

JANUARY  
2017

**REVEALING  
SELFIES:**  
The Consequences  
of Sexting

Hosted by MICHAEL SERAPIO

**NEWS  
IN  
REVIEW**

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Revealing Selfies: The Consequences of Sexting (Duration 15:37)

Sharing a sexy selfie with your latest crush may seem harmless, but once online those images live forever. Recently six male teens found out the hard way that sharing intimate pictures of their female schoolmates was also against the law. CBC reporter Ioanna Roumeliotis went to a high school in Nova Scotia to talk to teens about the pressure to share those intimate photos, and steps being taken to help students understand the consequences.

#### News in Review Study Modules

Kids & Technology: The Dark Side of the Wired World (Apr 2014)  
Frosh Week Controversy (Nov 2013)  
Learning from the Death of Amanda Todd (Dec 2012)  
Life, Work and Smartphones (Sep 2011)

#### Related CBC Programs

*Are We Digital Dummies?*  
*Generation Porn (CBC Radio – Ideas)*  
*Sext up KIDS*  
*The Sextortion of Amanda Todd*

## Credits

News in Review is produced by CBC News  
Resource Guide Writer: Jill Morris  
Resource Guide Editor: Sean Dolan  
Host: Michael Serapio  
Packaging Producer: Marie-Hélène Savard  
Associate Producer: Agathe Carrier  
Supervising Manager: Laraine Bone

Visit us at our website at [curio.ca/newsinreview](http://curio.ca/newsinreview), where you will find an electronic version of this resource guide and an archive of all previous *News in Review* seasons. As a companion resource, we recommend that students and teachers access CBC News Online, a multimedia current news source that is found on the CBC's home page at [cbc.ca/news/](http://cbc.ca/news/).

## Closed Captioning

*News in Review* programs are closed captioned for the hearing impaired, for English as a Second Language students, or for situations in which the additional on-screen print component will enhance learning.

CBC Learning authorizes the reproduction of material contained in this resource guide for educational purposes. Please identify the source.

*News in Review* is distributed by:

**CBC Learning | Curio.ca**, P.O. Box 500, Stn A, Toronto, ON, Canada M5W 1E6 | [www.curio.ca](http://www.curio.ca)

*News in Review – January 2017 – Teacher Resource Guide*  
**REVEALING SELFIES: The Consequences of Sexting**

## VIDEO REVIEW

### Before Viewing



#### Try This!

*Teachers: Use the following questions and answers to create a survey. You may find Kahoot ([getkahoot.com/](http://getkahoot.com/)) or Google Forms ([google.ca/forms/about/](http://google.ca/forms/about/)) helpful for this. If you cannot access technology you can photocopy this sheet.*

**\*NOTE:** You may find some of the following questions are suitable for group discussion, while others are better suited to anonymous or private responses. **Please review the survey questions carefully before doing this activity.**

1. How old were you when you first become aware of the existence of sexting?  
 Under 10     10-12     12-14     14-16
2. What percentage of your peer group do you think has participated in sexting?  
 Less than 10%     10-24%     25-49%     50-74%     more than 75%
3. Has an adult ever spoken to you about sexting?     Yes     No
4. How important do you think it is for adults to talk to youth about sexting?  
 Not important at all – what do they know?  
 Somewhat important – it might help me figure out some stuff  
 Pretty important – teens need more guidance  
 Very important – people are being hurt
5. Is the topic of sexting addressed adequately in your school's Physical Education class?  
 Not at all     To some extent     Mostly     Absolutely
6. To what extent is sexting a regular part of dating or flirting in today's youth culture?  
 A small number of people sext regularly     People who are only interested in "hooking up" sext  
 It is an aspect of most sexual relationships     It is central to finding and having a romantic relationship
7. Have you ever felt pressured to participate in sexting?  
 Yes     No     Maybe – it's complicated
8. Who would you be most likely to turn to for help if you were being pressured to sext or were experiencing harassment because of sexts?  
 Friend(s)     Parent(s)     Teacher(s)     Counsellor(s)  
 Anonymous websites or youth support phone line     Police

## Going Deeper

Working with a partner, consider the following statements. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each idea? Develop your reasoning and prepare to share your ideas with the rest of the class.

- Sexting is simply a form of sexual expression if it is done with mutual respect and clear, ongoing, consent.
- Girls are more likely to be victims of non-consensual sexting.
- The best way to handle non-consensual sexting is harsh criminal punishment for the perpetrators.

*Teachers: It may be helpful to have students make notes from their small group discussions on chart paper or they can use their devices to submit their thoughts to a group Padlet ([padlet.com](http://padlet.com)). They can then use these notes to share their ideas with the class or the class can circulate and view the notes of other groups. Debrief with a class discussion or written reflection.*

## Viewing

1. How does the student in the video define “sexting”?

---

---

2. Why has the case in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, had such a significant impact on neighbouring communities?

