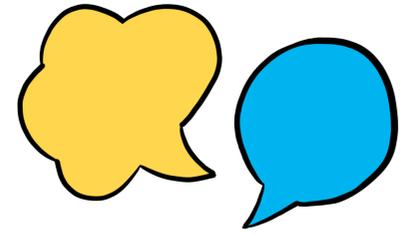


# media literacy



## SMART THINGS TO SAY

with Saleema Noon  
Sexual Health Educators

### preschool-grade 1

- The internet is great. It allows us to have fun, learn and connect with others.
- It's not healthy to spend too much time in front of a screen. This is why I limit your screen time.
- There are times when devices are not welcome (i.e. when we're eating dinner).
- Screens and devices don't belong in bedrooms or bathrooms. They belong in public areas of the house like the kitchen or living room.
- I'm the boss of all of the screens and devices we have.

### grades 4-5

*In addition to the messages for grades 2-3:*

- Having a device and using the internet is a privilege, not a right.
- It may not seem like it, but lots of kids your age don't have a phone.
- The internet is a great place to have fun, learn, connect with others and express ourselves.
- Too much time online or too much focus on our online life can be unhealthy and sometimes harmful (at any age). It's healthy for everyone to unplug from time to time.
- I trust you to make smart decisions online, and I'm here to support you if you run into trouble.
- Think critically about what you see and read online.
- Some shows and online content aren't healthy for kids your age to watch because they don't yet have the life experience to understand and make sense of what they are seeing or hearing. As you get older, you'll have more freedom to watch shows with more adult content.
- Reality shows aren't real.
- What we see and hear on TV, movies or online is usually for entertainment, not education.
- Commercials try to manipulate us (i.e. cosmetics companies want us to feel badly about our appearance so we'll buy their products).
- Hyper-sexualization in media (point out examples) can undermine confidence, increase shame of ones' body and lead to depression. Not to mention, it reinforces the damaging gender stereotypes that depict women as sexual objects. Yuck.
- Just like it's important for parents to know what their kids are watching on TV, it's important for them to be familiar with the games their kids play online.
- Most of the kids you play online games with are honest and harmless. But some people pretend they're someone they're not and can put you at risk.
- Violence and sexually graphic content in gaming can be harmful, especially when games glorify violence or demean women.
- Don't ever participate in behaviour that's mean. The rules for behaviour online are the same as in real life: practice respect, kindness and consent.
- If we know someone is being cyber-bullied, we have a responsibility to try to stop it, such as by talking to the bully (if it's safe) or reporting to a trusted adult.
- How a person represents themselves and acts on social media can have an impact on them not only today, but years down the road (i.e. people making decisions about their future opportunities can make inaccurate assumptions about their character based on what they see online).
- It's hard not to compare ourselves to others on social media...at any age. This can be unhealthy and harmful if what other people post makes us feel less interesting, less fun or less cool.
- Nothing can replace face-to-face connection with good friends.

### grades 2-3

*In addition to the messages for grades P-1:*

- There's no privacy online. The internet is a public space.
- Most people, online and in real life, are kind, safe and caring. But some people online can pretend they're someone they're not and lure you into a dangerous situation. Because of this, we need to be very careful about who we let into our lives, who we give personal information to and who we trust.
- If you ever feel unsafe online come and tell me. I will help you. And I would never get mad.
- It's my job to keep you safe and healthy. That's why I put boundaries and limits around how much time you spend online and what you do online.
- I need to know your passwords and monitor what you are doing online. This may include accessing accounts and activity. It's about safety.
- Some shows aren't healthy for kids to watch because they're meant for teenagers and adults.
- Some words we hear in songs are offensive and disrespectful. It's not ok to sing along to those songs unless we change the words.

### grades 6-7

- Once you put a photo out there in social media, or by text, there's no way to delete it. Even on Snapchat.
- If you send a photo to someone, even by text or direct message, you can't control who sees it.
- Sending sexual photos to someone that may not want them is sexual harassment.
- If someone sends you a sexual photo you don't want to see, tell them, "Dude, not cool!" or "You don't need to do that!" or "I want you to stop sexually harassing me". Then come and talk to me about it.
- It's against the law to share a photo of someone without their consent.
- We know from research that the more time people spend posting online (i.e. selfies, videos of them doing outrageous stunts), the more they become attached to the reaction they get. This can lead to low self-esteem and other unhealthy feelings if they don't get the attention they were hoping for.
- People usually post only the best 10% of their life on social media. So, it makes no sense to compare that to the good, bad and ugly of our lives.
- What we do on social media reinforces the gender stereotypes we're working so hard to break down (i.e. creating and posting the perfect selfie reinforces what society has taught us all of these years...that girls and women are valued only for how beautiful and sexy they are).
- Social media is awesome. What's also awesome is to do a check in with ourselves one in a while to make sure it's hasn't become the boss of us. Sometimes it's a good idea to take a step back and do some thinking about the role we want social media (and devices) to play in our lives.