

# TECHNICOOOL: Keeping Kids Safe on the Internet © Participant Handbook

**Table of Contents:**

Introduction and Safe Space.....2

Digital Risks and Prevention Gallery Walk..... 3

Prevention Notes .....4

Online Grooming ..... 4-5

Activity 1: Online Grooming Scenario ..... 5

Prevention Strategies for Online Safety ..... 6

Maintaining Healthy Boundaries ..... 7

Activity 2: Pine Street Afterschool Scenario..... 8

Concerning Youth Digital Behaviors ..... 9-10

Prevention Strategies for Concerning Youth Digital Behaviors ..... 11

Pornography.....12 -13

Prevention Strategies for Overall Digital Safety ..... 14

Summary ..... 14

Evaluation.....15

**Objectives:**

- 1) Participants will learn the digital risks for children and strategize ways to keep children and youth safe in digital environments.
- 2) Participants will learn effective strategies for dealing with children exhibiting concerning digital behaviors.

**Contact Us:**

For more information about PCAVT’s child sexual abuse prevention trainings, please contact Marcie Hambrick,MSW, PhD at: [mhambrick@pcavt.org](mailto:mhambrick@pcavt.org), 802-498-0616, or visit [pcavt.org](http://pcavt.org)



# Introduction and Safe Space

---

## Introductions

## Logistics

- Participant Handbook
- Sign in sheets
- Restrooms
- Agenda and Break
- Evaluations

## Safe Space

Child sexual abuse and sexual abuse prevention is a very challenging topic for most people. Your being here today is an important step in helping to protect children. Statistics show that when groups of people gather for training, it is likely that some of them have either experienced child sexual abuse or engaged in sexually harmful behaviors. It is important for us to work together to create a safe space for all trainees. Here are some ways that we can do so:

- Recognize that you or others may have strong feelings throughout this training.
- Take care of yourself. If you need a break, feel free to “check out” in your seat, or get up for a drink or to leave the room.
- Respect the feelings of the other people in the room by refraining from cell phone use, side conversations, and potentially harmful language.
- Maintain confidentiality around conversations had by the trainees (with the exception of any mandated reporting situations that may arise).

Notes:

---



---



---



---



---



---



## Prevention Notes

---

- Developmentally, children may not understand that digital environments have risks.
- Children are much more likely than adults to take at face-value that the way people represent themselves online is accurate. Children may not view people online as strangers, rather may view them as 'friends'.
- Children have grown up living their lives relatively publicly. As a result, children may not be concerned if people online ask personal information or request images or video.
- Children have an innate curiosity that makes them like little explorers online, which can be problematic due to the internet having content that is not 'kid friendly'.
- Children may be concerned if they accidentally come upon adult content that they will be blamed or have their access to digital environments restricted.
- Social media and gaming platforms are designed in ways that stimulate the reward center of the brain. Feel-good hormones like dopamine and serotonin are released and lead to the user wanting to spend more time in the digital environment (Gilbertson and Gentile 2020).
- Children may have unsupervised access to digital environments.
- Parents may view devices like smart phones and tablets as private like a diary rather than feeling comfortable monitoring digital activity of children.

## Online Grooming

---

### Online grooming (*verb*)

Actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, in order to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child

- Online grooming environments: Social Media, Messaging Apps, and Gaming Platforms

### Small Group Activity:

What makes children vulnerable in digital environments? Please discuss this in your group and be ready to share out.

- Social Media and Messaging Apps – Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, What's App, Twitter; These are some popular social media and messaging apps. As quickly as I say the names of these apps, others are being invented.
- Gaming Platforms - Some adults may not see video games as a concern, but this mechanism has been used by groomers to get access to children. Cases of children being asked to send

digital images, video, and even meet in person with a groomer have been identified and prosecuted. Even games intended for children could be a tool for groomers. Also, games that are popular with adults that children also like may have chat or voice communications that are not filtered and are inappropriate for children. For example, gamers may use vulgar language or slurs that can be harmful for children to be exposed to. The nature of these games provides positive brain chemicals that affect the reward center of the brain, so children may not want to report concerning situations in gaming environments due to a worry that their access to the game may be removed or restricted.

