others, and can prompt contact that could become a problem.

Internet Safety
What is Happening Online

It is important that people not discount the criminality of offenses where the youth participated voluntarily in sex or in initiating or concealing a relationship.

Statutory sex crime laws in every state recognize the exploitative imbalance of power and experience that makes relationships between young teens and adults inappropriate.

It is important to know that most Internet sex crimes have this dynamic, so both teens and parents can accurately identify situations where such crimes may be occurring.

Internet Safety
What is Happening Online

Internet offenders target teens who are willing to talk online about sex.

Once an offender can sense that a teen will open up to them online and begin discussions and share personal information, this will make them more vulnerable. It is very easy to tell, when asking sexually explicit questions, a teen's emotional maturity level. Predators will target teems who appear to be reckless, but do not have the underlying sophistication about sexuality.

Don't let your teen's friends influence their better judgment when they are online together.

Research suggests teens take more risks when they are online together with other peers.

Internet Safety
What is Happening Online

Using the Internet or a cell phone to send sexually explicit pictures can get teens into trouble with the law.

Most teens don't realize that sexual pictures of themselves and other minors can constitute child pornography; its production and transmission are serious crimes.

They may see such photos as romantic, fun, adventuresome, or even harmless. Youth need to understand why this is a crime, and that people who ask for and transmit such pictures can get arrested as child pornographers and sex offenders.

Even cutting and pasting an underage child's photo of their head onto an adult's nude body can constitute child pornography. This may seem to be a silly or a joke to some, but is actually an internet crime.

How to Report On-line Child Sexual Exploitation

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
Cyber Tipline Video

How can you tell what is criminal in nature?
Child Pornography Fact Sheet
http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PageId=2451

"Netiquette"

What is Netiquette?
by Virginia Shea

Simply stated, it's network etiquette -- that is, the etiquette of cyberspace. And "etiquette" means "the forms required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be required in social or official life." In other words, Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online.

http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

"Netiquette" Core Rules

- Rule 1: Remember the Human

- Rule 2: Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life

- Rule 3: Know where you are in cyberspace

- Rule 4: Respect other people's time and bandwidth

- Rule 5: Make yourself look good online

"Netiquette" Core Rules

- Rule 6: Share expert knowledge

- Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control

- Rule 8: Respect other people's privacy

- Rule 9: Don't abuse your power

- Rule 10: Be forgiving of other people's mistakes

Internet Tips for Teens

1) Be smart about what you post on the Web and what you say to others. The Web is a lot more public and permanent than it seems.
2) Provocative and "sexy" names and pictures can draw attention from people you don't want in your life.
3) Explicit pictures can get you into trouble with the law. If you are underage, they may be considered child pornography, a serious crime.
4) Be careful what you download or look at, even for a laugh. Some of the images on the Internet are extreme, and you can't "unsee" something.
5) Going to adult chat rooms and other adult sites may connect you with people who can harass you in ways you don't anticipate.

Internet Tips for Teens

6) Free downloads and file-sharing can put pornography on your computer that you may not want and can be hard to get rid of . Any pornography that shows children or teens under 18 is illegal child pornography and can get you in big trouble.
7) Adults who talk to you about sex online are committing a crime. So are adults who meet underage teens for that reason. Some teens think it might be fun, harmless or romantic, but it means serious trouble for everyone. It's best to report it.
8) Don't play along with people on the Web who are acting badly, taking risks and being weird. Even if you think it's harmless and feel like you can handle it, it only encourages them and may endanger other young people.
9) Report it when other people are acting weird and inappropriately or harassing you or others. It's less trouble just to log off, but these people may be dangerous. Save the communication. Contact the site management, your service provider, the Cyber Tipline or even the police.

Internet Tips for Teens

10) Don't let friends influence your better judgment. If you are surfing with other kids, don't let them pressure you to do things you ordinarily wouldn't.
11) Be careful if you ever go to meet someone you have gotten to know through the Internet. You may think you know them well, but they may fool you. Go with a friend. Tell your parents. Meet in a public place. Make sure your have your cell phone and an exit plan.
12) Don't harass others. People may retaliate in ways you don't expect.
13) You can overestimate your ability to handle things. It may feel like you are careful, savvy, aware of dangers, and able to manage the risks you take, but there are always unknowns. Don't risk disasters.

