

the digital dance: parenting in an online world



The Digital Dance: Parenting in an Online World

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This workshop manual is the facilitator guide for The Digital Dance: Parenting in an Online World. There are three modalities for the delivery of this process contained in this manual.

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introduction

The Digital Dance is a curriculum designed to assist parents to gain knowledge and skills towards parenting in a digital age. Unique to Namibia, it contributes to the country's effort to strengthen child protection systems and help keep children safe online. It fulfils Namibia's commitment to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse through educational programmes.

Identifying the problem

Parents often feel lost and helpless when it comes to dealing with the complexities of managing their children's exposure to technology. Nothing about their own experience growing up has prepared them for navigating this uncharted territory. Often, they know enough about technology to understand that there are risks and dangers, but not enough to know what to do to protect their children.

Children themselves, are not fully aware of the various dangers or how to identify, prevent and mitigate against them. When children have no reliable support system to turn to, and if there is more fear than trust of their own parents, children are not likely to open up about potential or actual harm they are experiencing. This harm can come from exposure to inappropriate sexual or violent content, cyber-bullying, grooming, sextortion, harassment, blackmail, child exploitation and abuse.

Electronic devices are sometimes seen by stressed and exhausted parents as a quick fix to keep children occupied and quiet. Alongside this, the myth also exists that early exposure to technology makes children learn faster. Often, the opposite is true. Spending too much time too early on electronic devices or online, reduces the amount of real-life interactions which are developmentally integral to building relationships and developing crucial interpersonal skills, and it also renders children more vulnerable to various forms of possible future online addictions.

Moving towards solution

Social exposure, positive trusting relationships, and good communication between children and their parents are absolutely essential ingredients to ensure that children grow up safely and develop into healthy, self-assured human beings.

On completion of this workshop, parents should feel confident, more knowledgeable and empowered enough to implement solutions that surface during the workshop. In this way, they will not only share their knowledge in an age-appropriate manner with their children, but they will also transfer and nourish this sense of confidence and empowerment in their children.

How this curriculum works

This curriculum empathetically takes parents' own experiences into account and provides practical, positive and applicable solutions. The process starts with the self, which is a central tenet to bringing about change in individuals. It acknowledges a person's own experience and struggle with a particular issue (in this case, technology and being a parent). This surfaces awareness of self and, in turn empathy for others. For example, if a parent is able to acknowledge their own struggle to manage technology and keep it in its proper place, they are able to be more sympathetic to their child's challenge. Instead of primarily focusing on information sharing and presentation of phenomena and prevention strategies, a person-centred, or in this case parent-centered approach, starts with acknowledging the participants' very own realities, knowledge and experiences. Through participatory

exercises and sharing in small and large group settings, participants are then gradually guided into a better understanding of the online realm and the risks and dangers that it contains. Parents are supported in developing appropriate strategies and responses to scenarios that are based on real-life experiences.

A key and ongoing focus of this workshop is that in dealing with online risks and dangers, is the trust relationship and good communication between children and their parents, which is a fundamentally important component of parenting, both 'offline' and 'online'.

notes to the facilitator

This workshop process has an important philosophical and pedagogical framing that is worth knowing. Fundamental to this is the **Paolo Freire** concept that people (and adults in particular) come to educational processes with their own knowledge and experience, not as “empty vessels” that need to be filled by an expert. When this knowledge and experience is surfaced, participants feel confident in themselves and open to learning new things. This also allows a particular type of group-learning to emerge. Each exercise in this manual therefore starts by drawing out what people already know. The facilitator’s role is then to introduce, or simply offer, new information, an alternative point of view, a range of other options or more depth to the discussion.

Pedagogical and Psychological approaches used by Alkimia in developing this curriculum

The following principles of adult learning are embedded in this curriculum:

- Adults are self-directed.
- They learn by doing.
- Build on what people already know from their own experiences.
- Theory should be relevant.
- Multisensory ways of learning are important.
- Adults learn well and self-efficacy is enhanced if they can practice new skills in a safe environment.
- Adults have an intrinsic desire for personal development.
- Involvement from participants is essential – sharing their own stories, experience, knowledge, and expertise as well as inviting feedback and consulting about pace and content.

The approach to learning is **constructionist** rather than **instructional**, which suggests that learning depends on what we already know: new ideas come as we change and adapt old ideas; and rather than the teaching of facts and figures, it involves the development of ideas.

Experiential Learning is learning through reflection and doing. This happens continuously in a workshop. People tell their experiences, reflect on what new insights they have gained and how they might do things differently, or not, in the future.

The **Person-centred** approach is fundamental to this workshop – all exercises stem from the experiences of participants and all theory goes back to questions like “What does this mean for me?” and “What, if anything, will I do differently now that I know this?”

The **Open-ended** approach is often employed – not all situations, case studies, role plays or questions have comprehensive answers provided. Complex problems are introduced and problem-solving skills are used to generate multiple solutions. Participants are invited to take away anything they deem useful from this process.

Relating Theory and Practice – bite size pieces of theory are dropped into sessions and participants are invited to debate the theory, say whether they think it applies to them, try it

out in the workshop and in their daily lives. **Case Studies or Scenarios** are an important approach that enable the practical application of learning and draw out concepts that participants recognize and already know.

Learning Conversations are continuously engaged in as participants share and reflect on learning and new insight in pairs and in groups. Facilitators are expected to engage in **Modelling** the concepts taught in the workshop.

Additionally, the manual draws from various Psychology-based approaches and traditions. **Client-centred Therapy** developed by Carl Rogers, posited that human beings are the experts on their own lives, that they have a deep capacity to heal themselves given the right environment – when they are held in a relationship of “positive regard”. **Narrative Therapy**, an approach founded by Michael White, encourages the telling of stories, as we make meaning of our lives through language. White emphasizes the belief that individuals have major skills, gifts and talents that can be used to creatively solve problems they confront if these can be surfaced through stories and actively brought to bear in their lives.

Brief Solutions Focused Therapy suggests that if people can gain some insight into their own lives, they are able to change their trajectory and this can make all the difference. **Positive Psychology** grew in reaction to the deficit model in psychology – that everyone needed to be “fixed”, with a neutral aim of moving towards being free of illness. Positive Psychology is preventative and involves lifestyle approaches and actions that bring more happiness and meaning. In particular, research on what builds resiliency is drawn on to design exercises and teach skills that are relevant.

A Note on the Manual

The workshop also has an arc (or a building process) that layers knowledge and concepts as people are ready for them. This assists participants to better integrate what they are learning into their own lives.