### Activity 1: Grooming Scenario

**Read the following case study. After you read, consider what parents or other concerned adults can do to keep Noah safer. When thinking about the definition of grooming, do you see any events that might indicate grooming is occurring?**

Noah is ten and has recently been allowed a bit more freedom on the family computer. He likes to play games and he even got a headset for his birthday so that he can talk with other players while he is playing. He also has an Instagram account which his parents don't know about. He needed to lie about his age to create the account but all his friends have one so he wanted one too. He doesn't set his profile to private; he figures he can get more followers that way.

One day Noah reads a comment on one of his posts from someone he doesn't know. The person posted a thumbs up on a photo of Noah with his new headset on. The next day Noah posted something about his new favorite game and the person commented *'That's my favorite game too!'* Noah was curious and looked at the person's profile. They seemed to have a lot in common!

When Noah gets a DM from the person, he is excited. They write back and forth a lot. In the beginning they talk about computer games but after a while, the person starts asking Noah other questions. Noah really trusts the person and sees him as a friend. When he has a bad day at school he opens up to his new friend and it feels good when his friend shares how he has been through similar things. Recently his friend has been making jokes that involve sexual stuff that Noah doesn't know much about. He doesn't think much about it, he really likes his new friend and just assumes that they must tell different kinds of jokes where this person lives.

---



---



---



---



---







---

## Prevention Strategies for Online Safety

---

### Teach Children They Can Ask for Help

	<p>If anyone online asks for personal information such as full name, address, school, etc.</p>
	<p>If someone offers gifts like money, gift cards, or game credits</p>
	<p>If someone asks for photos or videos</p>
	<p>If someone wants to meet in person</p>

#### Parents and other concerned adults can

- open communication with children about digital safety using a non-shaming approach. If children learn that they can ask for help with questions about people they meet in digital environments, they will be safer.
- reinforce that people online are strangers not friends.
- encourage children to seek adult help if an adult they know in person sends them a direct digital message
- help children understand that digital images and video are always public (not private) once shared.
- let children know that open communication about concerns that arise in digital environments are welcomed and will be received in a positive way.
- avoid being punitive when children report digital concerns.

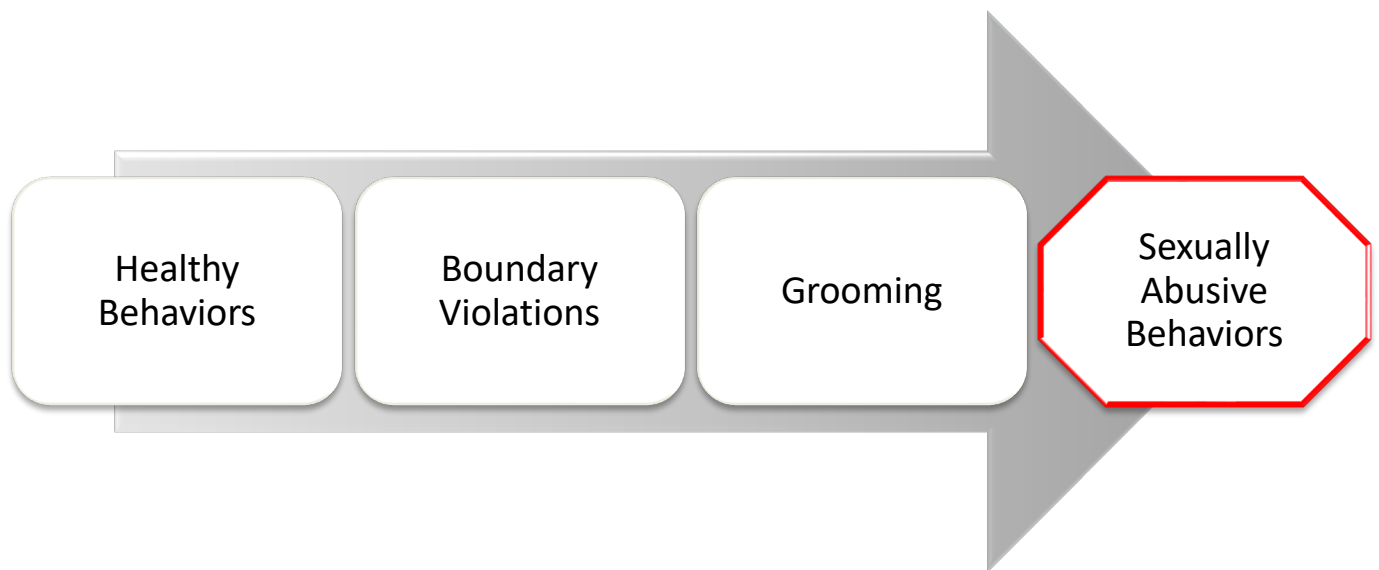
### Small Group Discussion:

