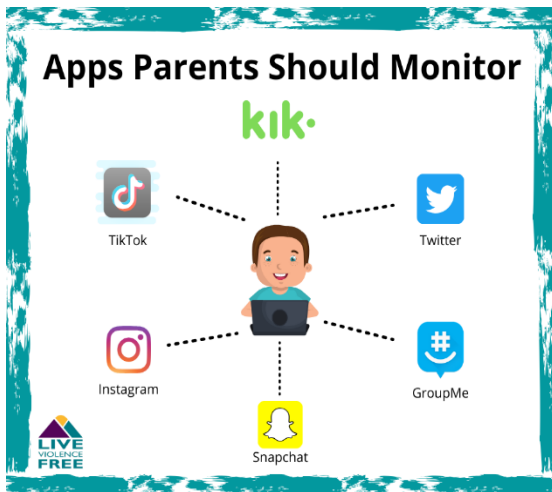


Dear Parents,

Youth and adults are connecting virtually more than ever given the current circumstances, and the staff of Live Violence Free would like to provide resources for online safety.

Countless apps on social media are being used to connect; although these connections are mostly positive, we understand that negative activities such as cyberbullying, sexting and using hateful language can occur as well. It is important that you have an understanding of the apps your youth are using, and some best practices to help them remain safe while they are connecting online.

While as a parent there may not be a way to monitor all of your child's online activity, here are some things you can do to help promote internet safety for your child and others:



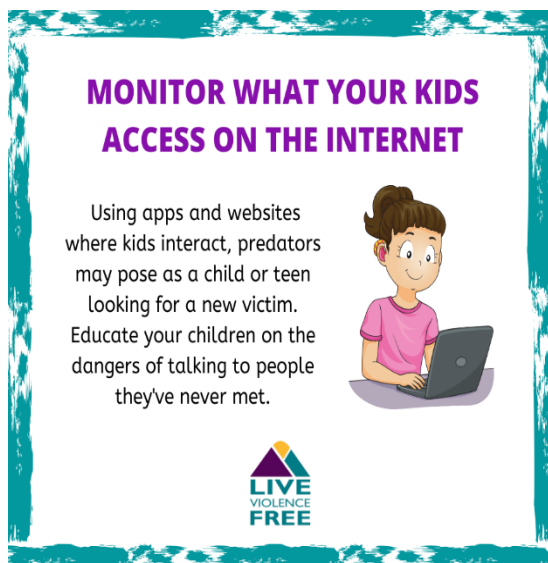
1. **Monitor social media apps and sites that are used**
Sit with your child and review what apps they have installed, and which websites they have been frequenting regularly

2. **Review privacy and location settings on all devices and re-set settings if needed**
Some apps may be tracking your location without your knowledge. Google search your device and location settings to learn how to accurately check and turn off location settings.

3. **Keep up on social media apps and slang terms that are currently being used**
Ask for explanation when you see acronyms or shortened words, you'll probably learn something new!

4. **Follow your child's account if there is concern for mistreatment, bullying or grooming**
Predators groom young internet users by establishing a relationship and then gaining personal information. Talk to your child about who they connect with online.

5. **Establish rules about appropriate digital behavior, content and internet usage**
Have a clear conversation about these rules and write them out so that everyone can easily remember them. Keep standards and expectations in place.





Conversations about Internet safety should be ongoing, and it's never a bad idea to start these talks with children before they begin using media. Having open and honest conversations about media can be essential in building the trust with your child so they continually feel open to conversations in the future if anything happens, or if they have questions. Below you will find a valuable link to a social media app overview, and also cyberbullying conversation tips.

Common Social Media Apps/Tips for Parents to Know About:

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/16-apps-and-websites-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook>

If there's suspicion your child may be a witness to or engaging in cyberbullying behaviors:

Tell them to NOT respond or retaliate

- Remind them that responding negatively is harmful; it doesn't matter "who started this" if the behavior bothered you enough to respond to it, that means you wouldn't want to get caught doing it, so don't! Remind them they can always walk away from a conversation and take time to calm down and not say anything they'll regret. Remind them that nowadays most colleges and jobs check social media accounts for potential applicants and new hires and to be cautious what is on their account and how it can reflect on them even down the road!

Suggest that they DON'T participate

- Let them know that it is not a good idea to comment, share, forward or "like" information that is negative in nature or that is directed at someone. Remind them this is damaging behavior and won't just harm the person it involves, but can also harm them if the negative post then reflects poorly on them.

Following up could be a good idea

- Reaching out to a victim of cyberbullying shows that person that they are supported which could mean a world of difference to them; even if the support is coming from a stranger, that doesn't typically matter, support is support.