The facilitator manual may be slightly different to other training manuals as it is designed to capture workshop process. This means that it anticipates some of the important ideas that will emerge from the group at a particular moment, and makes the linkages to the next concept, providing a more seamless facilitator process. Pieces of information are layered and linked, forming connecting pieces of a puzzle. For this reason, the manual includes a suggested script for the facilitator that gives an idea of how an exercise should be introduced or concluded. However, it is expected that you, as facilitator, will deliver the gist of this in your own words. You are not expected to learn this off-by-heart or to read the scripted parts of the manual aloud to the group. The manual is designed to capture a nuanced and quite sophisticated process that can be delivered successfully by a facilitator with relatively minimal training. We know that simply giving people new information doesn’t necessarily change their behaviour. This particular approach is used because it enables participants to better integrate new information into their lives and, most importantly, they are more likely to do things differently. The impact of this approach is therefore greater than many typical training interventions.

A few practical things to know:

- Printing appears at the back of the manual.
- In session 4 there are 7 possible scenarios. As facilitator you are encouraged to choose 4 or 5 suitable scenarios for the particular group you are working with. If the group is not comfortable in English, it would be important to translate the scenarios and type them up for distribution to the groups ahead of the workshop
- Text that is in blue in the manual is a note for the facilitator.

Guidance on Workshop Delivery

The workshop can be conducted in a variety of modalities. It can be run over a 6 -7-hour day, or as individual sessions over four weeks. Also included in the manual is a once off 2.5-hour session that is contained and is suitable for a group that needs the most basic information but does not have the time for the full workshop. This may be suitable for a parent evening at a school, for instance.

Ideally, the workshop should be facilitated by two facilitators. Facilitators should have the basic skills needed to work with groups but they should also be warm, empathetic, non-judgemental and respectful. They also need a good deal of courage and confidence, and a sense of humour, to hold and challenge the group and individuals when they are stuck, resistant or conflict arises.

Group size should be no more than 24 participants. The venue should be big enough for the group and include sufficient empty wall space for activity posters and flipcharts.

If translation is needed in a group that does not share a common language, timing of sessions will be challenging. Simplification is necessary.

programme

Suggested programme for full day workshop:

time	session
08h00 – 08h30	arrival and welcome
08h30 – 10h00	session 1: diving deep
10h00 – 10h30	tea
10h30 – 12h00	session 2: ages and stages
12h00 – 13h00	session 3: dicing with danger
13h00 – 14h00	lunch
14h00 – 14h30	session 3: dicing with danger
14h30 – 16h00	session 4: sharing solutions
16h00 – 16h30	session 5: stepping up

Suggested programme for month-long workshop:

week	session
week 1	arrival and welcome
	session 1: diving deep
week 2	session 2: ages and stages
week 3	session 3: dicing with danger
week 4	session 4: sharing solutions
	session 5: stepping up

Note to the facilitator: There are two options for the running of this workshop. It can be run as an intensive over a full day or it can be run over the course of a month with one session being held per week.

When deciding on a day and time for the weekly sessions, ensure that parents will be available for all sessions.

room set-up

Set the room up well in advance and be ready to welcome each participant as they arrive.

Prepare the room with chairs in a circle. There should be no tables in front of the participants.



materials

- Notebooks (1 per participant)
- Pens
- Name tags
- Flipchart stand
- Flipchart paper
- Marker pens
- 1 block of post-it notes
- 3 boxes of oil pastels
- 1 ream A4 paper
- A4 coloured card

printing

Session	Printing	Number of Copies
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programme• Social media icons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 per participant• 1 copy
Session 2	None	
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The waiting dangers samples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 copy
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scenarios handout	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 copy
Session 5	None	
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents Booklet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 per participant

Note to the Facilitator: When printing single documents such as the social media icons, dangers samples or scenarios, ensure that they are printed single-sided.

session 1

diving deep

TIME: 1 hour 30 minutes

OUTCOMES:

By the end of this session we want parents to:

- Feel comfortable around one another and build an environment of trust and respect.
- Be familiar with all the current big social media platforms
- Share their expectations of the workshop
- Have a clear set of guidelines for working together
- Have an understanding of their own relationship with technology and social media

SKILLS

- Interpersonal relatedness
- Empathy
- Self-reflection

activity	time	materials
Introduction and Welcome	15 minutes	Name tags Markers
Getting to Know You	30 minutes	Social media icons Icon descriptions
What to Expect	10 minutes	'Expectations' label on a section of wall Post-it notes
Working Together, Learning Together	10 minutes	Flipchart labelled 'Group Guidelines'
Me, Myself and My Mobile Phone	25 minutes	Thinking Page 1 Art materials

Preparation: Read through the session the night before and make sure you understand the process of each activity and that you have the materials needed.

- Prepare a flipchart labelled 'Expectations'.
- Have laminated A4 sheets with social media icons and their explanations ready.
- Prepare a flipchart labelled 'Group Guidelines'.

1. Introduction and welcome (15 minutes)

- Welcome parents as they enter the room.
- Ask parents for their names and make sure you can pronounce them correctly.
- Invite parents to write their first name clearly on a name tag and choose a seat.
- When all the parents have arrived, introduce yourself and your co-facilitator.
- Ask participants which languages are in the room. Appreciate the diversity and make sure you take care of any possible needs for translation.
- Give a brief overview over the workshop as follows:

Thank you so much for joining us here today start a process of learning more about the online lives of our children, some of the dangers they may face and how we can help to protect them and strengthen our relationships with them.

Say: *During our time together, we will spend time*

- *Getting to know each other and the process we are about to embark on*
- *Delving into our own use of social media and the impact this has*
- *Looking at the developmental stages of our children*
- *Understanding the benefits and dangers our children face online from themselves and others*
- *Looking at the positives of technology and media*
- *Looking at how we can mitigate some of the dangers of online life through active parenting and building stronger relationships*
- *Thinking about how to put some of our new knowledge into action.*

Ask the participants if they have any questions.

2. Getting to Know You (30 minutes)

Step 1

Say: *In the interests of getting to know one another, we will do two quick rounds of introductions. In the first round, we will share our name and the names and ages of our children. In the second round we will dive into the world of social media.*

Start the group off by sharing your own name and the names and ages of your children. This may include stepchildren, grandchildren or godchildren. Make sure each parent shares.

Step 2

After this round of introductions, explain that you will now share some of the most popular social media icons.

Parents can indicate their familiarity with each icon by holding up their hands.

