Online Predators

Predators and human traffickers can gain youth access online because they are not always aware of how dangerous online environments can be or how to keep themselves safe. Predators often stalk online meeting places like chat rooms and social media sites to identify and lure their victims.

Many vulnerable youths may use the internet as a place of self-discovery and find a supportive network of people experiencing similar hardships. While they may be building online friendships and getting much-needed support from peers, it is still essential that they practice safety online. Below are several safety tips you can discuss with the youth you interact with to protect themselves while they are online and using social media:

What to tell your Kids

» Keep your personal information private (where you live, work, go to school, or details about your personal life).

» Set your profile to intimate so only your friends in real life can get access.

» Never accept a friend request from someone you do not know.

» If you share a personal photo and someone uses it to threaten or blackmail you, you have options. Talk to a trusted adult about how to protect yourself or get help.

» If you plan to meet someone in person you met online, it should be in a public setting, like a restaurant or coffee shop, and let a trusted friend know who, where, and when you are meeting.

» Do your research on a job offer that seems too good to be accurate by reading reviews on company rating websites or contacting current and past employees to validate information about the job.

» If someone is not who they seem to be, or you think you are being lured into a potentially exploitative situation, tell a trusted adult. Reporting the person could help stop them from potentially exploiting others.

» Trust your instincts! If something feels wrong with a conversation with someone online, stop the conversation and block the profile.