

"SEXTING"



3 QUESTIONS TO ASK...

1. WAS THIS MY IDEA?

If you're not in the mood to make, take, or share a permanent record of yourself, choose not to send messages that put you at-risk for embarrassment or humiliation. If you're being pressured to pose, and feel embarrassed to say no, keep your clothes on and remember the negative outcomes of your peers that have set-up in similar situations. Still on the fence? Proceed to part two of this question: is it better to feel rejected by one person that does not respect you or be totally humiliated when the pictures wind up in hundreds of inboxes?

2. WHERE WILL THIS PICTURE END UP?

Possible answers:

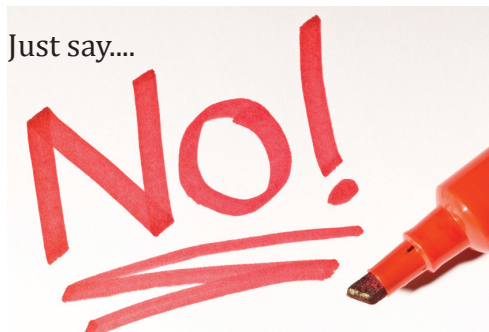
- My boyfriend or girlfriend's phone
- His or her friends' phones
- Everyone's phone and inbox, which could ultimately be brought to the attention of teachers, parents, police, other adults and the media.

3. WHAT WAS GOING ON WHEN THIS PIC WAS TAKEN?

If you're forwarded a sext, the answer is... who knows. Maybe the subject was having fun, but maybe s/he was coerced, or filmed/photographed without his or her knowledge or consent. Maybe s/he was under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time and has no idea that the sext you just got is making the rounds. The point is, when you get a sext, you might not know if the person would be cool with you sending it around, so better to hit delete rather than forward.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN

1. You get a reputation-because that "private" sext somehow escaped the phone it was sent to.
2. You get rejected - because the girl/guy you really want to go out with thinks you send naked pictures of yourself to everyone, since everyone's seen them.
3. You forward a sext and help humiliate the person in the picture contributing to their emotional distress...
4. You get arrested. Taking, sending, and possessing naked images of a minor is a federal crime. Sex offenders' registry? Not the honor roll you were hoping for.



MAKE A STAND...

Contain the beast. Before you record, reflect on where the picture you are about to take may surface.

Resist pressure. When your bff from 5th grade wanted you to do the chicken dance with her at the talent show, you said no, right? When your mom tried to dress you up as a Smurf for Halloween last year, you definitely said no. Same goes for sexting. Why sext if you don't want to?

Break the cycle. Forwards can live forever. If you don't want your junk mail floating around, just delete other people's sexts when you get them, and don't respond to obnoxious or inappropriate messages. Tell someone so it can be put to an end because there are serious consequences.

On February 1, 2010, State Attorney General Greg Abbott announced adults with nude or semi-nude photographs on their mobile devices can be investigated and tried on felony child pornography charges. Teenagers with photos of other teens aged 18 and under can be prosecuted and face up to 10 years in prison, Abbott said. In the United States, it is against the law to possess lewd photographs of minors. A New York lawyer is petitioning for federal sexting legislation that would make sexting a misdemeanor for minors.