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| no hands | = | I have never heard of it |
| one hand | = | I know about it, but I don't use it |
| two hands | = | I have an account (or installed it), but only use it occasionally |

two hands + waving = I am a regular, passionate user of this social media platform

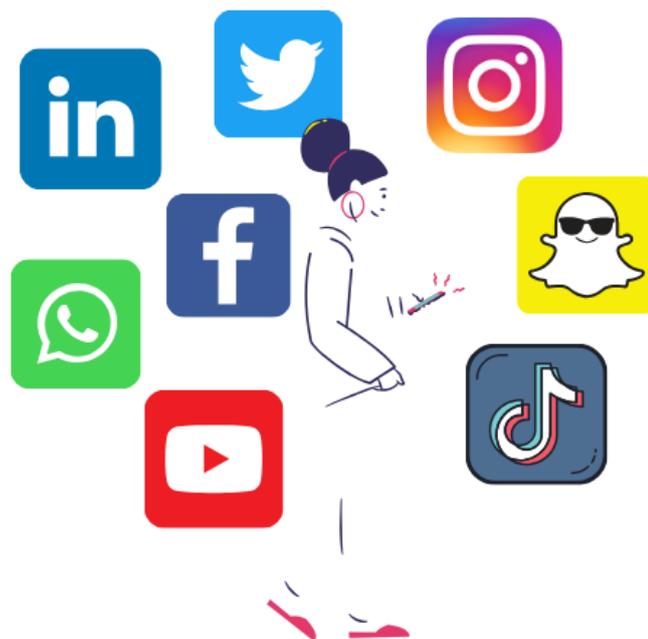
One by one, hold up the social media icons. Present each icon and ask parents to show their familiarity by waving their hands, or not! Throughout the activity, place icons on the floor in order of their popularity; the one parents are most familiar with should be at one end, with the platform parents are least familiar with at the other.

Step 3

Once you have done this, invite parents to stand up and take a look at all the icons. Start with the most popular one, and explain that people who would like to mention a BENEFIT (something positive) of the most popular social media platform should stand on the left side of the row, while those who would like to share a RISK or DANGER of this particular social media platform should stand on the right side.

Invite those on the left to share some of the benefits they have experienced on this platform. When they are done, invite those who stand on the right to mention some of the risks or dangers they are aware of when it comes to this specific platform.

Note to the Facilitator: This is a dynamic exercise so try to ensure that the sharing is brief and does not lead to discussions. This is merely an introductory exercise, and all details will be covered later in the process. This activity will give you valuable insights into where your participants are in terms of their existing knowledge and experience with social media as well as where some of their concerns might lie.



Step 4

Say: *Social media plays a huge role in our modern world. We use it to connect, learn new skills and so much more. Even if it is not a big part of our lives, it will be a central part of our children's lives and we can be the ones to guide them through this learning.*

Note to the facilitator: Below are some of the risks and dangers that we may face on each of the social media platforms we described.

Benefits and possible risks faced by children on social media platforms¹

Social media platform	Possible benefits	Possible risks
Facebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps children connect with friends, family and peers around the globe and stay connected online. • Children find opportunities i.e. scholarships, Internships etc. • Children can play games with peers. • News and entertainment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos of children uploaded online can easily catch the attention of sexual predators and make children a target for sexual exploitation. • Children can be stalked, harassed and bullied. • Children can be exposed to violent and sexual content. • Children's personal information can easily be accessible to strangers if their settings are not set to private. • Children can fall into online scams.
Instagram 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps children follow their interests i.e. interest in art, music etc. • Children can follow their role models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can be exposed to inappropriate pictures and videos. • Photos shared by children can attract sexual predators offering unrealistic opportunities i.e. promising to make the child famous, offering acting or modelling careers which often leads to sex trafficking.
YouTube 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access educational videos for school and other projects. • Children can learn a new skill. • Children can start their channel to share their views and skills with the world. • Learn a different language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can be exposed to inappropriate and self-harm content.
Twitter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic engagement- children can engage and air the voice on current affairs and issues affecting them and their society. • Children can easily tweet directly to leaders and influential people and engage them and their peers on issues affecting them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can be exposed to discriminatory remarks and hate speech. • Radicalization and Ideological persuasion. • Children can easily be exposed to sexual content, if the settings are

¹ This is based on various global reports on Child Online Protection

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can become global citizens 	not set to filter and block viewing of sexual content.
TikTok 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can showcase their skills i.e. singing, dancing, acting etc. • entertainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can easily be targeted by adults for sexual exploitation.
WhatsApp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can communicate and keeping in touch with friends, family and peers. • Children can share and receive information for school, sports and entertainment. • Directly share pictures and videos with their families and peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used for sexting and dissemination of child-produced indecent images. • Children can be bullied and harassed. • Children can be exposed to sexual and violent content. • Children can easily receive unwanted sexual material.
Snapchat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can share pictures and videos of themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can be targeted by adults for sexual exploitation

3. What to Expect (10 minutes)

Step 1

Say: *We have already looked at a broad overview of the workshop, but I would like to know what your specific expectations are for our time together to ensure that we do our best to meet them.*

Step 2

OPTION 1

Hand out a post-it-note to each parent and invite them to write one expectation they have for the workshop.

Invite parents to come up to the front of the room and read their expectation to the group before sticking it up on the 'Expectations' flipchart.

OPTION 2

If you are aware of literacy or language issues amongst the parents, simply invite parents to share their expectations with you verbally as you write them up on the flipchart.

Begin by sharing your own personal expectations for this workshop and ask the person next to you (either left or right) to continue. Make sure either yourself or your Co-Facilitator is capturing key words and expectations on the flipchart.

Note to the Facilitator: Ensure that all the parents use post-its **OR** all the parents share verbally in order to make everyone feel comfortable and catered to.

This is an opportunity to manage the participants' expectations. If any of the parents bring up expectations that we will not be able to meet within the parameters of this workshop, gently make them aware of this and explain that for any additional information they can come to you for direction. You can use the resource list at the end of the curriculum.

4. Working Together, Learning Together (10 minutes)

Step 1

Say: *As we discovered when did our social media activity, there are many different personalities in the room. Each of us has a history, things we love, things we dislike and things we are passionate about. But all of us love our children and that is why we are here. In order for us to learn from one another in a healthy, fun and constructive way, it is important that we create an environment that is free from judgement.*

Step 2

Invite participants to share things that they think will make this a safe space for them to share openly. Ensure that the list has the following:

- *Respect each person in this room*
- *Be kind*
- *Be thoughtful*
- *Share from your own experience*
- *Do not speak on behalf of others*
- *Be open and willing to participate*
- *Limit the use of technology*
- *Practice active listening*
- *Stay away from judging others harshly*
- *Use empathy to see others' point of view*
- *Discuss and share ideas, do not debate*

Step 3

Thank the parents for their inputs and explain that this list will be the constitution for our time together. Put it up somewhere where it is visible to all.

5. Me, Myself and My Mobile Phone (25 minutes)

Step 1

Say: *Now that we know each other a little better and have spent some time talking about different social media platforms, it is time to turn our attention inwards and look at our own relationship with technology.*

OPTION 1

Step 2

Explain to participants that they have 15 minutes to complete a thinking page.

Step 3

Hand out Thinking Page 1 to participants

Hand out pens and art materials to the participants. Invite them to draw or write their responses to the prompts on their thinking page.

Step 4

When the 15 minutes is up, bring the participants back into plenary.

Ask:

- *How was it, to think about your own use of technology? Was there anything that surprised you?*
- *What impact do you feel these devices have on your family life?*
- *To what extent do you feel that your own use of technology has prepared you to guide your children in their online lives?*

OPTION 2

Step 2

Where literacy or language may be an issue, explain that you would like to invite parents to reflect on their own journey with technology and social media. Ask them to sit comfortably and close their eyes if they feel comfortable doing so. Tell them that you are going to give them different situations to think about. They don't have to write anything down but simply explore the answers in their head.

