Sexting Educational Video – Megan’s Story

About the resource

This sexting educational video, *Megan’s Story*, is designed for teachers and students in years 7 to 12. The video can be accessed on the ThinkUKnow Australia YouTube channel <www.youtube.com/ThinkUKnowAUS>. *Megan’s Story* depicts the short-term consequences of a teenage girl’s involvement with sexting. This video will form part of a suite of multimedia resources on sexting addressing the issue from various perspectives, including if the protagonist was male.

Introduction

Sexting refers to the sexually explicit images or text messages which are shared with others via mobile phones or the Internet. This behaviour can be of particular concern when it involves children and young people. It is difficult to gain a clear understanding of the exact situation of ‘sexting’ in Australia, however research from the US suggests that between four and nine per cent of teens have sent a sexually suggesting text message (Cox Communications, 2009; Pew Research Centre, 2009).

Engaging in this type of behaviour can have serious social and legal consequences. Once something is created in a digital format and then shared, you lose control over who sees it and what they do with it. The sexualised images which young people may create and share could potentially be seen by anyone: family, friends, teachers, potential employers, strangers from anywhere in the world. These images could also fall under child pornography legislation and law enforcement agencies are often asked to deal with the issues around sexting. This has resulted in some young people being charged with child pornography related offences.

This video aims to raise awareness amongst young people of the risks associated with sexting and empower them to use the internet and digital technologies in a safe, responsible and ethical way.

*Megan’s Story Resources:*

- Megan’s story – sexting educational video
- Video Discussion Questions – Teacher Resource
- Video Discussion Questions

Further reading and resources:

Australian Communications and Media Authority, Units of Work – Peer and personal safety <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Teacher%20resources/Middle%20secondary/The%20acma%20units%20of%20work.aspx>


Video Discussion Questions – Teacher Resource

These questions are for Megan’s Story, which is a video about a teenage girl who sends an inappropriate image of herself and ‘sexts’ it to a boy. These questions are designed to stimulate discussion of:

- Peer and relationship pressures
- The consequences of creating something in a digital format and then sharing it
- The role of the bystander
- Gender stereotypes and sexual discrimination

Megan’s Story

1. Why do you think Megan took that photo and sent it on her mobile phone?
   (Encourage students to think about peer and relationship pressures)
   Sample answers:
   - Her boyfriend/crush asked her to
   - Everyone else does it, what’s the big deal?
   - She thought it would only be seen by her boyfriend/crush
   - To show how much she cares about her boyfriend/crush

2. What should her boyfriend have done with Megan’s photo?
   (Encourage students to think about relationship and peer dynamics)
   Sample answers:
   - He should have kept it to himself and not shown anyone
   - Deleted it from his phone
   - Not pressured her to send one in the first place

3. How did Megan’s classmates contribute to the problem?
   (Encourage students to think about the role of the bystander. Have them put themselves in the position of Megan’s classmates, what would they have done?)
   - They forwarded the pictures on
   - No one stood up for Megan
   - Judged Megan based on her photo
   - Didn’t respect her privacy

4. How will Megan’s actions, and those of her classmates, affect her in the future?
   (Encourage students to think about the long-term social and legal consequences of their actions)
   Sample answers:
   - Megan will never be able to take back that photo
   - Future employers/universities might not employ/recruit her because of the inappropriate image of her online
   - She will never know who has seen her image
   - Her image may contribute to the problem of child pornography

5. Would things have been different if a boy had sent an image of himself?
   (Encourage students to think about gender stereotypes and sexual discrimination)
   Sample answers:
   - It shouldn’t be different but it may have been; he’s still done the wrong thing
   - His friends might make fun of him
   - No, he might have been pressured just as a girl might be pressured into creating that image
Additional Activities

1. Have students map out the decision-making processes in the film and the alternative pathways the students could have taken. For example:

   ![Decision tree diagram]

   - Megan
     - Send her image
       - Boy 1
         - Delete her image
       - Boy 2
         - Delete her image
         - Forward Megan’s image
           - Boy 1
             - Tell Megan what is happening
               - Don’t create or share her image
               - Keep her image and not share it

2. Investigate the legal consequences of this sort of behaviour. Relevant legislation includes the Commonwealth Criminal Code 1995 as well as state/territory legislation around child pornography.

3. Have students debate the following topic:
   “Sexting should not fall under child pornography legislation”

4. Rewrite the video with a boy as the person who creates the image and shares it. Develop alternate endings depending on the actions of the classmates.

5. Discuss how this situation should have been addressed by the teacher, school, other students, parents and police.