FEBRUARY 2023

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month: Teen Dating & Technology
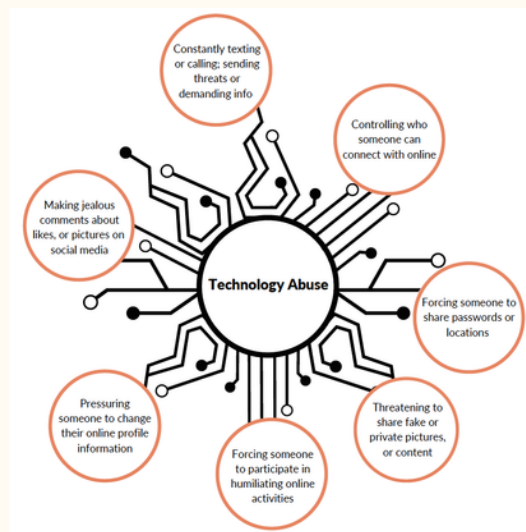
Be About It!

unity house
Making Life Better

In a 2022 Online Abuse & Harassment Survey,

It was discovered that the most common setting in which online harassment occurred was on social media **(70%)** and via text or other messaging apps **(78%)**

Technology Abuse diagram:
- Constantly texting or calling; sending threats or demanding info
- Controlling who someone can connect with online
- Making jealous comments about likes, or pictures on social media
- Forcing someone to share passwords or locations
- Pressuring someone to change their online profile information
- Threatening to share fake or private pictures, or content
- Forcing someone to participate in humiliating online activities

***Technology abuse is a red flag for other abuse. It rarely happens in isolation**

Technology Changes, Abuse Doesn't

WHAT DOES PREVIOUS RESEARCH SAY?

Over 1000 teens ages 13-17 surveyed and found:
- Most teen relationships still start "in real life"
- Social Media is top venue to flirt with others
- Teens still talk to and spend time with their significant other, but texting is #1
- Social Media makes them feel more connected to their partners, but also creates jealousy

- Those with dating experience are more likely to sext or send flirty messages
- Some have decided to block people who make them feel uneasy
- The most common reported "red flag" behavior is checking up on and stalking partners
- Online rumor-spreading, name-calling, and general unkindness after a break-up are pretty common.

Popular Apps: Uses & Potential Misuses

List Not Exclusive*

Uses: Sharing videos, creating and watching vlogs, showing talents, gaming, product reviews, and earning money

Misuses: Creating false video names, bullying, harassment in comments, and harmful pranks

Uses: Posting, liking, and sharing pictures and videos, selling products, raise awareness, create boards, empowering hashtags

Misuses: bullying, harassment, finsta (fake profiles), comparing self to others, stalking, threats, grooming, face tuning
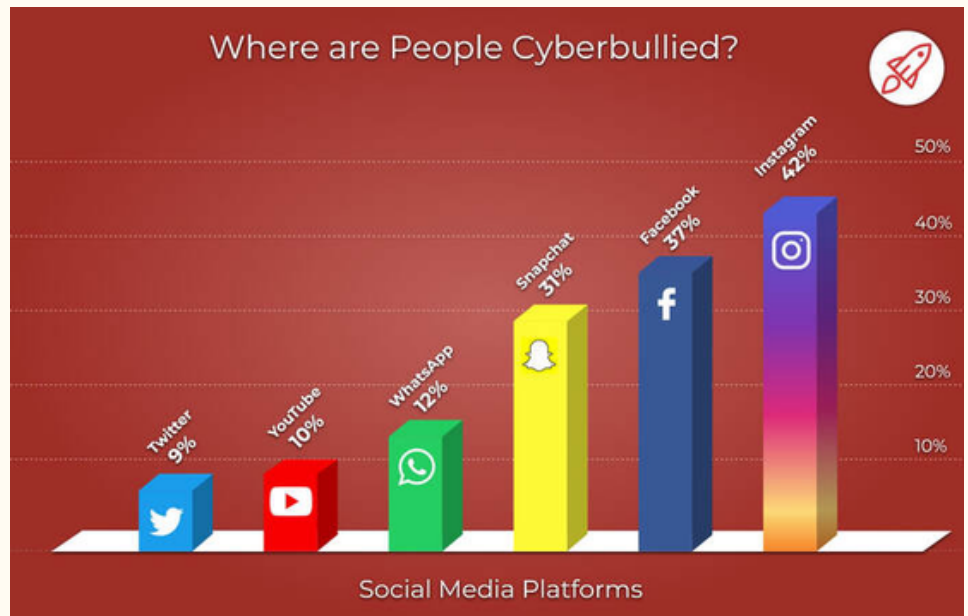