Say the following in a loud, clear and calm voice. Make sure you pause to give participants enough time to imagine these situations.

- *Remember the time and circumstances under which you received or bought yourself your first cell phone or your first computer. What type of phone or computer was it?*
- *How did you feel when you first got this phone or computer?*
- *How many devices do you own at the moment? What type of devices are they? What do you use them for?*
- *How much time do you think you spend on your devices and in front of a screen per day? How many hours may that be in a whole week? Do you think this is a lot?*

Step 3

After sharing the last question, give participants a moment to think before asking everyone to come back 'into the room' with their awareness, and to open their eyes.

Step 4

Invite participants to briefly share some of their experiences.

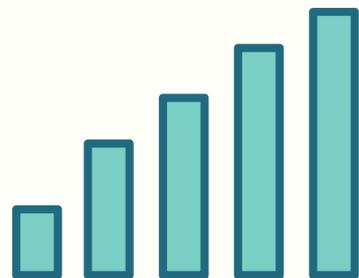


THINKING PAGE 1: ME AND SOCIAL MEDIA

WHEN DID YOU RECEIVE YOUR FIRST
CELLPHONE OR COMPUTER?

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF TECHNOLOGY
AT THE TIME? HOW DID IT MAKE YOU
FEEL?

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TECHNOLOGY
NOW?



HOW MANY ELECTRONIC DEVICES DO
YOU USE OR OWN AT THE MOMENT?

WHAT DO YOU USE THEM FOR?

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU THINK YOU
SPEND ON YOUR DEVICES PER DAY?



WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DO
YOU USE?

WHAT DO YOU USE THEM FOR?

WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE ON THESE
PLATFORMS BEEN LIKE?



Step 5

Say: *Modern life is complex, modern parenting even more so! We are having to navigate things with our children that nothing in our own lives could have prepared us for. For the rest of this day, we will spend time getting to know a bit more about this sometimes-alien world of technology and social media and I hope that by the end of this process, you feel excited to venture into online and offline life with your families.*

Later in the process, we will start to think about how we can set the example for our children at home through modelling positive behaviour with our devices and use of social media.

Note to the Facilitator: If you are running the workshop over a series of weeks, present the below questions to parents for them to think about and/or put into action before they see you again.

At home thinking:

1. What is your relationship with technology and social media right now?
2. How present is technology and social media in your home?
3. Is there anything you would want to change about how technology and social media are used in your home?
4. How could you change some small things in your own use of technology and social media to improve this?

session 2

ages and stages

TIME: 1 hour 30 minutes

OUTCOMES:

By the end of this session we want parents to:

- Understand the importance of building a relationship of trust with their child from the earliest years and how to do this. This is essential for negotiating and navigating technology in the adolescent years.
- Know the appropriate use of technology for children at various stages of development.
- Understand how a slow but steady exposure to technology as a child grows can have great benefits.
- Explore how exposure to technology too early can hamper a child's natural developmental processes.

SKILLS

- Relationship and trust building skills
- Setting boundaries around technology in the earlier years.

activity	time	materials
Introduction: When does childhood begin and end?	10 minutes	
Short visualization: Imagining a child that we know	10 minutes	
Group Work: The link between good, trusting relationships and appropriate technology	45 minutes	5 flipcharts on the wall Questions on flipchart stand Markers Prestik
Plenary Discussion: Technology and child development	25 minutes	

Preparation: Read through the session the night before and make sure you understand the process of each activity and that you have the materials needed.

Prepare 5 flipcharts with one of the following headings:

- Birth – 2 years
- Pre-schoolers: from 3 – 5 years
- The primary years: aged 6 – 12
- Early/middle adolescence: aged 13 - 15

- Late adolescence: aged 16 – 18

These should be pasted around the room before the session starts. Stick a marker with Prestik to the wall next to each flipchart for the group work.

Prepare a flipchart with the following questions:

- How do you build a relationship and develop trust with a child at this age?
- What technology is appropriate for this stage? Consider the devices, social media platforms as well as time spent on technology.
- What are the best ways you have discovered of managing your child’s screen time in this age group?

Note to the facilitator: The following table is reference material for you for this exercise.

AGE and STAGE	BUILDING a RELATIONSHIP	APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY
<p>0 – 2 years old</p> <p>Themes: safety and security & stimulating the senses</p>	<p>Babies and toddlers this age are fully dependent on adults for all their needs. If we respond to their needs for food, sleep, changing, reassurance and comfort when they are frightened or in pain, they learn to trust their caregivers. They need to be held, rocked, loved and increasingly stimulated by parents/caregivers. Have fun with your children at this age – blow bubbles on their tummies, tickle them and play games with them. Help them learn to sit up, roll over, crawl, walk and slowly learn new words. Talk to them in reassuring ways when they are small. They should not be allowed to cry unattended for long periods of time or they will stop trusting that parents/caregivers are there to support them.</p>	<p>No technology is appropriate at this stage. Don’t prop up babies in front of cartoons or screens of any kind – rather give them experiences that stimulate all the senses.</p>
<p>3 – 5 years</p> <p>Pre-schoolers</p> <p>Themes: Curiosity</p>	<p>Children are learning so much about how the world works and their bodies and brains are developing fast. Spend time with them helping them discover the world. Boundaries are set to keep them safe because they are exploring everything. They still need lots of cuddles, kisses and talking. Show them new things. Reward them with compliments for what they are learning. “What a big girl – you can feed yourself!” Talk to them non-stop as</p>	<p>Limit screen time to no more than an hour a day, preferably with parents watching. They can watch cartoons and play some of the age-appropriate games available on phones and online. Very close supervision needed.</p>

	they are expanding their language skills in the latter part of this time.	
<p>6 – 12 years The Primary Years</p> <p>Themes: Learning and Peer acceptance</p>	<p>Children start school and gain access to a wider community of peers and other families. Clear boundaries are needed and parents should support school learning and also after-school activities. Spend quality time with children doing the things they love, affirming them for all the new things they are learning and for who they are as people. While they are more and more exposed to life and people outside the family home at this age, they still need lots of physical love and attention.</p> <p>Good communication and conflict resolution skills are developing at this age, and it is important for you as parent to identify the difference between the child and the behaviour of the child. If your child steals something, rather don't call them a thief, but point out that s/he has stolen something and that this has certain consequences.</p>	<p>They will increasingly want access to phones and social media to connect with peers. They are very vulnerable online, so clear boundaries and regular monitoring needs to happen. Talk with them about the dangers to self and others. Avoid TV's and other devices in bedrooms. Try and set up access in a more public place in the house. Still limit screen time and keep monitoring and supervising. Have clear boundaries around "IT-clear zones" in the house – at the dinner table, at bedtime, when others are visiting etc</p>
<p>Age 13 – 15</p> <p>Theme: A time of change</p>	<p>Children in this age group start looking out towards the world for relationships and it is sometimes hard as parents to realise you are no longer the centre of their world! This is where the trust you developed with them in their early years starts to be very important as you need to trust them more as they move into the world and they need to trust that you have their best interests at heart when you have to set clear boundaries.</p> <p>This is also the age where you will have uncomfortable conversations with your kids about controversial topics, such as sexuality or the meaning of life. Take them and their questions seriously and acknowledge that they have their own viewpoints and ideas.</p> <p>Know that at this stage, children may rebel and be more difficult to handle, yet no matter what, always embrace them with love in your heart and mind.</p>	<p>Early adolescent children have a driving need to be "connected" on social media with peers and this is normal, but sometimes difficult to manage. They are often interested in brands in technology – having the "right" smart phone is important to them and they can be relentless in their nagging! Parents feel pressure to spend more than they can afford. Clear boundaries should be set around technology beyond bedtime and in "IT-free zones".</p>