---

---

3. At what age do studies suggest some children are beginning to engage in sexting?

---

---

4. According to recent studies, what percentage of high school students have sent or received a sext?

---

---

5. What were the alleged criminal actions of the six young men accused in the Bridgewater case?

---

---

6. What act is now explicitly illegal under the new anti-cyber bullying law (Bill C-13)?

---

---

7. Why is the Bridgewater case in the spotlight?

---

---

8. What is at the core of all sexting crimes?

---

---

9. According to Stephen McGill, the principal at Bluenose Academy, at what point does sexting become criminal?

---

---

10. What are some of the reasons that the students being interviewed give for why teens sext? Can you think of any other reasons?

---

---

---

11. What is the goal of the website NeedHelpNow.ca?

---

---

### After Viewing

Visit and browse the website NeedHelpNow ([needhelpnow.ca/](http://needhelpnow.ca/)). Select one of the “I need help” options and explore it in more detail.

1. Write a short description of the “help” option you selected and discuss the guidance the website offers.

---

---

---

2. Did you find the information from the website helpful? Explain your answer.

---

---

---

## THE STORY

### Minds On

Browse the website Scarleteen, a sex-positive education site created for youth: [scarleteen.com/](http://scarleteen.com/)

Because it is not always comfortable to read or think about sex in a crowded computer lab or classroom, you may want to explore the website for homework and/or in a safe space with some trusted friends.

In this case, the internet is being used to give you more information and control over your choices around sex and sexuality. After exploring this website, do you think that it is a helpful resource? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the site?

As a class, create a list of **problems** and **benefits** associated with the internet and social media in terms of healthy sexual development.

### The click of a button

In a split second, everything can change. Whether we like it or not, technology has increased the speed of our lives — and the swiftness of the consequences of our actions. Suddenly, walking down the school hallway is like running a gauntlet of shame and misery: whispers of *slut*, and *whore*; cold stares and colder shoulders. Now, the “game” is out of hand and police officers are confiscating smartphones and using words like *pornography*. This is the unfortunate reality for some high school students who decide to try their hand at sexting.

Research indicates that over half of all senior high school students have both sent and received sexts — sexually explicit images sent by text.



For many, this practice began earlier with a significant number of students reporting that sending “nudes” seemed normal as early as Grade 7. Some even report that it is not uncommon for nine-year-olds to at least be aware of the practice. It seems that ethical choices regarding sexting have quickly become a new and important aspect of coming of age. It may be that the only thing moving slowly is society’s response to this phenomenon. And when adults and authorities don’t keep pace with the realities that young people face, the results are often tragic.

### Tragic consequences

In November 2011, after suffering months of harassment and humiliation, Rehtaeh Parsons of Cole Harbour, N.S., attempted suicide. Eighteen months earlier, Rehtaeh had been sexually assaulted and a photograph of the assault had been circulated by the boys who had allegedly participated in that crime. Shortly after her attempted suicide, Rehtaeh, 17, died in hospital.

Across the country in Port Coquitlam, B.C., Amanda Todd, 14, was similarly victimized when, during an attempt to extort more sexually explicit images, an online stalker sent a naked photo of her to her parents, friends and school community. In addition to being targeted by the online perpetrator, Amanda faced relentless

harassment from her peers. No longer able to bear the abuse and alienation, Amanda took her own life on October 12, 2015.

Both cases demonstrated that digital or cyber communication was quickly becoming a major part of the sexual development of young people. The cases also suggested that this cyber-sexual experience was becoming increasingly hostile and violent, especially in terms of how girls and young women were being perceived and treated. Ultimately, the tragic failure to help both Amanda and Rehtaeh would lead to the development of a new cyber-bullying law.

### Amending the Criminal Code

Given that young people were becoming increasingly involved in the consensual sharing of intimate images, the concern was that, even if they had initially been acquired with consent, those images could potentially be used at a later date to humiliate and harass their subjects. To address this concern, the federal government introduced the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act (Bill C-13) in April 2015. The act amends the voyeurism laws of the criminal code, giving the court the power to order the removal of “intimate images” from the internet. It also gives authorities permission to confiscate the devices — computers, smartphones, etc. — used in the distribution of the images. Most importantly, the act clearly prohibits the distribution of “intimate images” without the consent of the subject of those images.