Uses: Fun filters, showing talents, connecting with others through geotagging, having 'streaks' or consistent contact with other users

Misuses: Revenge porn, taking screen shots of private messages, being "visible" on the map (location always on), messages disappear after 24 hours
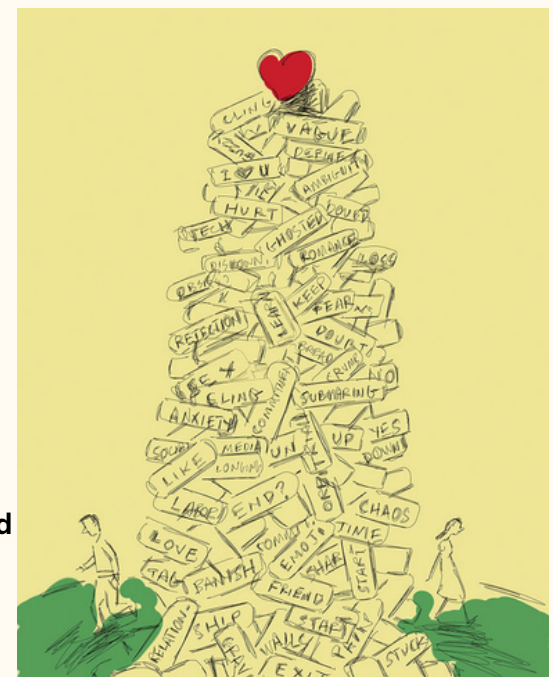

Uses: Sharing talents, gaining knowledge, "life hacks", dance challenges, finding likeminded people, making friends

Misuses: Location tracking, harming others for views or likes, dangerous challenges, disclosing abuse (there's a trend where people record a video of them creating something and the voiceover is a traumatic story), promoting violence, peer pressure

Where are People Cyberbullied?

Social Media Platforms

- Twitter 9%
- YouTube 10%
- WhatsApp 12%
- Snapchat 31%
- Facebook 37%
- Instagram 42%

Sexting & Non-Consensual Image Sharing

- In New York State, **it is a criminal and civil offense to disclose an intimate image of another person with the intent to cause harm**

- New York State doesn't have a law specific to sexting by and between teens and minors, rather these fall under the state's felony child pornography and obscenity laws

- **If a teen engages in spreading a nude photo of another teen younger than 17, they could be convicted for possessing and distributing child pornography.**

- If this teens sends the picture to a friend, the friend could also be convicted of possession of child pornography

How Can We Help?

WHAT CAN WE DO IF WE FIND OUT A TEEN OR YOUNG ADULT IS EXPERIENCING TECHNOLOGICAL/CYBER ABUSE?

Remind Them of Digital Rights & Personal Control

- You have the right to turn off your phone and spend time with friends and family without worry about whether your partner will get angry
- You have the right to say no to sexting
- You have the right to say no to sharing pictures or information digitally to your partner if you are uncomfortable
- You have the right to keep your logins and passwords private
- You have the right to control your own privacy settings on social media apps
- You have the right to feel safe and respected in your relationship, online or off

Tips Surrounding TDVAM & Healthy Uses of Technology:

- Approach teens and young adults with curiosity instead of judgment
- Encourage teens (and anyone!) to take a social media hiatus if it's becoming too overwhelming
- Create time for intentional activities away from electronics (mindfulness!)

- If you suspect someone may be experiencing dating violence online, check out this safety plan.

- If you suspect someone may be experiencing abuse through technology, here are some questions you can ask