	They go through intense hormonal changes, which can be really difficult for them. They still need physical love, your affirmation and regular praise, quality time and time doing things together like sport or church or walking, hiking and swimming together.	
Age 16 – 18 Theme: Making Decisions	In their late teens, the investment we put into building our relationship with our children in the early years, starts to return to us. They need a much lighter hand on boundaries, a lot of talking and listening, school assistance and help making decisions about the future. They need more freedom and yet a close “eye” on them as they encounter decision-making about important life decisions around sexuality, exposure to alcohol and drugs and as they test out relationships with the opposite sex, or maybe even the same sex. Be as loving, open-minded, non-judgmental and supportive to them finding their own path as possible. This is one of the greatest gifts you can give them. They still need regular hugs and a growing sense that you trust them to make good decisions, but also availability for conversation when they are uncertain or heading in the wrong direction.	If affordable, they would need a cell phone to connect with peers and you as they interact more socially outside the home. They often need access to the internet for learning if you can afford this. Laptops and I-pads are wonderful resources in their late high school years and are essential for tertiary study.

The information above was drawn from a number of sources over a number of years:

Berk, Laura *Child Development*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston 2003
Church, Patsy *Positive Parenting*, Lifeline/Childline, Namibia 2010
Semarak Kasih Malaysia Positive Parenting Programme Add-on Module *Digital Parenting*, UNICEF, 2019

1. Introduction: When does childhood begin and end? (10 minutes)

Say: *All of you are already parents, or perhaps you work with children and/or parents. Certainly, we have all grown up in homes and neighbourhoods where there are children at various stages of their development. In this session we will be talking about:*

- *How to build relationships and trust with children at various stages of their development and how this lays the ground for navigating with our child through adolescence.*
- *How we can introduce technology in appropriate, safe and healthy ways as children are ready for it.*



Ask: *Let's start by defining the boundaries of childhood. When does childhood begin and end?*

It starts when we are born and goes until puberty – between 11 and 15 years old. Following that we are in adolescence. Adolescence is the bridge that is supposed to help us move from childhood to adulthood. We consider adolescence to be over by about 18, and legally this is so. However, we will always remain our parents' children, no matter what.

2. Short Visualization: Imagining a Child that we Know (10 minutes)

Note to the facilitator: This is a short visualisation to enable participants to develop a picture of a child they know in order that they might engage more deeply with the next exercise, using the observations that have surfaced about the developmental stage of that child. Read the questions in a lower voice, and very slowly, giving participants time to build their imaginary pictures.

Say: *We are going to start with a quick 5-minute exercise using our imagination. Get comfortable in your chair. I want you to think about a child that you know very well right now. It could be your child or another child in your family, belonging to friends, or a child that you work with.*

Now close your eyes for a moment and hold a picture of that child in your head. I will ask you a few questions and you can use these to build a deeper picture of that child right now.

- *Picture their bodies and how they are growing and developing right now.*
- *What are they doing in their lives at the moment? Are they learning at school, playing at home, in their crib or cot or running around the garden?*
- *What is their personality like? Are they quiet and gentle, or busy and noisy, thoughtful and curious? Or are they grumpy and challenging teenagers right now?*
- *What are they learning? Speech, crawling, walking, how to write their name or do Algebra at school?*
- *What do they love to do? Sports, hobbies, interests...*
- *Who are the important people in their lives, such as friends they like to hang out with?*
- *How are they special for you?*
- *How have you built a relationship with that child over the years?*
- *How have you developed trust?*

Say: *When you are ready, open your eyes but keep holding the picture of the child in your head and take it with you into the next exercise.*

3. Group Work: The link between good trusting relationships and appropriate technology (45 minutes)

Step 1

Say: *Notice that there are 5 posters around the wall. Each one represents a different stage of growth and development:*

- The first is Infants – from birth until 2 years old.
- The second is pre-schoolers – from 3 – 5
- Children aged 6 – 12 (the primary years)
- Early adolescence aged 13 - 15
- Late adolescence 16 – 18





Step 2

Ask everyone to choose one of these age groups based on the age of the child they know and have just imagined, and they should move towards the flipchart for that age group. If there are too many people in one group, ask some members to move to another (maybe neighbouring) group for this exercise. You could make it easier for people to move into another group by inviting them to imagine their child some years ago or how it will be when their child grows.

Step 3

Give instructions: *As you stand at your posters, let me explain what your task is.*

Together with your group you will discuss and then answer these questions on the flipchart:

- How do you build a relationship and develop trust with a child at this age?
- What technology is appropriate for this stage? Consider the devices, social media platforms as well as time spent on technology.
- What are the best ways you have discovered of managing your child's screen time and use of devices in this age group?

Tell groups that at least one person per group should be ready to briefly report back at the end of the discussion. Give groups 10-15 minutes to complete this exercise. Walk around as groups are busy to assist where needed by clarifying the tasks, and to also check how fast the different groups are and when it's time to bring everyone together again.

Step 4

Feedback from the groups will take place in two rounds, each round starting with the infant-group, and then moving age-group by age-group.

The **first round** of feedback will only focus on:

What helps parents build trust and relationship with children of this age?

The **second round** of feedback will only focus on:

What technology is appropriate at this age, and what are good ways of managing children's screen time and use of devices at this age?

Other participants from the same or other groups should feel free to add to what the group's representative has said if they think something important is missing. Finally, the facilitator should offer any other information in the table provided that has not surfaced.

4. Plenary Discussion: Technology and Child Development (25 minutes)

Bring the group together again in the circle and lead a discussion using the following questions:

Ask: *Was there anything interesting that you learnt about relationship building for the various development stages in this exercise?*

Ask: *Do you all agree with the technology appropriate in each age and stage? If not, please share your thoughts with us.*

Ask: *What benefits can children have from technology?*

- They can LEARN so much from the net, good TV shows and documentaries. There are free learning opportunities for almost anything we wish to study online.
- They are socially connected with peers and this is very important when they reach the teenage years.
- There is opportunity for self-expression and sharing of ideas on social media.