### Child pornography laws

Prior to Bill C-13, similar cases could only be addressed under child pornography laws which criminalize the production, possession or distribution of any sexually explicit image of a person under the age of 18. Under these laws, taking a sexually suggestive photo of your 17-year-old girlfriend or boyfriend and keeping it on your phone could technically result in a charge of possession of child pornography. A

**Sexual consent** is a two-way exchange; it is an ongoing process of giving and getting permission. It is *positive*, which means you are showing in words and actions that you freely agree to participate in a sexual activity. In the case of intimate images or sexts, this means that you give or receive clear permission to take, have or share those images. Receiving permission to take a picture does not mean that you have consent to share that image. Consent is also *ongoing*, which means that you continue to get and give permission throughout a sexual activity. Consent can be revoked at any time. For sexts, the subject of a photo is free to change his or her mind and decide that they do not want you to have that image. Likewise, a person can revoke permission to share an “intimate image.” (Adapted from: *Get Consent*. Canadian Women’s Foundation<sup>1</sup>.)

16-year-old in Saanich, B.C., discovered that her boyfriend’s ex-girlfriend (also a minor) was sending him naked photos. Hurt and angry, she shared the images through text and Facebook. In 2014, she became the first youth convicted of possession and distribution of child pornography. She received a six-month conditional discharge, meaning that she avoided jail time if she met the requirements of her sentence: reporting to her parole officer, only using the internet when supervised by an adult and writing a letter of apology to the victim. Perhaps the most punishing aspect of her experience was the treatment she received from her community. Even though her identity as a young offender had been protected during the trial, some of her personal information was leaked and posted to social media. She was targeted and ostracized by her schoolmates who labelled her a *pedophile* and *pornographer*.

According to the Canadian Criminal Code<sup>2</sup>, an **intimate image** is a visual recording of a person made by any means including a photographic, film or video recording:

- a) in which the person is nude, is exposing his or her genital organs or anal region or her breasts or is engaged in explicit sexual activity;
- b) in respect of which, at the time of the recording, there were circumstances that gave rise to a reasonable expectation of privacy; and
- c) in respect of which the person depicted retains a reasonable expectation of privacy at the time the offence is committed.

The young woman in Saanich was not the only youth charged under Canada’s child pornography laws. In 2014, investigators in Kamloops, B.C., determined that a group of over 50 youth were involved in the illegal sharing of sexually explicit images. In the end, three boys were charged with possessing and distributing child pornography. Since 2009, dozens of youth have been charged under child pornography laws. These laws continue to be used in cases brought against young people who struggle with sexual expression and the responsible use of electronic devices and social media. However, with the introduction of Bill C-13, the application of law in these situations now takes into consideration the distribution of nude photos as a form of cyber-bullying, essentially modernizing the Criminal Code. It also makes it easier for the authorities to go after cyber-bullies.

## Consent

One of the most important ways in which Bill C-13 amended the criminal code was to direct the focus in these cases to consent. Mary Anne Franks, a law professor at the University of Miami specializing in cyberbullying, says, “When a teen forwards an image of another teen non-consensually, it’s wrong to say it’s child pornography. That’s not what’s wrong with it — what’s wrong with it is that it’s non-consensual behavior.”

While Bill C-13 may prove helpful in properly focusing prosecution, it should also prompt us to ask questions about why so many young people are finding themselves — sometimes unwittingly — the victims and perpetrators of electronic sexual crimes. As Franks points, the fact that law enforcement is involved is an indication that parents and teachers have not done a good enough job of educating young people about healthy relationships. According to Franks, “training and education needs to start as early as possible, for boys and girls, to emphasize that sexual activity in particular is the kind of thing where you always need unambiguous consent.”

## The first test

In the most recent case in Bridgewater, N.S., six young men are set to be tried in September, 2017. They have been charged under Bill C-13 with distributing intimate images of at least 20 high school girls without consent, but they have also been charged with possessing and distributing child pornography. This will be the first real test of the new law.

The **age of consent**, also known as the “age of protection,” refers to the age at which a young person can legally consent to sexual activity. All sexual activity without consent, regardless of age, is a criminal offence. The age of consent laws applies to all forms of sexual activity, ranging from sexual touching (e.g. kissing) to sexual intercourse. The age of consent for sexual activity is 16 years of age. It was raised from 14 years of age on May 1, 2008 by the Tackling Violent Crime Act.<sup>3</sup>

Need more help understanding the concept of consent? Check out this video:

[youtube.com/watch?v=fGoWLS4-kU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGoWLS4-kU)

## To Consider

1. Do you believe that young people can make responsible choices when it comes to sexting?
2. In your opinion, are schools and parents doing enough to help prepare young people to deal with choices around sexuality and sexting? What do you wish they would do – or do more of?
3. What can you do to support people who may be experiencing cyber-bullying or harassment because of non-consensual sexting? Can you think of some safe ways to stand up against cyber-bullying?

