

Praesidio

SAFEGUARDING

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the second Praesidio Safeguarding newsletter! We hope you will find that it is filled with advice, support and tips. This month we are discussing the topic of healthy relationships.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

It is natural for young people to be curious about their sexuality and relationships. Whilst this can be an awkward stage of children’s development for practitioners, carers, and parents it can also be a confusing time for children themselves. Talking to children about sex, relationships and pornography is essential to ensuring they can make informed decisions and that if something goes wrong for them, they know where to turn.



Softcore pornography surrounds us all in our everyday life from semi-nude images on billboards, films, and music videos to celebrities and ‘influencers’ normalising sexualised behaviour on social media. It can be difficult even for adults to not become engrossed. Together with hardcore pornography being so regularly and easily accessible online with a few taps on a smartphone, unrealistic body image and sexual expectations are quickly embedded in the minds of impressionable adolescents.



Sexting has long been a concern, along with children viewing porn as young as 11 and many young women saying they had sex before they were ready. We need to equip our teenagers with the tools to identify when they are in an unhealthy relationship. Teenagers far too often feel compelled to conform to societal norms in hope of being included, therefore engaging in risky behaviour without assessing the consequences or repercussions.



Adolescents need to be educated and empowered so when they do feel the time is right, they are able to make, give and understand informed consent to sex.

"A healthy relationship is one which enriches you; not imprisons you."

Enson S. (PDF) Evaluating the impact of pornography on the lives of children and young people (researchgate.net), September 2017
 Independent More than half of young women losing their virginity before they feel 'ready' | The Independent | The Independent , January 2019

- Steve Maraboli

Safeguarding News



Ofcom has published their Children and parents: media use and attitudes report. The report looks at media use, attitudes and understanding among children and includes findings on parents' views.

To read the full report follow the link;

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/217825/children-and-parents-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2020-21.pdf



The IWF confirmed 77% more self-generated sexual abuse images in 2020 compared to 2019 and a staggering 80% of these cases involved 11- to 13-year-old girls.

To find out more -

<https://www.iwf.org.uk/selfgenerated-prevention-campaign>

To watch their campaign video -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fskbLna3DiY>



Protecting children worldwide from sexual abuse

Above all, children need our unconditional love – whether they succeed or make mistakes; when life is easy and when life is tough.

– Barack Obama

Relationship help and support for young people.



If you are supporting someone who has experienced negative relationships or sexual experiences, counselling is available at -

<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>



An in-depth explanation from the NHS into what consent is, what it looks like and how to give/obtain it.

<https://www.nhs.uk/about-the-nhs-website/professionals/healthandcareprofessionals/child-sexual-exploitation/documents/consent-information-leaflet.pdf>

Following the recent news Everyone's Invited NSCPCC has launched a new helpline for victims of sexual abuse in schools. To find out more:



<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2021/sexual-abuse-victims-schools-helpline/>



ChildLine has created 'Zip it' an app for young people to use to keep flirtatious texting under control.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/zipit-app>



MEET THE TEAM

Elizabeth Curtis has extensive experience in child protection and safeguarding. A former Duty Headteacher of an inner-city primary school, Liz recently joined Praesidio as our Education Manager.



• Tell us about you?

Prior to joining Praesidio, I worked in education, initially in a teaching role and then moved into a senior management position. Whilst I enjoyed working within a school environment, it was time for a change.

• Why did you join Praesidio Safeguarding?

Throughout my teaching career, child protection and safeguarding played an enormous part in my daily experience. When the opportunity came along to use my skills and working knowledge of safeguarding in education in a different context, I jumped at the chance.

• What is your experience with healthy relationships in childhood?

I grew up in a rural area where we often felt 'cut off' from the rest of the world. Sometimes that resulted in a form of ignorance that was reflected in the behaviours of those around me. Sexism and sexist attitudes were part and parcel to my adolescent years, from both adults and my peers. Luckily, I had very open parents with whom I could talk through my experiences and seek guidance when I needed it. These were the days before unlimited Internet access, so I was lucky to have a support network around me who I could turn to for advice.

• When do you think children need to know about consent?

Having worked in an inner-city primary school, my experiences have taught me it is never too early to introduce the principal of consent. For younger children, this can take the form of learning to ask for permission for any number of things. By the end of the primary phase, children should have a firm understanding of what the notion of consent means, ready to then apply its meaning to sexual consent when they reach secondary education.

• Why do we need to do more to raise awareness about viewing pornography in childhood?

I've taught sex education in school, so I have first-hand experience of how taboo the subject still feels within schools and among staff. But sadly, that is not an excuse for insufficient sex education for young people. In the digital world that we now live in, it's important that we talk to young people about online sexual content and its implications. It's important to remember that this dialogue is not about reprimanding viewing porn, but instead educating adolescent viewers that it is not a realistic representation of sex, gender roles, body image and consent.

Training and Support we offer to help support Healthy Relationships

Our Healthy Relationships & Online Sexual Content Webinar is a practical 1.5-hour session led by the Praesidio Safeguarding team.

The webinar provides professionals, parents and carers practical tips and advice on good quality sex education for young people to be able to talk to children about what healthy relationships are, what sexual consent is, and the impact pornography can have.



Intended for: Parents, carers, professionals.

For more information contact:

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