



POLICE & SECURITY DEPARTMENT

55 Fruit Street, WACC 232
Boston, MA 02114-2696
Dispatch: 617.726.2121
SIU: 617.726.1474

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Jennifer Goba, Sr. Manager of Investigations
Daniel Coleman, Senior Investigator
Robert Patenaude, Investigator
Robert Langhorne, Investigator

ONLINE SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR FAMILIES

Dan Coleman, MGH Police and Security, Feb 2020

USEFUL LINKS:

www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect

<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/stopthinkconnect-parent-and-educator-resources>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/digital-awareness-for-parents>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/is-your-child-social-media-savvy-1516111365>

<https://www.bark.us/blog/top-5-social-media-apps-parents-monitor/>

https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/02/tax-identity-theft-awareness-week-starts-today?utm_source=govdelivery

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWz33PfsG5o> (SCAM CALL EXAMPLES)

CHALLENGES:

- TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL MEDIA, SPONTANEOUS COMMUNICATION IS A FACT OF LIFE FOR ALL AGES
- AVAILABILITY, ACCESS, AND EVOLVING SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND APPS
- FRAUD, CRIMINAL ACTORS, PREDATORS, ETC
- PRIVACY LAWS, SETTINGS, ETC
- LOCATION, PERSONALLY IDENTIFYING INFORMATION, HABITS, FRIENDS, ETC
- TOO MUCH INFORMATION, TOO FEW PROTECTIONS-especially for kids
- TRUST VS SAFETY PLANNING FOR KIDS
- RESPECT/DESIRE TO AVOID “SNOOPING” VS REALITY OF ONLINE RISKS

RISKS:

- **DISTRACTED DRIVING:** texting, etc...Mass is now “Hands Free” as of Feb 23, 2020
- **SEXTING:** inappropriate images, words, relationships; adults/coaches/teachers/etc
- **GAMBLING:** online betting, fantasy leagues, financial data exposed-often involves off-shore
- **BULLYING:** can be the victim or perpetrator, recent suicide cases, criminal charges, etc
- **EXTORTION:** demands made to avoid sharing embarrassing/hurtful images, words, posts, etc
- **DATING SITES:** others posing, “catfishing”, predators, etc
- **ROBBERY:** sneaker deals, online sales of items used to lure and rob for items or cash
 - **Many police agencies now offer safe meeting space**
- **SCAM CALLS-TEXTS-EMAILS:** fraudulent sites or messages, schemes, ID theft, etc
 - **Nobody is kidnapped or injured in Mexico-DO NOT buy gift cards as instructed**
 - **The IRS or DEA is NOT going to arrest you-DO NOT divulge or confirm any information, DO NOT give them any money**
- **RIDE SHARING APPS:** Use caution-have a plan, use the alert settings, be aware

STRATEGIES: BE AN EXAMPLE AND PRACTICE SAFETY

- **BE INVOLVED:** if you are paying for the phone and access, know what they are doing with it
- **COMMUNICATE:** review the links above-and many others found online, be educated and aware of emerging threats/risks/trends/etc
 - **MAKE IT A HABIT-NOT JUST A ONE AND DONE CONVERSATION**



While virtually ALL of these platforms have been created for legitimate use and social interaction, they, and many other available online platforms, provide a potential universe for dangerous, illicit, and risky behavior

INSTAGRAM: VERY popular-lots of photos/videos posted, others can follow and comment

SNAPCHAT: One of the more popular-messages go away after a brief period...UNLESS the recipient takes a screenshot/recording of the post/video/words...can be shared later, etc

WHATSAPP: more common now, messaging that allows remote deleting of what was sent, etc

GROUP ME: uses wi-Fi, can stay within data limits (perhaps stay under the radar), images, money, limited control to delete

TWITTER: follow, comment, like, etc...can be like graffiti on a bathroom wall...opinions, free speech, influences others

- **Consider following people your kids follow to assess the content**

TIKTOK: Popular site for teens-15 second videos, cyberbullying or sexual content can often be transmitted/included

VENMO: (and other similar platforms): money transfers, can be used for legitimate transactions-know if your child is sending or receiving money

- Drugs, gambling, bullying, etc

ONLINE GAMING: kids playing video games online with people not known personally to them or you.

- Can talk on headsets, share personal information about locations, etc
- Can lead to other social media contacts

WHY WE NEED TO HAVE AN ACTIVE ROLE WITH OUR KIDS:

Not just what THEY are posting, but WHO and WHAT they are “following” and comments they may make/post.

Reputational damage, being associated with inappropriate or illegal CONTENT, “friend” or “follower” to criminal, threatening, or inappropriate PEOPLE

- Can end up being a victim, perpetrator, or witness to criminal conduct-(Police involved)

College applications, Military enlistments, job applications, security background checks, even prospective dating interests, other parents:

- ALL will look at the “online profiles”
- Is THIS what they desire?
- Is THIS what they will accept?

First Amendment allows freedom of speech, and that includes online posts, etc. We are ALL entitled to our opinions.

- **BUT**...there ARE limits; hate speech, fighting words, threats, etc
- Even a valid First Amendment statement about an ideology, belief, person, group, or opinion could have implications for people-whether fair or not-it is a reality;
 - Labeled by others as...(fill-in the blank)
 - Viewed negatively or targeted by others with an opposing opinion
 - Retaliatory comments/actions
 - Viewed positively or targeted by those with a more aggressive opinion
 - Recruitment or radicalized to an extreme