

Theme 5: Staying safe online – Parent's conversation

Before you start – Remember:

- Remind yourself of the safeguarding code of conduct
- Check with the parent that this is a good time for the call, and remember to ask both the child and parent if they are still happy to take part in the project
- Take notes so that you are able to complete the call log accurately after the call
- For this session: If the family does not have internet access, use the session as a learning opportunity for when they or their child are able to access the internet in future

There are options in red for children with special needs. Always begin with the instructions for typically developing children. Move to option 1 for a modified version of instructions for children with mild difficulties. For children with severe difficulties move to option 2 or 3. Visuals will be attached to this document to be shared with the children and parents. A video call is preferred over a regular telephone call with the child.

Beginning the time together

- Ask about what have been the best parts and most difficult parts of the last week
- Follow up on last week's commitment: did they manage to put it into practice?
- Reminder of the process: what to expect from these calls and how long they will last

If the parent was shy or hesitant, share your experience of the past week (e.g., I had a long week at work, but I rested well during the weekend).

Introduce the theme: Staying safe online

Today's topic is staying safe online – by the end of our call we will have talked about:

- Understanding and preventing risks online
- Healthy habits online as a family

Topic 1: Understanding and preventing risks online

Ask: Are your children spending more or less time online during this time? Do you think this is a good thing?

Affirm: In many cases, children and teenagers are now spending a lot more time online. Being connected helps them reduce the impact of the crisis and encourages them to continue with their lives – but it also presents some risks and dangers.

Ask: Which risks are you aware of, or concerned about for your child?

Share: Some key risks are:

- Adults targeting children for sexual purposes on social media, gaming, and messaging platforms
- Harmful content – for example violence, misinformation or pornography
- Children sharing personal information or sexual photos or videos of themselves
- Cyberbullying from peers and strangers

If the child has communication difficulties, they may have trouble understanding others' people's attitudes and emotions. Therefore, they may feel frustrated when connecting with friends and family online. It is important that these children receive guidance and assistance while navigating online social communication and browsing from their family members.

Ask: What do you already do to try to manage these risks?

Share: Some ideas are:

- Set up parental controls and turn on 'Safe search' on your browser
- Cover webcams when not in use
- Get to know the apps, games and social media your children are using, making sure they are age-appropriate, and set up strict privacy settings on online apps and games
- Restrict who can contact your child or ask them to check with you before accepting new friends
- Help your child understand the importance of not sharing personal details online, especially with strangers

For children to understand online boundaries better, it may be helpful for parents to explain physical and social boundaries, and then relate them to online boundaries. For example, the parent would explain to the child that they should not talk to strangers in person. Similarly, they should not do so online. Parents can also explain to the child that their body is private and no one can see it except for parents while assisting in the toilet or doctors while examining them in the presence of their parents. Similarly, they should not send pictures of their body online.

Ask: Is there something new you will put into place this week or find out more about?

Topic 2: Healthy habits online as a family

Ask: How do you help your child to manage their time online?

Share: Even if you are at home together, it isn't possible to monitor your child's online activities every second of the day. It's important to talk with them about online safety issues to help them develop their own ability to make good choices. One way to do this is to create a family agreement about healthy use of our devices and time online. This might include:

- Use devices in open areas of the home
- Set time limits that balance screen time with other activities
- Create device-free spaces and times in your house (e.g. eating, playing, schoolwork and sleeping)

Share: Communication is one of the best ways to keep your child safe online – letting your children know that they can talk to you about what happens online. Build an open, trusting relationship around technology.

- Tell your children that if they experience something online that makes them feel upset, uncomfortable or scared, they can talk to you and you will not get angry or punish them.
- Be alert to signs of distress. Notice if your child is being withdrawn, upset, secretive, or obsessed with online activities.

Children learn by observation. Therefore, parents can model healthy online habits by applying the above agreement to their own activity.

Parents can initiate the conversation with their children by asking them how their online experience has been and encouraging them to share any interesting content. This would encourage the child to share

Putting it into practice this week

An activity to do with your child this week: spend time with your child online. Explore websites, social media, games and apps together. Let them tell you about what they are interested in and what they enjoy doing online. Use this as an opportunity to have a conversation about how they can stay safe online.

Explain: The game and poster you will send over WhatsApp or in print – if possible. The activity 'We can help one another make healthy choices' is about choices in general but can also be used to open up a conversation about how we make choices online.

