DIGITAL DILEMMA

# Social Media and Body Image

Digital Dilemmas are brief hypothetical situations and corresponding questions designed to foster cross-generational conversations about different aspects of adolescents' digital lives. Use this fictitious scenario, based on real-life stories, to spark a conversation at home with your children and open up the discussion about these very important topics.

### 4-3-2-1

Josh clicked open his Instagram app and saw the latest version of his grade's new favorite game. Someone would post pictures of four different girls on Instagram and others would vote for the most attractive by "liking" her picture. The girl whose picture received the fewest number of likes would be eliminated and pictures of the other three girls were reposted for another round of voting. The sharing and voting process would continue until there was a winner. Josh said that one of the 'worst' parts of the game was that the girls who lost might actually initiate another round of the game with a fresh set of girls, in the hopes of winning a separate version. Still, he didn't want to get involved. He knew that games like "Hot or Not" were popular in other schools, so he figured this was just his grade's version.

**?** What is your gut reaction to this story?

**?** How do the people whom you follow use Instagram?

**?** Have you ever heard of anything like this happening on social media?

**?** Do you think there is a difference between the kinds of pictures girls share of themselves and the kinds of pictures boys share?

**?** What would you have done if you were in this situation?

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# Sexting & Nude Photographs

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### Prove you trust me

Devon opened his cellphone and saw a picture of a girl without a shirt on. He couldn't see her face, but saw the text message sent with the picture: "Fwd if you think Rachil is a slut!" Rachil was in Devon's Spanish class and he immediately cringed, imagining how ugly this was going be for Rachil at school tomorrow. Rachil had sent the picture to her ex-boyfriend because he promised they would get back together if she proved she trusted him. She sent it to him and they got back together, but a few days later they got into another fight and broke up. Jose forwarded the picture to his friends. Then, the picture spread like wildfire.

? What is your gut reaction to this story? What parts of the story seem most realistic to you?

? Why do you think Rachil decided to send the picture? What could she have done differently if she really wanted to get back together with her boyfriend?

? What is a misconception you think adults have about sexting?

? What would you have done in this situation if you didn't know Rachil? If you were Rachil's friend? If you were Rachil herself?

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# Cyberbullying

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**Fake Pages**

Mackayla looked away from her computer screen in disbelief. One of her friends had just sent Mackayla the link to a vicious fake page… of Mackayla's younger sister, Remy. Someone – she had no idea who was behind it – had used Remy's picture and name to make a fake account. They filled out all of the "About me" sections making fun of Remy's interests, hobbies, and even her style and appearance. All of the tagged pictures were photoshopped pictures of Remy's head on embarrassing bodies. One pictured showed Remy's face on the body of a very overweight older man, and another had Remy's head on the body of a nearly-naked bikini model. Even worse, it looked like the fake page had "friended" more than half of Remy's grade. Mackayla remembered that Remy had mentioned having some issues at school and had even come home crying a couple of times but she had not realized that it had gotten this bad. Mackayla didn't know if Remy had seen the page yet, but she was devastated and knew that Remy would be too.

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**?** What seems realistic (or unrealistic) about this story? Do you ever hear about this kind of thing happening?

**?** What can Mackayla do now that she has seen the page? What would you do if you were Remy's older sister and saw the page?

**?** Do you think this is a case of "cyberbullying"? Why or why not?

**?** What can different people – her parents, her school, her friends – each do to help Remy get through this experience?

DIGITAL DILEMMA

# Digital Footprints & Photo Sharing

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**Take it down!**

When Vin snapchatted his friend an embarrassing picture of himself — he hadn't expected that his friend would take a screenshot of the picture and upload it to Facebook. He didn't want to seem uptight, but he was pretty embarrassed that the picture was posted for all to see. He texted his friend, "Not cool, man. Take it down." His screen lit up: "hahahah." Vin texted back, "Nah, I'm not playing, take it off." His friend wrote back, "Whoa, chill out, I'm just playing" but he didn't take the picture down. Vin was about to go through recruiting for college sports and while he knew the picture wouldn't get him in trouble, it wasn't exactly the image he wanted recruiters to see.

