

Grisham Middle School

Social Media and Internet Safety

10805 School House Lane

Austin, Texas 78750

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6:00-8:30 p.m.

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- 1996 Graduate Kilgore College East Texas Police Academy
- Licensed Private Investigator since 2015
- Commissioned Liberty Hill, Texas Police Officer (Reserve)
- Commissioned Security Officer
- Certified Texas Commission of Law Enforcement Instructor
- Former Office of the Attorney General Captain
 - Supervised Forensics Unit, Human Trafficking Unit and Child Exploitation Unit
- Former Internet Crimes Against Children Commander
 - Supervised 134 Texas Counties for the ICAC Task Force
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Objectives

- Examine some of the potential problems
- Identify Social Media Sites and Apps commonly used
- Discuss predators and grooming techniques
- Identify warning signs associated with online exploitation
- Establish reaction and intervention strategies
- Questions & Answers

Examining the Problem

- Almost everyone has 24-hour a day access to the internet, apps and social media sites
- “Fitting in” is very important to adolescents and may lead them to have conversations that are not appropriate or safe
- Constant and repeated exposure to graphic sex, violence and other forms of disturbing content limits opportunity for a “safe space” and sometimes leads to exploitation and harassment

Examining the Problem

- Adolescents and teens have a limited ability to resolve conflict and formulate solutions due to their undeveloped cognitive and social abilities
- Addressing and recovering from hurtful and confusing comments is extremely difficult without intervention
- Fear of the consequences often prevents disclosure
- Average age of exposure to sexual content online is 11
- Unintentional lack of intervention, awareness and supervision

Social Media Sites and Apps

- Social Media is often perceived as the center of social activity and interaction for today's youth and much of society
- Popular sites and apps include:

Facebook Pinterest YouTube Google+

Kik Backchat Tinder Snapchat Ask.fm

WeChat Instagram Omegle Groupme WhatsApp

Saraha Telegram Yellow Whisper Tumbler

Second Life Animal Jam Chat Roulette

Social Media Sites and Apps

- Ability to create multiple usernames and passwords on an indeterminate number of forums
- Apps available to provide hidden “vaults” to store images, videos and texts or provide a false sense of security
 - Secret Calculator-appears to be a calculator app but actually stores information secretly
 - Snapchat-images are deleted within seconds of being sent, however, the images can still be captured via another device or screen-capture

Sexual Predators

- There are more than 747,000 registered sex offenders in the U.S.
- There are over 88,000 in Texas
- 3 out of 4 victims are known to the sexual predator
- They are driven and will go to any length and spend any amount of time required to facilitate their goal of sexual exploitation

Sexual Predators

- There is no absolute profile of a sexual predator however
 - 90% are male and have been married
 - 32-34 years old
 - not bound by race, socioeconomic status or education
 - may victimize between 50 and 150 before they are caught
- They display a variety of contradicting behaviors such as
 - violence or passive behavior
 - charm, charisma or a lack of social skills
 - outgoing or withdrawn

Sexual Predators

- Sometimes rationalize that the sexual education of children is their responsibility because
 - They are older and more experienced
 - To protect the child from trauma from a person who doesn't care about the child they way they do
- Often seek positions associated with children's activities to increase opportunities for access to children and for opportunities to groom caregivers

Sexual Predators

- Exhibit grooming behavior such as
 - Listening to problems and concerns
 - Providing attention and affection to fulfill emotional needs
- Provides sexually graphic material to break down inhibitions
 - Subsequently uses this exposure to gain access physically and sexually
- Often “groom” caregivers to gain undetected access
 - Arranges to spend unusual amounts of time alone with a child
 - Gifts or unusual amounts of praise
 - Communication at inappropriate hours

Sexual Predators

- Attempts to gain the trust of the child
- Attempts to control and isolate the child
- Creates an environment of secrecy
 - Causes a fear of disclosure through blackmail/sextortion
 - Instills feelings of guilt and fear through risk of arrest/jail
 - Victims become convinced they are “in love”

Warning Signs

- Frequent headaches, stomach aches or other symptoms of illness
- Skipping school or a decline in participation and grades
- Changes in eating habits-over eating or refusing to eat
- Withdrawal from friends, family and activities
- Anxiety associated with social media or text alerts and subsequent anger, depression, and/or frustration after checking their phone or computer messages

Warning Signs

- Difficulty sleeping, sleeping too much, frequent nightmares and fatigue
- Self-destructive behaviors-cutting, drug or alcohol abuse, running away from home
- Disrespectful behaviors such as talking back, breaking the rules and destruction of property.
- Low self-esteem
- Suicide ideation or attempts

Managing Your Reaction

- Establish a dialogue and allow them to communicate in a forum they are comfortable with
 - Verbally
 - Via text, email or other forum
- Be patient and reserve punishment until you are able to find out exactly what may be happening and what is causing your child to act out in a way that is not common for

Managing Your Reaction

- If your child confides in you, **validate** the feelings your child expresses even if you don't understand them or agree.
 - Examples of a minimization
 - “Just don't read it”
 - “Just block them”
 - “Just ignore them”
 - “Sticks and Stones” analogy

Preventative Measures

- Before there is an issue:
 - Keep cell phones and computers out of the bedroom during sleeping hours
 - Become familiar with the children attending school with your child and their parents.
 - Friend your child and parents of friends of your child on social media
 - Know your child's passwords and don't be afraid to use them.
 - Establish contact through PTA meetings, open houses, sporting events, or even on social media.
 - It is a lot easier to address a situation or problem when you have already established a dialogue with those who may be involved.

Preventative Measures

- Establish the rules and write them down
 - Identify the appropriate and inappropriate sites and apps
 - Limit exposure
 - Be available at least 15 minutes a day for conversation
 - listen not lecture
 - Educate yourself and keep with the latest trends and apps
 - Consider monitoring apps
 - www.bark.us
 - www.internetfilterreview.com
 - www.getnetwise.org

Reporting Options

- Contact the School District and School Resource Officer (if available)
- Contact Local Law Enforcement
- Save all communications and evidence
 - In the event the evidence consists of images of child pornography- DO NOT store, copy, transfer or transport those images. Contact Law Enforcement immediately.

P.I. Jak



<https://www.facebook.com/pijakinvestigations/>

References

- National Center For Missing and Exploited Children
- Parents for Megan's Law
- Becker de, Gavin & Salter, Anna C. PHD (2204) Predators: Who They Are, How They Operate and How We Can Protect Ourselves and Our Children
- Sharon K Araj Professor of Sociology-National Center for Victims of Crime
- K. Lanning, Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis
- Professional Experience via Victim, Witness, Predator and Parent Interviews