What can you do in your role either personally (as a parent or caregiver) and/or professionally (as an educator, youth worker, etc.) to address some of these barriers to communication and increase the likelihood that a child would ask you for help with a concern?

## Maintaining Healthy Boundaries

### Grooming (verb)

“A process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of this child. Specific goals include gaining access to the child, gaining the child’s compliance and maintaining the child’s secrecy to avoid disclosure. This process serves to strengthen the offender’s abusive pattern, as it may be used as a means of justifying or denying their actions.” (Craven, S., Brown, S., & Gilchrist, E., 2006, page 297)



Healthy Behaviors - trust building behaviors by adults with and parents, organizations, and children. This means that adults respect children and have appropriate boundaries when using digital technologies.

Boundary Violations – Groomers may step outside of their given role communicating using digital technology directly with a child. Groomers may desensitize children to sending and receiving images and video with intention of eventually requesting or sending explicit digital content.

Grooming – Groomers may seek increased time in digital environments engaging in communication with a child. Groomers may tell children to keep digital communication a secret.

Sexually Abusive Behaviors – Can be both touching and non-touching. Non-touching forms of child sexual abuse involving digital media are: adults sending texts of a sexual nature, adults sending explicit photos or videos to children, adults requesting explicit photos or videos from children. Adults use digital media to get children to meet in person with intent to sexually abuse a child (luring).

**Activity Two: Pine Street Afterschool Program Case Study**

**Read the following case study. After you read, consider what the afterschool program can do to increase safety for children.**

Pine Street Afterschool Program is housed at a local elementary school and serves 120 students in grades three through five. The program employs a lot of motivated young adults and emphasizes outdoor activity, arts and crafts, and special project weeks. Students are grouped into mixed age groups of 20 and each group has a leader and an assistant.

The groups have a lot of flexibility in how they structure their time and many groups go on frequent field trips. When on field trips, group leaders often take pictures of students to share with parents and/or use in promotional materials.

The afterschool program really prides itself on its reputation as a program that puts a lot of value on quality interaction with each student. Group leaders are encouraged to show interest in each student including what they like and what their interests are. Most students love participating in the Pine Street Afterschool Program.

What could this program do in terms of policy and procedure regarding digital interactions to increase safety for students?

---

---

---

---

---

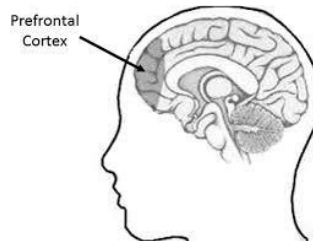
---

---

## What can youth serving organizations do?

	Develop policy that clearly outlines digital contact between professionals and children
	Train professionals about appropriate boundaries for digital interactions
	Recognize the inherent power dynamics of adult-child relationships
	Provide professionals guidelines for responding to and reporting concerning adult behaviors

## Concerning Youth Digital Behaviors



### Brain Development

- The prefrontal cortex is the judgement center of the brain. This is the part where we weigh decisions before taking action. This is the last part of the brain to develop and is not fully formed until the mid-twenties.
- Brain imaging research is very cutting edge today and has uncovered a basic difference between the way the adolescent brain and the adult brain process decision-making.
- We can use the example of the adult and the adolescent beekeeper to illustrate how the differences in the adult and the adolescent brain change the way each makes decisions.