Resource: Crimes Against Children Resource Center

"Cyberbullying"

"Cyberbullying" is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to have a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor.

The methods used are limited only by the child's imagination and access to technology. And the cyberbully one moment may become the victim the next. The kids often change roles, going from victim to bully and back again.

Children have killed each other and committed suicide after having been involved in a cyberbullying incident.

"Cyberbullying"

There are two kinds of cyberbullying, direct attacks (messages sent to your kids directly) and cyberbullying by proxy (using others to help cyberbully the victim, either with or without the accomplice's knowledge). Because cyberbullying by proxy often gets adults involved in the harassment, it is much more dangerous.

Direct Attacks

1. Instant Messaging/Text Messaging Harassment
2. Stealing Passwords 3. Blogs 4. Web Sites 5. Sending Pictures through E-mail and Cell Phones 6. Internet Polling 7. Interactive Gaming 8. Sending Malicious Code 9. Sending Porn and Other Junk E-Mail and IMs 10. Impersonation

"Cyberbullying"

Cyberbullying by proxy

Cyberbullying by proxy is when a cyberbully gets someone else to do their dirty work. Most of the time they are unwitting accomplices and don't know that they are being used by the cyberbully. Cyberbullying by proxy is the most dangerous kind of cyberbullying because it often gets adults involve in the harassment and people who don't know they are dealing with a kid or someone they know.

Cyberbullying by proxy sometimes starts with the cyberbully posing as the victim. They may have hacked into their account or stolen their password. They may have set up a new account pretending to be the victim. But however they do it, they are pretending to be the victim and trying to create problems for the victim with the help of others.

"Cyberbullying"

Preventing Cyberbullying

Educating teens about the consequences (losing their ISP or IM accounts) helps. Teaching them to respect others and to take a stand against bullying of all kinds helps too.

How can you stop it once it starts?

Because their motives differ, the solutions and responses to each type of cyberbullying incident has to differ too. Unfortunately, there is no "one size fits all" when cyberbullying is concerned. Only two of the types of cyberbullies have something in common with the traditional schoolyard bully. Experts who understand schoolyard bullying often misunderstand cyberbullying, thinking it is just another method of bullying. But the motives and the nature of cybercommunications, as well as the demographic and profile of a cyberbully differ from their offline counterpart.

Internet Addiction

Parents' Concern: Too Much Time Online

With kids ages 8 to 18 spending on average 44.5 hours per week in front of screens, parent are increasingly concerned that screen time is robbing them of real world experiences. Nearly 23% of youth report that they feel "addicted to video games" (31% of males, 13% of females.) These are the results of a new study of 1,178 U.S. children and teens (ages 8 to 18) conducted by Harris Interactive (2007) that documents a national prevalence rate of pathological video game use.

Internet Addiction

- ◆ Dr. Douglas Gentile, Director of the Media Research Lab at Iowa State University reports, "Almost one out of every ten youth gamers shows enough symptoms of damage to their school, family, and psychological functioning to merit serious concern."

- ◆ Children who lack rewarding or nurturing relationships or who suffer from poor social and coping skills are at greater risk to developing inappropriate or excessive online habits. Because they feel alone, alienated, and have problems making new friends, they turn to invisible strangers in online chat rooms looking for the attention and companionship missing in their real lives.

Internet Addiction

- ◆ Like addiction to drugs and alcohol, the Internet offers children and adolescents a way to escape painful feelings or troubling situations. They sacrifice needed hours of sleep to spend time online and withdraw from family and friends to escape into a comfortable online world that they have created and shaped.

- ◆ Socially, they learn to instant message friends rather than develop face-to-face relationships, which can impact their way of relating to peers. As one principal explained, "The Internet is hurting their ability to work in groups. Our teachers struggle to get them to participate in any kind of team assignments; instead they would all rather stare at the computer.