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**?** What is your gut reaction to this story?

**?** How do you decide what pictures are okay to share on social media and what pictures should stay offline?

**?** What kinds of pictures do kids screenshot?

**?** Are there any pictures that you wouldn't mind sharing now but you wouldn't want attached to your name later in life?

**?** Is it reasonable for Vin to be concerned about the recruiters? What kinds of content do you think the recruiters would or wouldn't want to see if they searched for Vin online?

What would you do if you were in this situation and your friend refused to take down the picture?

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DIGITAL DILEMMA

# Privacy, Surveillance, and Self-Disclosure

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### Breaking and Entering

Nik and his girlfriend Blair were hanging out at his house. Blair got up to go to the bathroom and left her phone on the couch. While she was gone, Nik noticed her phone light up and saw the name Matthew out of the corner of his eye. He was torn about whether or not to look, but decided he would just take a quick look at the texts that he could see on the main screen. Then, he couldn't resist: he knew her phone password, so he typed it and opened the conversation. Before he knew it, he was scrolling through Blair's conversations. He saw that she had been texting Matthew a lot. Nik was furious, but he couldn't decide whether or not to confront Blair and admit that he had looked at her text messages. Finally, he decided he was too angry to ignore it. Blair could not believe that Nik had looked through her messages — she thought that he trusted her and she felt like this was a complete invasion of her privacy.

**?** What is your gut reaction to this story?

**?** Can you understand Nikhit's decision to read Blair's text messages? Has there ever been a situation when you wanted to read someone's messages?

**?** What do you think about Blair's reaction: Did she have a right to be angry?

**?** Are there any situations when it is okay to read another person's private messages or emails?

**?** Have you ever heard of something like this happening to someone you know? Has it ever happened to you?

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# Sexual Imagery & the Internet

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### Sketchy Videos

Kai hopped on his laptop to look for a new remote-controlled helicopter and found a cool YouTube video showing how to make intricate aerial dives.  He watched the video on repeat, trying to learn the new moves. On the side of the screen, sketchy video suggestions kept popping up, but he did his best to ignore them. When his friend Carter came by to see what he was watching, Carter told Kai he wanted to show him something. "Click on that ad over there, I bet I know where it leads." Kai clicked on one of the sketchy videos and was surprised to pull up a pornographic website. He knew he probably shouldn't be on the site, but he was instantly intrigued.  Over the next couple of weeks, Kai continued to look up different sites all with pornography material on them. Before he knew it, he felt like he was "hooked."

**?** What is your gut reaction to this story?

**?** Has this kind of thing happened to anyone you know?

**?** What do you think Kai saw on the sites? What do people mean when they talk about "pornographic material"?

**?** Do you think that watching pornography has any impact on people's perceptions of sex or of members of the opposite sex? In what ways?

**?** If you were a parent, what would you tell your kids about pornography?

# Distraction, Multitasking, & Time Management

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### Ticking Clock

Carrie was sitting at her family's dining room table studying for a history midterm that she had coming up. She promised herself 2 days ago that she was going to study for a couple hours each night until the exam, which was now the next day. Carrie really needed to do well on the test: at her school, the rule was that students could only compete in sports events if their grades were high enough. Carrie was supposed to play in tennis regionals at the end of the month, but she needed to boost her history grade by 8 points. The last couple of days were not very productive, so Carrie was really feeling the crunch. She tried to focus, but the material was just so boring. Before long, Carrie found herself scrolling through her newsfeed instead of her World War I study guide. Then, her phone buzzed next to her and she looked down and noticed she had 22 text messages in her group text. This was not going well. Carrie flipped her phone on silent, turned it upside down and decided to see if she could find any interesting history videos about World War I on YouTube. An hour later, Carrie had gotten totally pulled into a series of Epic Rap Battles of History, but had made no progress on her studies.

**?** Does this story seem realistic? Why or why not?

**?** Do you ever find yourself distracted when you're trying to do homework or study? What distracts you the most?

**?** What advice would you give to Carrie about how to minimize distractions and focus?

**?** Carrie turns her phone upside down to try and minimize the distraction. Is this a useful strategy? Why might it help (or not help)?