## Brain Development & Decision-making During Adolescence



(Pine and Harden, 2006)

### Sexting (*verb*)

the sending of sexually explicit digital images, videos, text messages, or emails, usually by cell phone (Salter, 2013)

**Discussion:** How did youth prior to the digital age show attraction to one another? How has digital communication changed how youth communicate attraction to one another?

**Consensual Sexting:** Consensual sexting occurs when both parties actively agree to share sexual images, without any pressure or coercion. Youth sexting is similar to other youth sexual behaviors in that it can result from a basic developmental phase of sexual exploration.

Non-consensual Sexting:






- *Sending sexts to a person who is not into it and has not agreed to it. This includes instances in which there has been pressure or coercion to share sexual imagery or instances in which one person sends sexual imagery without being asked or receiving consent.*
- *The other form is re-sharing consensually shared sexts. Imagine the person who sends their crush a photo of them in their underwear. If this is then shown to others or, worse, posted or shared with others, this is a form of non-consensual sexting.*

*Laws differ in each state. In most states, even consensual sexting can result in criminal charges. It is important for adults to help youth understand the law to be able to make the best choices.*

## Prevention Strategies for Concerning Digital Behaviors

---

### Parents and Concerned Adults Can

	Teach youth the difference between public and private
	Guide children to only share digital items that they are comfortable being public
	Teach children to ask for permission before sending digital items to others
	Teach children to ask for permission prior to sharing anyone else's digital content
	Teach children to ask for adult help to decide whether to send digital material or if they receive unsolicited or upsetting digital material

### **Pornography** (*noun*)

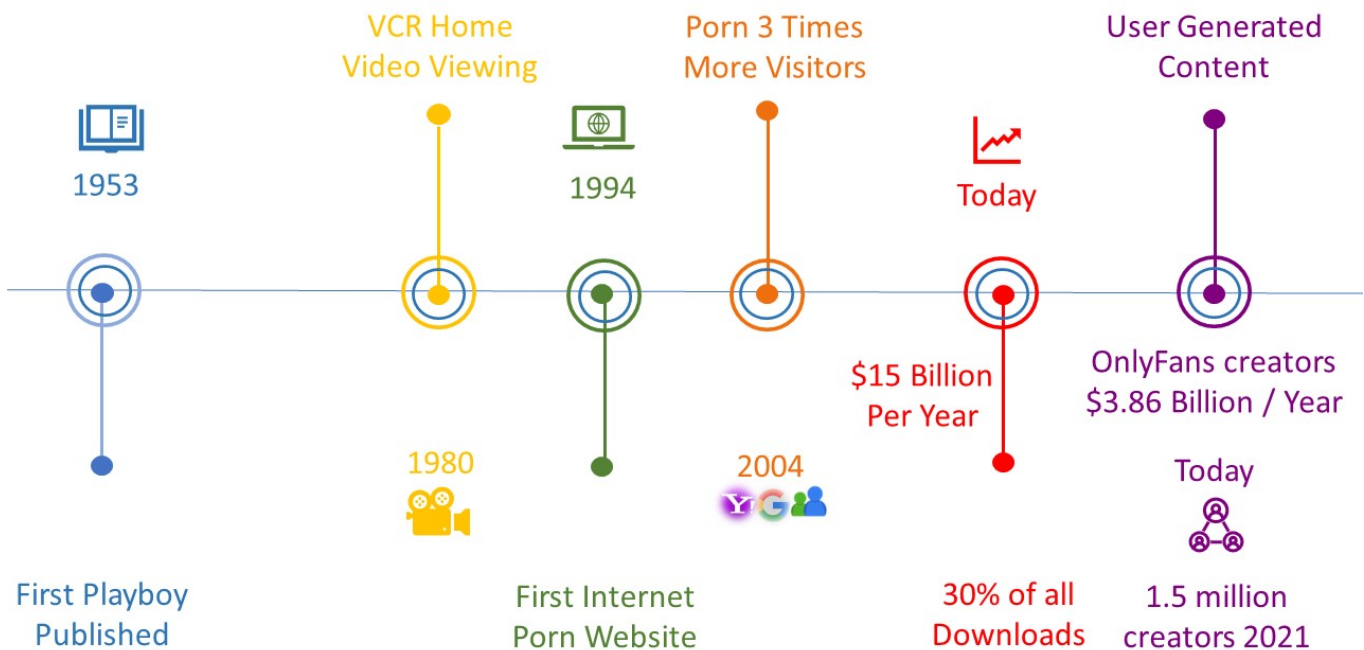
sexually explicit videos, photographs, writings, etc., for the purpose of eliciting sexual arousal