Internet Addiction

- ◆ Dr. Kimberly Young, Director of the Center for Internet Addiction Recovery, identified the following potential warning signs for children with pathological Internet use:
  - Loses track of time while online
  - Sacrifices needed hours of sleep to spend time online
  - Becomes agitated or angry when online time is interrupted
  - Checks email several times a day
  - Becomes irritable if not allowed access to the Internet
  - Spends time online in place of homework or chores

Internet Addiction

Potential warning signs for children with pathological internet use (continued):

- Prefers to spend time online rather than with friends or family
- Disobeys time limits that have been set for Internet usage
- Lies about amount of time spent online or "sneaks" online when no one is around
- Forms new relationships with people he or she has met online
- Seems preoccupied with getting back online when away from the computer
- Loses interest in activities that were enjoyable before he or she had online access
- Becomes irritable, moody or depressed when not online

Internet Addiction

What can parents do?

◆ **Address the problem**

In a two parent household the effort has to be a united one. A child will feel threatened at the very idea of curbing computer time. It is important not to respond to the emotion but to show concern. Acknowledge your child's feelings but stay focused

on the topic of his or her Internet use

◆ **Show you care**

It will help to begin your discussion by reminding your child that you love him or her and that you care about his or her happiness and well-being. Children often interpret questions about their behavior as blame and criticism.

Internet Addiction

What can parents do?

◆ **Become more computer-savvy**

Checking history folders and Internet logs, learning about monitoring software, and installing filters all require a degree of computer savvy. Go to www.ikeepsafe.org.

◆ **Set reasonable rules**

IMPORTANT FIRST STEP: Move your child's personal computer out of his or her bedroom and make it visible so you can enforce any rules. Remember you are trying to break a psychological dependency……a real addiction. Do not go cold turkey. Allow your child an hour per night, including homework time, and then reduce that time if needed. Set clear expectations and follow through. Do not use the restrictions as a form of punishment.

◆ **Encourage other activities**

As a family look for ways to fill that time. Remember you will be seeking something that replace that "high" obtained from internet use. This will take time and commitment.

Internet Addiction

What can parents do?

◆ **Support, don't enable**

If your child does rebel against your intervention efforts let the first storm subside. Acknowledge their feelings—it is not easy for them to feel that you're tugging at their only lifeline—but stick to your goals. Validate any effort they make to work with you.

◆ **Use outside resources when needed**

Remember, this is an addiction and your child may need counseling or the family may too have to make that investment. You may want to seek assistance for resources from local addiction centers and also address this in your child's IEP and with a school counselor.

This addiction took time to occur. Identifying it and moving to work through it may be a challenge, but will be worth the effort to regain a better quality of life for your child.

Internet Addiction

Parent-Child Internet Addiction Test

As a parent what type of an example are you for your child? How much time do you spend with them "unconnected" to your phone, Blackberry, laptop, home PC, etc? We must lead by example if we expect our kids to listen.

Handout

Available at http://www.ikeepsafe.org/TEST/

National Campaigns to Assist Teens and Parents

THINK!

Think Before You Post
Learn how posting images and personal information can put you at risk. http://tcs.cybertipline.com/

FOR TEENS ▸ DON'T BELIEVE THE TYPE

Don't Believe the Type
Teens learn to better protect themselves from online sexual predators. http://tcs.cybertipline.com/

HDOP

HDOP - Help Delete Online Predators
Parents and guardians learn to better protect their children from online sexual exploitation. http://www.missingkids.com/adcouncil/

Keeping Your Teen With ASD Safe

The best resource in all of this is you as a parent. The tips provided will give you a foundation to look at what could be occurring and how to address that. The thing to remember with you teen that has ASD is that they are like other teens and can be subjected to the same consequences. Being involved as they group up and mature, and making sure they have a healthy basis about their own sexuality will may them less likely to be subjected to exploitation and abuse.

There are many resource within this presentation that will also lead you to additional resources. www.netsmartz.org will also provide you with many resources you can print out and discuss with your teen. It's not easy, however avoiding it can bring devastating results. You as a parent are the only person that can guide your child and educate them about what can happen.