

GET RESULTS WITH BETTER CONVERSATIONS

What do you do about sexting?

First, understand that the young people in your care are “digital natives.” They are growing up with abilities and the tools to use them that some of us aren’t even

aware of. New apps and programs are being created that allow kids to secretly access information and communication that is hidden from the adults in their lives. Prevention is optimum. You can do that by clearly addressing use of electronics before there is a problem.



Here are some suggestions for healthy responses to sexting:

- Calm down.** Pause and take a deep breath before you do or say anything.
- Never shame the young person.** Instead, explain the dangers of sending pictures that can get into the hands of anyone and that can never be retrieved off the internet.
- Respond in terms of safety of the young person,** saying something like, *“This kind of behavior could result in terrible pain for you. I care about you and want to help you stay safe.”*

Age-appropriate tools are available free of charge at www.netismartz.org/Parents

☑ **Put some time between the event and the correction.** When everyone is calmed down, explain how the behavior can lead to dangerous and painful situations.

☑ **Teach the young person critical thinking skills by asking for ideas** on what he or she could do differently in the future.



☑ **If you issue consequences, make sure they are directly related to the offense.** For example, if the young person’s inappropriate behavior involves a phone, restrict use of the phone.

“Young people have no concept of the irreparable damage that can be caused by sharing explicit photos of themselves. And kids who have been sexualized are more than willing to do whatever will make them fit in..”

—*Rhonda Sciortino*

The best way to help kids avoid the dangers of inappropriate behaviors, including sexting, is to see value in them, and help them to see value in themselves. When they see value in themselves, they feel better about themselves. When they feel better, they make better choices.

Thank you for helping to create successful survivors!

Video series available on [YouTube](#)

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