**Discussion:** How were youth prior to the digital age exposed to pornography?

- *How were youth exposed to sexual imagery? Who was often involved?*
- *What were youth exposed to?*
- *When did exposure often occur? At what age?*
- *What medium or device was used (magazine, cell phone, etc.)?*
- *Did youth in that era have the knowledge and skills needed to prevent exposure?*

## History of Pornography Timeline

### History of Pornography



Early exposure to pornography is common. 49% of U.S. youth were between the ages of 12 -15 the first time they saw pornography, and 97% of youth in the U.S. see pornography before reaching age 18 (Fibrilla, Fairus, and Raifah, 2021).

*Some important things to include when responding to accidental exposure to pornography include:*

- *There is no wrong way to feel after seeing pornography. It is okay to feel curious or excited and it is also okay to feel scared or overwhelmed. Many people feel a mix of feelings.*
- *Most of the pornography on the internet is not an accurate representation of sex in real life. Pornography is produced to make money and is, above all, a business.*
- *You can always ask me questions or tell me how you are feeling about what you saw now or in the future.*

### *Pornhub Most Searched 2023*

1. *Hentai*
2. *MILF*
3. *A specific sexual orientation*
- 4, 5, 7, 8. *Specific Race*
10. *Step-mom*

*(#6 and # 9 were a specific body part)*

Hentai: Cartoon Porn: a subgenre of the Japanese genres of manga and anime, characterized by overtly sexualized characters and sexually explicit images and plots.

The use of race and sexual orientation in porn is concerning because it legitimizes oppression and objectification of specific people. This translates into dehumanizing beliefs and increased sexual violence in society. Objectification can be negative to self-image and self-esteem (APA 2007).

In addition, mainstream online pornography portrays violence 45% of the time. The target of violence is 97% of the time a woman, and men are portrayed as aggressive in 76% of these scenes (Fritz et al., 2020).

**Discussion:** How could the nature and availability of pornography be a child sexual abuse prevention issue






- Adolescents' and young adults' perceptions of sexual relationships are heavily influenced by the pornography that they are exposed to (Hald, Malamuth, and Yuen 2010).

How is this issue further compounded considering the statistic that one-third of sexual abuse is committed by children under the age of 18?

## Prevention Strategies for Overall Digital Safety

---

### Parents and Concerned Adults Can

	Start very early and use everyday events to start conversations.
	Spend time with children online. Be affirming about responsible digital use. Share online activities they enjoy.
	Provide developmentally appropriate information about sexuality including using anatomically correct names for body parts (i.e. penis and vagina/vulva).
	Make sure to talk about values and relationships as well as biology.
	Teach children to ask for adult help to decide whether to send digital material or if they receive unsolicited or upsetting digital material

### Summary

- Digital technology can be a risk to children if used for grooming, sexting, and pornography.
- Developmentally, children are not able to protect themselves from digital risks.
- Adults set limits with adults and youth to avoid digital boundary issues.
- Parents and adults provide non-shaming guidance to children who use technology.
- Parents and other adults monitor children in digital environments to keep them safe.

**Thank you for your work today. Together, we can make a safer world for children.**

**For additional information visit [www.pcavt.org](http://www.pcavt.org)**

## Evaluation QR Code

---

Many mobile devices will allow you to use an app specifically designed to scan QR codes or do so automatically in the standard camera app.

1. Open the camera app
2. Focus the camera on the QR code by gently tapping the code
3. Follow the instructions on the screen to complete the action