Option 1: Present Ahmad's possible choices and discuss them together.

Option 2: Use role-playing to present Ahmad's choices and consequences. You can also create hand-drawn objects and characters (e.g., fruits, Ahmad, Ahmad's father, and guests), and use them to create a

Confirm: What do they plan to put into practice with their child this week?

Restate the discussed options. Make a list of suggestions and let the parents pick one.

[Put in place extra security on devices / learn about the apps and games your child uses / talk with your child about online safety / create a family agreement about device use / other]

When will you meet again?

Ask: the parent if they are happy for you to speak to the child now and ask them to hand over the phone.

Theme 5: Staying safe online – Child's conversation

Before you start – Remember:

- Remind yourself of the safeguarding code of conduct
- Check with the parent that this is a good time for the call, and remember to ask both the child and parent if they are still happy to take part in the project
- Take notes so that you are able to complete the call log accurately after the call
- For this topic: If the child does not have access to the internet, you may adapt the content of the conversation to help them to learn skills for the future and share the information more generally

Inform the child that they are allowed to take breaks. Agree with the child on a sign or word that represents wanting to take a break when they need one (e.g., raising hand, crossing arms, or saying "break"). Prompt them to take a short break to stretch when you feel necessary.

Beginning the time together

- Begin with your regular check-in questions, such as:
 - What was the best thing that happened this week?
 - What was something funny that happened this week?
 - What was hard about this week?

Share some personal experiences from your week (e.g., the best thing about this week was meeting my best friend. A funny thing about this week was learning a magic trick. A hard thing about this week is not being able to go to the beach).

Option 1: How are you feeling today? What did you do today? Tell me about a game that you played.

Option 2: Ask the child "how are you feeling today" and provide a diagram of emotions to choose from. You can prompt them by reading the emotions aloud (e.g., are you happy, sad, or angry). Use Picture [5.1] or [5.2].

- Reminder that these calls are about: checking on how you are doing, giving you a chance to talk and share how you are feeling, and sharing ideas together which can help you and your family
- Ask: Are you still happy to be part of this project?

Inform the child that we have many interesting activities and topics to discuss together and make sure that he is happy to continue.

Remember to provide brief breaks when needed (for stretching, toilet break, walking around, or

Introduce the theme: Staying safe online

Ask: If you could invent any app or online game what would it be? What would it be able to do? (OR for younger children, what's your favourite thing to do online?)

Option 1: What games do you like to play online (i.e., on the phone, tablet, or computer)?

Explain: The internet is great and helps us to stay connected to our friends and family, and helps us to learn, but there are also things we need to do to make sure we stay safe and have fun online, especially now we are spending a lot of time online. Today we'll be looking at how we can use our time online well and stay safe.

Topic 1: Who I am online

Ask: Think about your best friend. What is it that makes them a great friend? *Encourage the child to mention character qualities such as kindness or fairness as well as things they can do.*

Option 1: Simplify questions. For example, who is your best/favorite friend? What do you like about him/her? Is s/he kind to you? Does s/he respect you? What do you like to play with him/her?

Ask: What about you – what is it about you that makes you a good friend?

Option 1: Ask the following questions: Do you know what your friends like about you? Are you kind to them? Do you respect them?

Explain: It's important to be kind and respect others when we are online, just like when we are offline.

Ask: What are some ways we can be kind to others online? What are some ways we can be unkind? Ideas could include:

Option 1: Ask about offline activity first. For example, what are some ways we can be kind to others offline? What are ways we can be kind to others online?

What are ways we can be unkind offline? What are ways we can be unkind to others online?

- Share positive messages.
- Think before you send an unkind message. Don't forward mean messages on.
- Don't share someone's photos or information without asking them.

Share: No one deserves to be bullied or hurt online. Don't ignore bullying if you know it is happening or if it happens to you. If someone is being unkind online, it's just as wrong as when it happens in real life, and we can get help. Tell an adult what's happening, and they can help you.

Explain what bullying means to the child with special needs. You can say the following “bullying is when someone purposefully does hurtful things to another person. For example, they can hit a child in the playground for no reason, they can take away his/her school bag, they can call the child different names, such as loser, ugly, etc. Bullying can also occur online. For example, someone can draw a funny picture of a child and send it to his/her friends to make fun of him/her. Has someone done anything like this to you or to someone you know?”