Ask: *If we give children unlimited access to technology, how can this impact on their physical, social and emotional and their brain (cognitive) development?*

- Physical – can stop their physical growth, co-ordination and balance, impact posture, stop them sleeping properly, cause weight gain etc
- Social and emotional – stops them building friendships and relationships offline and learning all the social skills they need for life. Too much screen time can cause addiction and depression. Stops offline activities and turns to technology- they detach from the offline world.
- Brain development – children’s brains need lots of stimulating experiences that technology doesn’t give them – they need to use their bodies, their 5 senses (taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing), their imagination through play with the most basic toys and through building relationships with others.

Say: *One of the myths that many people believe is that early exposure to technology helps our child get ahead and be on top of technology for the rest of their lives. Children learn quickly and are very motivated to learn on technology. Giving them access too early in fact holds their development back, but given at the right time, and with clear boundaries, can help them be connected and learn many new things.*

Ask: *Is there any good idea you heard from this exercise that will help you manage your child and technology better?*

Summarise: *It is clear that children’s access to technology should grow as they grow older. Managing technology as a parent becomes more and more difficult the older a child becomes. You are unable to control every move of a teenager on technology, and you want to be able to trust them to be responsible on social media and on the net. If you have established a strong relationship with your child early on, it is easier to trust them later and to communicate your concerns (and for them to trust your judgement). Relationships are a little like a bank*

account. The more you “deposit” into the relationship at the start, the more you can “withdraw” or, in this case, the more you can expect from children. Negotiation is easier when the relationship is strong.

session 3

dicing with danger

TIME: 1 hour 30 minutes

OUTCOMES:

By the end of this session we want parents to:

- Be aware of the dangers their children face online.
- Identify their primary concerns for their own children online.
- Strategies methods of mitigating these dangers by guiding their children towards positive online communities.

SKILLS

- Identifying primary areas of concern.
- Informal risk assessment.
- Managing online safety.

activity	time	materials
Our Worries	15 minutes	
The Waiting Dangers	40 minutes	Flipchart and markers Danger samples
The Dangers on My List	25 minutes	Thinking Page 2: The Dangers on My List
Seeing the Light	10 minutes	Safety infographic

Preparation: Read through the session the night before and make sure you understand the process of each activity and that you have the materials needed.

Prepare a flipchart with the following questions:

- *What does this mean?*
- *What is the potential impact?*

1. Our Worries (15 minutes)

Say: *We are all aware that there are dangers out in the world that our children will have to face and navigate.*

Ask:

- *What are you most worried about for your children when it comes to technology and online life?*
- *For you, what aspects of technology and online life are the most difficult to understand or connect with?*
- *What is it like, trying to navigate this with your children?*

Say: *There is so much pressure to be the perfect parent and to always be on top of everything, but we know that although we do our best, this is not always possible. Many of us are in the same boat and it is refreshing to share our concerns and figure this out, together.*

2. The Waiting Dangers (40 minutes)

Step 1

Ask: *What dangers do you think children face from technology and social media?*

List parent's responses on a flipchart. Make sure the list includes

- Exposure to pornography
- Exposure to violent content
- Exposure to self-harm content
- Unfiltered search engines
- Harmful political and social messaging
- Social media addiction
- Technology/gaming addiction
- Negative news overload
- Jealousy and social pressure
- Cyber bullying
- Grooming by sexual predators
- Online scams
- Sexting
- Revenge porn
- Sextortion



Step 2

Say: *These risks can be divided into 5 categories:*

- *Child sexual abuse*
- *Inappropriate content*
- *Inappropriate conduct*
- *Inappropriate contact and*

- *Commerce and addiction*

Our main focus is learning to identify and stop child online sexual exploitation and abuse. It will be helpful for us to learn a little bit more about each of these categories, so we are going to do some brainstorming in small groups.

Split the participants into 6 groups and give a sample of dangers to each group. Invite the group to spend 20 minutes discussing each danger on their list in more detail using the following questions:

- *What does this mean?*
- *What is the potential impact?*

Step 3

Once the 20 minutes is up, invite each group to present their thinking and receive feedback and input from other groups. Add in any information they may have missed and be prepared to share resources for further support with parents.

Lifeline/Childline 106/116 are toll free numbers that parents and children can call to receive guidance and help from trained counsellors.

1. exposure to pornography

Pornography is any photograph, video, audio or writing that shows sexually explicit scenarios. Pornography can be very harmful to both older and younger children and can leave them with harmful ideas about sex.

grooming by sexual predators

Online grooming is the process of building a relationship with a child through the use of the Internet or other digital technologies to make online or offline sexual contact with that child.

2. harmful political and social messaging

Some websites target young people who are vulnerable to harmful messaging and recruit them to causes such as hate groups, groups that promote anorexia and more.

negative news overload

Being exposed to overwhelming negative news from around the world can have a negative impact on emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

3. social media addiction

People are increasingly living their lives online and social media can become addictive. An addiction means that you are dependent on something and cannot stay for long without it.

technology/gaming addiction

Technology and gaming addictions badly affect the social, emotional and cognitive development of children and young people. It can also have negative physical impacts such as carpal tunnel and problems with posture. Another risk faced in gaming is online grooming, sextortion and live streaming.

4. jealousy and social pressure

Social media exposes us to the best parts of other people's lives and creates unrealistic pictures of what life is like. Seeing people with the 'perfect' body or lifestyle on social media can lead to negative social comparison, jealousy and submitting to social pressure.

cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when one or more people bully a person or group of people publicly on social media or privately through direct messaging. This bullying takes many different forms and can be seen in the form of videos, "pranks", memes, pictures or hateful messages.

5. online scams

Scammers are people who use technology to illegally obtain money or information. Children are especially vulnerable to this.

unfiltered search engines

This is when your search engines, such as Google, have no restrictions placed on them. If search engines are fortified with parental controls, a child will not be referred to material that is inappropriate for them.

6. sexting

Sexting means using your phone, computer, or camera to take or send sexy messages or images. Sexting can cause serious problems whether you send them or share them. The pictures may be posted online, where people like your family, teachers, and friends can see them. Sharing these pictures or messages without permission is a serious violation of privacy and isn't ok. And if the pictures you send or share are of someone under 18 (even if that's you), you could even be arrested for child pornography, which is a serious crime.²

revenge porn and sextortion

A sex tape is a video made of any sexual act. Sex tapes or nude photographs will always have the potential to be leaked publicly and this can have huge negative impacts on social life, mental and emotional health and even for future job prospects. Sextortion is the threat made by others to release this material and to coerce the victim into further acts, to silence them and prevent them from reporting these crimes or for financial gain.³

Note to the Facilitator: It will be important to continue to remind parents that when these things happen, it is not their fault nor the fault of their child. When a child approaches us, it is important that we remain calm and supportive.⁴

² <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/bullying-safety-privacy/all-about-sexting>

³ <https://parentinfo.org/article/what-parents-need-to-know-about-the-online-blackmail-known-as-sextortion>

⁴ <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyiving/trauma-and-children-tips-for-parents>

3. The Dangers on My List (25 minutes)

Step 1

Say: *It can be really overwhelming to talk about some of the dangers in this way, but information is also power. Now we will spend some time thinking very specifically about our own children and the particular risks we think they may face.*



Hand out Thinking Page 2 and make writing and art materials available. Parents have 15 minutes to make a start of this and can complete their thinking at home.