# Digital Drama

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### Impersonation

Erin was home sick from school watching a movie when she looked down at her phone and saw her screen filled with text messages written in capital letters and punctuated with exclamation points. "I HATE YOU!!! HOW COULD YOU?!" Erin panicked: she had no idea why she was receiving the flood of vicious text messages. She frantically texted two of her friends, but both were in class, and her calls went to voicemail. A few hours later, Erin pieced together what had happened. Someone had hacked onto her best friend's Facebook page, acting as her, and sent perverted messages to her best friend's boyfriend. Her best friend was furious and was convinced that it was Erin, since Erin was the only person who had her password. Erin hadn't been at school to defend herself, so their other friends had already heard about the incident and were mad at Erin, too.

**?** What is your gut reaction to this story?

**?** Is sharing passwords something that people who you know do?  Who would you share your Facebook password with and under what circumstances?

**?** What would you do in this situation if you were Erin?

**?** Is impersonation something you ever see on social media? Are there ever situations when it is funny or just a joke?

# Video Games and Violent Content

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Jaden isn't a "hard-core gamer" compared to many of the other kids he knows, but he does have a few video games that he loves. His latest favorite is *Doom Battle*. Jaden's parents are constantly bugging him about how much time he spends gaming, but from Jaden's perspective, he spends way less time playing than most of his friends. Plus, he finds that it's a great way to unwind and relax after a long day at school. Jaden's parents tell him to "do something productive" or "at least go hang out with your friends." Yet Jaden doesn't see gaming as a waste of time, and he often is playing with his friends. Lately, his parents have been threatening to put time limits on his video game playing, and Jaden feels like he's being punished when he hasn't even done anything wrong.

**?** What seems realistic (or unrealistic) about this story?

**?** In what ways do you agree with Jaden's parents about gaming? In what ways can you relate to Jaden's perspective?

**?** Do you think the kinds of video games Jaden is playing makes a difference? Why, or why not?

**?** Is playing video games with friends a good way to bond?

**?** What do you think of the idea of parents setting limits on gameplay? How many hours would seem like a fair amount of daily playing time?

# Young Children and Digital Footprints

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### Before They Have Accounts of Their Own

Jon logs onto Facebook and is surprised when the first thing he sees is a picture of his daughter Allie smiling back at him. He notices that the picture was posted by his sister, Allie's aunt, who babysat her last week. Although Jon occasionally shares pictures of Allie online, he doesn't really like the idea of other people posting pictures of her on social media. He tries to be careful about the kinds of pictures he posts — for example, no photos of her in the bath or running around in only a T-shirt and no pictures of her with her school in the background. The picture his sister has shared isn't anything concerning, but Jon can't help but feel funny about the fact that she shared it (and 52 people have already "liked" it!).

**?** What is your immediate reaction to this story? What seems realistic (or unrealistic) about the dilemma?

**?** Do you relate to Jon's perspective, or do you think he's being unrealistically protective?

**?** Do parents have a right to tell others — family members, friends, spouses — whether or not they can post pictures of their kids online?

**?** Does it make a difference how old Allie is? Would your reaction change if Allie were 10 months versus 10 years old?

**?** If Jon wanted to ask his sister to take the picture down, how could he go about making the request? Do you think his sister would be willing to remove the photo?

# Selfie Culture

Digital Dilemmas are brief hypothetical situations and corresponding questions designed to foster cross-generational conversations about different aspects of adolescents' digital lives. Use this fictitious scenario, based on real-life stories, to spark a conversation at home with your children and open up the discussion about these very important topics.

Dylan's friend Jamie was completely addicted to posting selfies. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook — you name it — Jamie's page was covered in selfies. Dylan had tried to ignore it, but it was only getting worse and a few things were especially driving Dylan crazy. One, their other friends had started making fun of Jamie's posting and Dylan didn't know what to do: defend Jamie or join in? Tell Jamie about their friends' teasing, or just stay quiet? Two, whenever they were hanging out, Jamie would be snapping selfies or asking for Dylan's opinion about which picture to post and what to make the caption. It started to seem like it was all about Jamie, all the time, and Dylan was exhausted.

