

## Safe Adults and Internet Safety (Ages 13–15)

It is important for adolescents to be able to identify safe adults in their lives. As adults, we assume adolescents know who to go to when they need help. But identifying a safe adult can sometimes be confusing for adolescents. When talking to adolescents about safe adults, it is important to talk about the qualities that make an adult safe, what should be told to a safe adult and how to tell a safe adult.

### What do safe adults have to do with Internet safety?

When it comes to Internet safety, it is important for adolescents to be able to identify a safe adult in their lives because it will mean knowing who to talk to if something happens that makes them feel uncomfortable or uncertain.

### Who is a safe adult?

Read the following statements to your adolescent and discuss which ones describe qualities of an adult they could go to for help (Remember to discuss the role of an adult — that an adult protects kids, looks out for their best interest, helps keep kids safe, etc.).

- An adult who you feel uncomfortable around. **(Unsafe Adult)**
- An adult who has appropriate boundaries. **(Safe Adult)**
- An adult who gives you gifts but touches your private parts. **(Unsafe Adult)**
- An adult who asks you to play games that seem weird and inappropriate – games you would feel embarrassed to tell other people about. **(Unsafe Adult)**
- An adult who you have fun spending time with and who always listens to and respects your feelings. **(Safe Adult)**
- An adult who shows you inappropriate movies and lets you break rules that your parents wouldn't. **(Unsafe Adult)**
- An adult who asks you to do things that other healthy adults would not. **(Unsafe Adult)**
- An adult who threatens to hurt someone you love. **(Unsafe Adult)**
- An adult who helps you when you need it and respects your boundaries. **(Safe Adult)**



## Safe Adults and Internet Safety (Ages 13–15) (cont'd)

### What adolescents should tell to a safe adult

An important part of personal safety is helping children learn what should be told to a safe adult. Many dangerous situations, such as sexual abuse, start with adults breaking boundaries with children and keeping it hidden in secrecy. Teach your child to learn the difference between harmless secrets and secrets that need to be told to a safe adult.

### Secrets and confiding

As children become adolescents their friendships deepen through sharing secrets and confiding in one another. They typically share harmless secrets but still need to be reminded to tell a safe adult about any dealing with safety and protection. Have a conversation about KEEP Secrets and SPEAK Secrets with your adolescent.

### KEEP Secrets

- A friend shares who s/he likes.
- A friend shares an embarrassing moment.
- A friend tells you who s/he thinks is hot.
- A friend tells you why s/he is mad at her/his parents.
- A friend tells you s/he is mad at another one of your friends.
- A friend tells you s/he wants to go out with your friend's brother/sister.

Explain that an adult can be fun to be around, but if s/he asks children or adolescents to do things that are inappropriate or unsafe then s/he is not a safe adult.



## Safe Adults and Internet Safety (Ages 13–15) (cont'd)

### **SPEAK Secrets – Broken boundaries**

- Someone is threatening to hurt you or someone you know.
- Your friend is going alone to meet someone they first met online.
- You or a friend is frightened by text messages you are receiving.
- Someone is asking you or your friend to send naked pictures.
- Someone is sending you naked pictures.
- You or a friend is receiving sexual text messages from an adult.
- You or a friend is receiving text messages from an adult asking really personal questions.
- An adult wants to look at or touches your private parts.
- An adult wants to look at or touches your friend's private parts.
- An adult wants you or a friend to look at or touch his or her private parts.
- An adult asks you or a friend questions you feel uncomfortable or confused about.
- An adult tells you or your friend sexual jokes.
- An adult wants to take naked pictures of you or your friend.
- An adult shows you or your friend pictures or movies of naked people.



## Safe Adults and Internet Safety (Ages 13–15) (cont'd)

### KEEP it or SPEAK it activity

Read the following examples to your adolescent and ask them if they think it is a secret that is harmless or if it something that needs to be shared with a safe adult.

- My friend got a text from our teacher. He told her she looked hot.
- My friend told me he went to his coach's cabin and his coach was sexually inappropriate towards him.
- My friend is dating this guy at school and they text each other all day.
- My friend told me she stayed up all night texting her boyfriend.
- Some girls at school are harassing my friend. They text her constantly, making fun of her and threatening to hurt her.
- My friend got on cam for this guy in her bra and underwear. Now he's harassing her to send naked pics of herself or he says he is going to post the pics he has of her online.
- My friend is talking sexually to men online.
- My friend goes to nasty sites online that her parents told her not to go to.

### How to tell a safe adult about something that is difficult to share

Discuss the various ways that adolescents might tell a safe adult about a harmful secret and about someone who is breaking boundaries. Explain that there isn't one right way to tell. Share examples with your adolescent of how some people might tell. Ask your adolescent how s/he would tell a safe adult if something uncomfortable happened to her/him or a friend of her/his.

Examples of how people might tell:

- Some blurt out everything that happened right away.
- Some wait and then tell what happened.
- Some people start with little bits about what happened and slowly tell the rest with the adult's help.
- Some people tell a little bit to one safe adult and then tell the rest to another safe adult.



## Safe Adults and Internet Safety (Ages 13–15) (cont'd)

### Important points to share with adolescents:

- It can be uncomfortable to tell.
- Sometimes adults don't 'hear' what adolescents are saying. If an adult doesn't seem to hear what you are saying, tell them again or tell someone else.

### Why it can be hard to tell an adult

It can be extremely difficult to share uncomfortable situations and it takes a lot of courage. Share examples of why it can be so hard to tell an adult.

- Some people feel embarrassed or ashamed.
- Some people really like the person who has done something that is inappropriate.
- Some people are scared they will get into trouble.
- Some people are scared they will get the other person into trouble.
- Some people don't want to cause any trouble.
- Some people are scared they won't be believed.
- Some people are worried their friend will be upset because their friend made them promise they wouldn't tell.

Share why else you think it would be hard for kids to tell.

