

## Sexting: What Every Caring Adult Should Know

### The Situation

Advances in cell phone technology mean people are continuously using their cell phones for a variety of activities. Sexting is one of the harmful ways that teenagers and young adults are using their cell phones. The majority of teenagers have cell phones and of that group, approximately 20 percent say they use their phones to send or receive sexually suggestive messages, or sext.

There are many consequences to this behavior that. Some of these consequences include a destroyed reputation, shared messages/images, felony charges, and educational or occupational consequences.

### Extension Response

It is important for parents and adults who work with youth to be aware of this trend and learn how to prevent it from happening or intervene when it does. NDSU Extension Service has created a program for parents and adults titled, *Sexting: What Every Caring Adult Should Know*. This program lets adults know what sexting is, how prevalent it is among teenagers and young adults, what some of the consequences of sexting may be, and what they can do about it.

This program was delivered to a group of parents and adults who work with youth. They were gathered at a monthly meeting of the Parent Awareness/Prevention Center in Jamestown.

### Impacts

At this time, this program has been delivered once in Stutsman County, but will be delivered to more audiences in the future. At the close of the presentation, participants filled out an evaluation form and reported the following impacts:

- 67 percent said they would share this information with their children, grandchildren, or youth they work with
- 33 percent said they would monitor their teenager's phone usage or stay up to date with technology so they know what teenagers are doing.
- A majority of the participants reported learning about the prevalence of teenagers sexting as well as the many consequences that could result from this behavior.
- 100 percent of the participants reported that they would recommend this program to other educators.

### Feedback

- "This presentation brought out the fact that those pictures could be out there forever"
- "I had a general idea of sexting before I came, but I was not aware of young teens being charged with child pornography."
- "I intend to check my daughter's cell phone more often."
- "I will share this information with my clients at work."
- "I will talk with my granddaughter and her parents."

### Contact

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