**?** Is this situation realistic? Why or why not?

**?** Why do you think Jamie would post so many selfies?

**?** Why do you think Dylan and Jamie's other friends make fun of Jamie for posting selfies?

**?** If you were Dylan, would you say anything to Jamie? If so, what?

**?** Are there rules among kids your age about acceptable ways to post selfies? What makes for a "good" selfie? What kinds of selfies are annoying?

# Managing Screen Time

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> "Put away your phone," "close the laptop," and "turn off the television" — Liana felt like she was constantly policing her kids' screen time. But her kids felt like they were constantly having to explain themselves: "I'm doing homework,"  "I'm trying to figure out my plans," "This is the first minute I've spent relaxing all day," or "My friend needs me." Everyone in the family was exhausted by negotiating tech time. Liana wanted to make sure she was doing her part to raise kids who could actually have a conversation and weren't totally addicted to their devices. Her kids kept telling her she was overreacting and that their screen time wasn't just fun and games; they needed technology for all their responsibilities.

**?** What seems realistic (or unrealistic) about this story?

**?** Do you think Liana is right to be wary about her kids' screen time, or is she just out of touch?

**?** How much screen time do you think is too much? Does the reason for using a device (homework, fun, social media, gaming) make a difference?

**?** What advice would you give to this family to try to make everyone feel more comfortable with how the kids use technology? Is this an inevitable source of conflict, or are there ways to alleviate some of the frustrations?

Are there any times of day when you think it's a good idea to unplug (before bed, first thing in the morning, during meals, after school)? Why, or why not?

# Kids as Coders

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Tina's school started a new initiative at the beginning of the school year: Kids could choose either music or coding as an elective. The school administrators thought that everyone would be excited about the choice, but no one seemed happy. Some parents resented the idea of taking time away from music for an "unnecessary" class; other parents argued that coding was such a critical skill for the 21st century that it should be mandatory for all students. Among the teachers, some argued that coding would be more appropriate as an after-school club, while others worried it would only attract "a certain group of kids." Meanwhile, yet another group of teachers complained that kids were already spending too much time in front of screens; they felt that adding more computer time was a horrible idea.

**?** Do you think coding is something that should be taught in school? Do you consider it a valuable 21st-century skill?

**?** What do you make of the reaction of some teachers that coding might only attract a "certain group of kids"? What do you think those teachers meant, and why do you think they saw this as a problem?

**?** Is coding "just" another form of screen time, or is it different from other types?

**?** Why do you think the school was asking students to pick between coding and music? What would you have done differently if you were in charge of the school schedule?

**?** What kinds of skills do you think schools should teach kids so they're prepared to succeed in a digital world?

# Technologies that Meet Unique Needs

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## Meeting Kids' Unique Needs

Hayden had trouble taking notes, so his teacher gave him permission to use a computer during class, even though she normally didn't allow devices in her classroom during most subjects. Hayden felt like the computer really helped him take notes and pay attention, but he felt funny being the only one with a laptop. Plus, some of his friends said he didn't really need it, and he kind of understood what they meant, since it's not like he was totally unable to learn without it. He told his teacher thanks but he wasn't going to use the laptop anymore. But she saw how much of a difference it was making in his grades, and she urged him to reconsider.

? Do you ever find that technology helps you or makes your life easier? What are some examples?

? Why do you think Hayden's friends were bugging him about using the laptop?

? Do you think it's OK for some kids to use technology in a classroom but not others? Would it bother you if you were a student in Hayden's class and he was using a laptop?

? Do you know anyone who uses technology to overcome something that is challenging for him or her? What would it be like for that person if he or she wasn't allowed to use a special device or tool?

? What could Hayden's teacher do to help this situation? What do you think Hayden should do?

http://www.ncld.org/students-disabilities/assistive-technology-education/overview-assistive-technology