



Behind Their Screens: What Teens are Facing (And Adults are Missing). Harvard researchers draw on a multiyear project that surveyed more than 3500 teens to help grown ups understand the complicated nature of online lives. Part 2 of our book conversation focused on some difficult topics like sexting, nude photos and more strategies for parents to help navigate social media.. Here is a summary of November's conversation:

Positives of Social Media: Instagram, Youtube, Reddit, TikTok, Discord

- Connected with friends
 - Can do so without driving etc. (positive from safety point of view)
 - Disconnecting is difficult for kids as well as adults
- Greater exposure to new and different things, more opportunities for learning
- Parents can use it to connect and talk about things ie: Harker Instagram

Small Slight, Big Fights

- Online social connections can be tricky and sometimes small transgressions or small things said/posted can be taken out of context
- The way teens see social media now is very different from how we as adults see it, even for those of us who used it in our own adolescent years. It's such a part of their world that it's not really possible to separate online use from in-person social interactions and dynamics.
- Kids experience pressures to stay connected and new stresses around keeping in touch and keeping up. Parents can ask questions to seek to understand.

Nudes (and why teens sext when they know the Risks)

- Students know that sexting and related activities has risks that can impact their lives long term, but the reason for doing it is not because of the fear of those consequences but rather the more immediate social impact and the negative social consequences that can arise. Immediate consequences are more important.
- Educate your child about things they may see online and in social media
- Rather than focusing on consequences, consider exploring how we can support our kids' understanding of consent and the meaning behind it.
- **Talk about consent: FRIES (freely, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, specific)**
- How do we support our kids/empower them to make decisions:
 - Know their value system - Trust - Positive reinforcement
 - Explore via conversation, ask questions to seek to understand
- Ask questions
 - Do you feel safe? Do you feel respected?
- Model for your kids what consent means. For example, posting halloween photos, school performance photos, etc.

Parenting Ideas & Take Aways

Have conversations with your child: ask questions versus assuming, empathy versus eye rolling and judgment, normalizing experiences without minimizing their experience.

Our next LIFE Parent event will be **Thursday, January 24: Student Fishbowl at Saratoga Campus**. In this experience, students from 6-12 will sit in a circle and converse with each other. Parents will be invited to sit around the circle to just learn and listen to the student experience from their perspective. Last year, this was an incredibly eye-opening and powerful experience for our parents and empowering for our students.

RSVP for this event is required. **We hope to see you there!**