Remember: once you share something online it is very difficult to take it back. It could be shared or copied by someone else. Ask permission before you share something and if you’re not sure, don’t share!

Emphasize that the child can ask for assistance or guidance from a parent or trusted adult when they have concerns or feel unsure about what to do.

Topic 2: How I can stay safe online

Ask: Is there anything you already do to try to stay safe when you are online? If you had to tell a friend how to stay safe online, what advice would you give?

Option 1: Try to be more practical. For example, what is your friend’s name? What would you tell your friend to do if someone sent him/her unkind words online, such as ugly, loser, etc.? What would you advise your friend to do if someone asked him/her to send a photo of himself/herself? What if someone is spreading wrong information about your friend? Prompt the child or provide responses if the child is unable to respond to the questions.

Share: Here are some more things to think about to help us stay safe online:

- **Online friends** – Most people online just want to be friends or chat but not everyone is like that, and some people can pretend to be someone else online. How could you tell if someone is pretending to be someone else?
 - If the way they talk or look doesn’t match the age on their profile
 - If they ask you to send photos of yourself or other personal informationIf this happens: Tell your parent or a trusted adult – they can help you.
- **Sharing personal information** – When you are online, check with an adult before sharing information like your full name, your birthday, your phone number or where you live.
- **Messages** – Not all online messages are good. Messages that make you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or scared are not right for you. Don’t reply to these messages and tell your parent or a trusted adult.
- **If you see something that you don’t like or makes you feel uncomfortable** – It’s ok to switch off or turn off the screen – then tell an adult. You won’t get in trouble and they can help you.

It is essential that the child is able to identify the feeling of discomfort before we ask about it. Therefore, we can ask the following: Do you know what feeling uncomfortable means? Let them provide examples. You can also provide practical examples, such as if you sit on a chair and you feel pain or do not feel relaxed, you might be uncomfortable. You might also feel uncomfortable if someone asks you to do something that you do not want to do. You can also feel uncomfortable if someone gives you a name other than your name.

Ask: Is there anything you'll do differently when you are online now?

Give them the time they need to express themselves.

Ask them what their parents would think.

Restate the discussed options. Make a list of suggestions and let them pick.

Wrap up: What can we do together this week?

Ask: Do you and your family have some rules about how you use your devices? Could you talk together about this?

Try to have the parents nearby so that they can answer and provide the child with examples. For example, the parents might say, "Remember, we have a rule about the time that we can spend online."

Share: Spending time online can be great and can help us stay connected with our friends and family, especially when we are apart. But sometimes we might find we are spending too much time online. If you find yourself spending a lot of time online and even thinking about it when you're offline (instead of spending time with friends or family) you might need to take a break.

Explain to the child that sometimes we do not keep track of the time spent online but we usually hear our family members complaining that we are spending so much time on the phone or tablet. Therefore, ask the child to ask his/her parent to discuss the appropriate time to spend online. If possible, ask the parent to discuss this with you and the child. Check the rule set by parent and modify accordingly. Children are expected to spend approximately between 1- 2 hours online per day, depending on their age. Inform the parent that they can break down the time spent online across the day. For example, it may be decided that the child is allowed to spend 20 minutes online in the morning, 30 minutes after lunch, and 10 minutes in the afternoon.

Ask: What will you do this week to be a good friend and stay safe online together with your family?

Option 1: Divide into two questions to simplify.

1. We talked about being a good friend online, how are you going to do that this week? If the child is hesitant, provide him/her with previously discussed options.
2. We talked about staying safe online this week too, what are you going to do to be safer? If the child is hesitant, provide him/her with previously discussed options.

[Be kind online / Tell an adult about a concern / Talk to my family about using our devices / Other]

Close the call by thanking the child for talking with you, and explain when you will meet again.

Do not forget to praise the child for the effort. Encourage the parent and child to pin the date of the next meeting on a calendar and ask them to check the shared date on WhatsApp.

After the call

- Share the poster or image over WhatsApp or as a printout if you are able to: 'Keeping children safe online'
- Share the game over WhatsApp or as a printout if you are able to: 'We can help one another make healthy choices'
- Complete the call log now
- Contact your supervisor if any safeguarding issues have been raised or if you have any concerns
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- Share Picture [5.1] or [5.2]

NB – images to share (your supervisor will share these with you)



5.1

5.2