Step 2

When the 15 minutes is up, split parents into pairs. In their pairs, parents should share about some of the specific concerns that came to light for them while doing the Thinking Page. Each participant has 5 minutes to share.

4. Seeing the Light (10 minutes)



Say: *After doing these activities, it is difficult to see anything except danger online. In the world we live in today, we know that the online world and technology is going to form a big part of our children's lives. The good news is, that there are also many positives to technology and the internet.*

When used in a healthy way, it is the great equaliser when it comes to education and poverty eradication. It is a source of support, community, connection and learning and as parents, we can guide our children towards this positive, constructive and fulfilling side of the internet.

In our next session, we are going to look at building and sharing solutions so that we can tackle these dangers head on.

Invite each participant to share one word for how they are feeling.



ONLINE SAFETY



FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

1

Interact: Rather than blocking access, help your child learn to use tech safely and positively.

2

Be open minded: Take an interest in your child's favourite apps and websites.

3

Connect: Nourish trust and practice open communication with your child.

4

Build consensus: Create a family agreement for tech free zones such as cars, bedrooms and meal times.

5

Learn: Explore apps and websites that can help to keep your child safe online. Check the age restrictions for social media platforms.

6

Educate: Teach your child which personal information they should not share online.

7

Support: Help your child learn to tell the difference between fact and fiction.

8

Be clear: Set healthy boundaries and balance screen time and green time at home.

9

Collaborate: Talk with other parents about your children's health and safety online.

session 4

sharing solutions

TIME: 1 hour 30 minutes

OUTCOMES:

By the end of this session we want parents to:

- Learn from real life scenarios and share tips.
- Understand how to respond to their child as a victim and perpetrator of cyber bullying.
- Consider when and how to involve the school around cyber bullying.
- Understand online security issues.
- Think about how they might communicate with others who supervise or host their children around IT exposure and security issues.
- Know where children (and adult children!) can receive help, support and counselling.
- Start working on an age differentiated family media plan.

SKILLS

- Self-awareness
- Negotiating skills

activity	time	materials
Discussion: Reflection on Dangers	15 minutes	Flipchart and markers
Group Work: Dealing with challenging scenarios	45 minutes	Scenarios handout
Personal Reflection: Creating a family media plan	30 minutes	Pen and paper

Preparation: Read through the session the night before and make sure you understand the process of each activity and that you have the materials needed.

Make a copy of the Scenario's handout (see end of session) and cut out each scenario – 1 per group.

Note to the Facilitator: the following scenarios are real incidents that happened in Namibia and South Africa. You should choose only 5 from the 7 that are included in the manual. Make your choice based on the local context and the scenarios that are likely to be most relevant.

Each scenario chosen should be given to a group and each group needs to come up with suggestions for next steps for the parent. In blue below each scenario are a few possible

action steps the parent might take. **This should only be shared with the group as additional information if the group is unable to come up with clear and viable options themselves.**

If you are working with a group that is not comfortable in English, it will be well worth translating these scenarios into their local language and typing them up for this exercise.

Scenario 1: Credit card access for online purchase

You discover your 9-year-old son and his 11-year-old cousin have used your credit card to buy an online game. In addition, the game they purchased is gambling game for adults.

- It would be important to explain to the children why this action is unacceptable.
- Explain why it is important to never share credit card and other personal information online and why they shouldn't.
- Speak about privacy and security online.
- Speak about age appropriate games and risks associated with gaming i.e. inappropriate contact and content through gaming.
- Possibly, depending on the situation, the parent of the 11-year-old would need to be contacted.
- The parent would need to contact the gaming people and explain the situation to stop the payment.
- The parent would need to change all passwords and privacy settings on bank cards and technology.

Scenario 2: Cyberbullying

Your 13-year-old daughter has been unusually withdrawn and sullen. After an outburst at a meal over a petty issue, she runs from the dining room in tears and shuts herself in her bedroom. You follow and find her crying in a desperate heap. She finally tells you that an awful photo of her kissing a boy at the Grade 7 end-of-year party has been doing the rounds on social media. The terrible thing is that she never kissed that boy – in fact he is a “real nerd” - and wouldn't dream of kissing any girl. She finally tells you that she has recently been excluded from the “cool” girl group and that these girls photoshopped two photos to make it look like she was kissing the boy. All the boys in her class and the “cool” girls have been teasing her at school and she has been sitting alone at break for the last 10 days.

- Reassure the child this is not her fault.
- The child may need to access counselling at school or from an organization like Lifeline/Childline.
- Ideally this would be a situation where the parent involves the school.
- Discussion with your child about the best way to do this would be critical with regard to who to approach.
- Understand that the child will be anxious that any intervention and involvement at school might make the situation worse. Finding out what route feels safe to the child would be important. Ideally this should be dealt with by a school counsellor.
- The school would need to ensure the picture comes down and should involve the other parents in discussion and mediation.
- Assist the child to think about how they might connect with other children at school not a part of this group.

Scenario 3: Others permitting excessive TV exposure

You work long hours in a demanding job. Your 2-year-old and 4-year-old stay home with a young family member who helps take care of the kids. Your friend pops over to collect something at the house and gives you a call. She is concerned that the kids were like “zombies”, watching inappropriate TV shows. You talk to your 4-year-old and discover that the two children are allowed to watch TV from when the eldest comes home from creche at 12 noon until just before you arrive home at 6pm. This explains their difficult behaviour in the evenings.

- It would be important that all people who deal with your child are aware of how you wish your children to engage with technology when they are in their care. This may include Granny! Discuss what TV shows are age-appropriate and also the negative effects of too much television and the importance of managing screen time.

Scenario 4: Social Inclusion through IT

Your daughter in grade 8 volunteered to help at the senior Valentine dance at school. She is in charge of drinks in a dark spot outside the school hall. She ends up having to use her cell phone to see what drinks she is handing out. Towards the end of the evening, she drops her Christmas gift – her first smart phone – into the big bath of water holding the drinks. She is absolutely heart broken. You explain that you cannot afford another cell like that in February. She tries everything to persuade you to buy her a new one – she nags, she threatens, she cries and life at home becomes very unpleasant. You eventually sit her down and chat to her. She explains that not having a phone keeps her away from all social interaction between her friends. She feels isolated, lonely and is experiencing terrible “FOMO”, a fear of missing out.