## Going Deeper

Working with a partner, discuss the following topics from the most recent version of Ontario’s Health and Physical Education curriculum<sup>4</sup>. For each topic, write a short, point-form description of and rationale for the ideas covered by that topic. Then, indicate whether you feel that you learned enough about each topic in your physical health education class. Finally, note any information that you wish had been covered for each topic. You could also use the chart on pages 8 and 9 to organize your work.

- Naming body parts accurately
- Stages of development
- Physical and emotional development
- Puberty
- Personal hygiene
- Reproductive system
- Understanding stereotypes, bias and assumptions
- Respect
- Delaying sexual activity
- STIs and pregnancy prevention
- Sexual health and decision making
- Sexual orientation
- Relationships and intimacy (including how to end relationships)
- Thinking ahead, consent and personal limits
- Mental health
- Proactive health measures

After you have finished exploring the topics with your partner, consider which topics (a) should include more information and (b) provide an opportunity for discussion about sexting. Using this activity and what you have learned from the video and material in this package, work together as a class to create a list of information and ideas about sexting that you think people need to know.

### Sources

1. Get Consent. Canadian Women’s Foundation. Retrieved from [www.getconsent.ca](http://www.getconsent.ca).
2. Criminal Code of Canada, Section 162. Retrieved from [parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication](http://parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication).
3. Age of Consent. Government of Canada, Department of Justice. Retrieved from [justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/other-autre/clp/faq.html](http://justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/other-autre/clp/faq.html).
4. Cline, S. (September 27, 2015). Ontario's Sex Ed Curriculum Is a Modern Document for a Modern Era. Her Magazine. Retrieved from <http://hermagazine.ca/ontarios-sex-ed-curriculum-modern-document-for-a-modern-era/>.
5. Brean, J. (October 5, 2016). Ruined: When children themselves feel the full brunt of child pornography laws. The National Post.
6. Browne, R. (May 1, 2015). Canada’s New Cyberbullying Law is Targeting Teen Sexting Gone Awry. Vice.com. Retrieved from [news.vice.com/article/canadas-new-cyberbullying-law-is-targeting-teen-sexting-gone-awry](http://news.vice.com/article/canadas-new-cyberbullying-law-is-targeting-teen-sexting-gone-awry).
8. Montgomery, M. (April 30, 2015). Canada’s cyberbullying and revenge porn law applies to adults too. Radio-Canada International. Retrieved from [rcinet.ca/en/2015/04/30/canadas-cyberbullying-and-revenge-porn-law-applies-to-adults-too/](http://rcinet.ca/en/2015/04/30/canadas-cyberbullying-and-revenge-porn-law-applies-to-adults-too/).
9. Tutton, M. (December 19, 2016). Nova Scotia teens stored up to 75 nude and sexually suggestive images on Dropbox: court documents. The Canadian Press.

### Going Deeper: Exploring Physical Education and Health Curriculum Topics

Topic	Description and Rationale	Learned Enough?	What else do you wish had been covered?
Naming body parts accurately	Learning the proper scientific names for body parts so that we can have open, shame-free conversations about all parts of our bodies	Yes (or No)	It might have been helpful to talk about some of the slang words used for body parts so that we could know and think about the impact of them.
Stages of development			
Physical and emotional development			
Puberty			
Personal hygiene			
Reproductive system			
Understanding stereotypes, bias and assumptions			
Respect			

Topic	Description and Rationale	Learned Enough?	What else do you wish had been covered?
Delaying sexual activity			
STIs and pregnancy prevention			
Sexual health and decision making			
Sexual orientation			
Relationships and intimacy (including how to end relationships)			
Thinking ahead, consent and personal limits			
Mental health			
Proactive health measures			



## ACTIVITY #1: INFOGRAPHIC

Students: Based on what you have learned about sexting, consent and the law, use one of the free applications available online to create your own educational infographic:

Venngage – [venngage.com/](http://venngage.com/)

Piktochart – [piktochart.com/](http://piktochart.com/)

Easel.ly – [easel.ly/](http://easel.ly/)

Share your digital poster with a small group. Working as a group, choose the most effective infographic and design an educational campaign around it. Consider:

- How can you best share this information with the people in your school?
- Where to place posters, the use of public announcements, the creation and sharing of video PSAs, lunchtime presentations (e.g. an information table or interactive event).

As a class, share your group campaign designs and select one design to develop and share with your school community.



## ACTIVITY #2: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Teachers: Use what you have learned about sexting, consent and the law to create an online educational quiz. You can use one of the free online apps such as:

Quizlet – [quizlet.com/](http://quizlet.com/)

Kahoot – [getkahoot.com/](http://getkahoot.com/)

Google Forms – [google.ca/forms/about/](http://google.ca/forms/about/)

Test it out with your class. Hopefully everyone knows more about healthy sexual expression, mutual respect and consent!