- Essentially this was an accident.
- Be empathetic to your child and their strong need at this age to connect with peers.
- It is important to remember that children will gain access to technology even if they haven't got their own phone or laptop.
- Try to find solutions that are affordable, like the purchase of a second-hand phone to keep the connections going for the child.

Scenario 5: Online Grooming

You don't have a computer in your home so your son, who is 10, looks for every opportunity to go and play computer games next door. One day he mentions that he and his friend are going to get a cell phone from a man they have been talking to online who lives in Swakopmund. The man has promised them gifts of cell phones if they meet him the next time he visits Windhoek. He wants a photo of your son now and your son asks you to take the photo on your cell phone. The man told him to just be wearing his PE shorts and no t-shirt.

- This needs a serious response.
- Share this information with your neighbor and see if they would like to be involved in taking it further to the police.
- Contact Lifeline/ChildLine on their toll-free numbers 106 or 116 for advice, support and counselling for your child if necessary.
- Talk with your child about the dangers of online interactions, what is appropriate behaviour online and what information may not be shared with others.
- Explain how a paedophile will befriend them to build relationships with children and their friends. Also explain how grooming can happen through online games.

- Explain that they should not accept gifts from people online or meet people in person that they have only met online.
- Talk about the risks associated with sharing pictures (and particularly intimate pictures) online.
- Encourage your child to keep talking with you about any concerns they may have about their “digital life”.
- Discuss with your neighbor about on-going protection and supervision for both your children. If you are not able to reach an agreement or understanding, you may need to reconsider your child going next door.

Scenario 6: Cyberbullying

Over the weekend, your 16-year-old daughter opens up to you and tells you that she is being bullied by some of her female classmates who she thought were her friends. For the last 3 weeks, they have been accusing her of stealing their boyfriends. She is friends with several of the boys but in fact, she says, she doesn't even have a boyfriend yet and isn't interested in dating. On top of verbal bullying of her at school, the girls have created a Facebook page where they have been uploading pictures as if they were her, and saying nasty things. Now, students from other grades who she doesn't even know are talking about her and life at school feels unbearable.

- Empathise deeply with your daughter – this is a traumatic thing to happen.
- It would be important to engage the school on this matter as soon as possible and to see if a school counsellor could be involved in providing support and counselling to your child and mediating with and disciplining the “bullies”.
- If you do not have a response at the level of teachers and/or counsellors, it would be important to take the matter to the principal.
- If counselling is not available through your daughter's school, arrange for her to talk to a counsellor at Lifeline/Childline by calling 106 or 116.

Scenario 7: Perpetrator and Victim!

You notice that over the last few weeks, your 12-year-old son has been behaving differently. He has been quieter than usual and seems withdrawn. You decide to deliberately spend some time with him and invite him for a walk where the two of you can have some time to talk without being disturbed by others. It is during this walk that he confesses to you that he has written nasty, disrespectful and hurtful words about one of the most popular girls at school, on Facebook. He said he was dared to do it in order to join the group of popular boys at school. At first, he had thought that these boys were really cool and he desperately wanted to be friends with them. He felt that he was willing to do anything to be accepted by them but now he feels guilty and ashamed for hurting the girl who he doesn't even know very well. He is angry and disappointed with himself because he never thought he would hurt someone in that way.

- Your empathy and compassion in this situation is very important. Shame is a difficult emotion for a child to process.
- Essentially he has been a victim of peer pressure and in a way, bullying, by the “popular boys” and at the same time has become a perpetrator of bullying of the girl.
- Speak to him about being responsible and respecting others online.

- You will need to help him work through his options on how to begin to repair the situation. For instance, to help him to apologise to the girl. He may also have to talk to her parents and a teacher or the principal at his school.
- Involvement of an understanding school counsellor would be very useful because the situation involves other children at school. Not involving the school risks the chance that your son is reported to the school by the girl and/or her parents and he is then treated only as a bully, whereas the situation is more complex than this, so talking to the school first may well be to his advantage.
- Prepare him for possible consequences at school. It may not be comfortable for him, but it's a sign of maturity that he takes responsibility for his actions. Don't forget to acknowledge that. Just because he did something wrong or harmful does not mean he is a bad person.
- Encourage him and make sure he is sufficiently self-confident in himself in future.
- If you feel unable to help your son through this, consider outside counselling from a professional or through Lifeline/Childline by calling 106 or 116.

Prepare a flipchart:

Developing a Family Media Plan

- *Say when devices (phones, laptops) can be used.*
- *Say where these can be used.*
- *Write up internet safety rules like keeping personal information private.*
- *Say which programmes (and apps) children can or can't watch and the amount of time they can spend in front of screens.*



- *For Teens and pre-teens say how they can respond to cyber bullying (of themselves and of others).*
- *The plan is about being respectful to each other in the house.*
- *Different children would have different arrangements, depending on age.*



Inspiration for the Family Media Plan:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>

1. Reflection on dangers (15 minutes)

Say: *Last session was quite a challenging one for us all when we realized how many dangers are out there on the net for our children.*

Ask: *How did you feel?*

Ask: *What impact does the way you feel have at home?*

Note to the Facilitator: It would be useful to surface the constant anxieties experienced by parents around these issues and how little preparation they have had for how to deal with digital parenting. Poor boundaries for technology in homes creates daily conflict between parents and children and sometimes between parents and partners. This is exhausting. Be empathetic.

Say: *In this session we are going to get more practical in how we can deal better with the dangers and restore a little peace into our homes!*

2. Dealing with challenging scenarios (45 minutes)

Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5. Explain that you will be giving out a short parenting scenario to each group. The group should imagine they are the parent in the situation and come up with next steps or solutions on how best to respond or intervene. Give them 10 minutes for this discussion.

During the feedback from the groups, start writing up a list of “Tips for Parents” that emerge from the scenarios so that they become shared collective learning.

Add any ideas from the list below if they don’t emerge from the group in the discussion:

Tips for Digital Parenting

- Build trust and a loving relationship with your child from an early age. Online safety starts with offline parenting.
- Talk with children about what is and isn’t affordable in the family but also leave space for your child to approach you about what they want and need to engage socially.
- Talk to all the people who look after your children about how you would like technology to be handled (Granny, domestic workers and other family).
- Keep all passwords for your bank cards and digital devices confidential.
- Build a good relationship with the principal and teachers at the school in case you ever need to liaise with anyone there. Finding yourself an “ally” – an understanding teacher or school counsellor will help you resolve a range of issues that may crop up for your child.
- Be empathic to children as they navigate the “social” aspects of technology and make mistakes.
- Talk with parents in the homes your child visits (and whose children visit you) to agree on how supervision of devices could happen.

- Know where you can go if you feel your child is being preyed upon or “groomed” by an online stranger.
- Be prepared to take action when you do discover something dangerous for your child and others.
- Managing technology with your child means regular conversations and re-negotiation as they grow.
- Talk with your children about the dangers they might encounter.
- Use opportunities like TV shows and awareness building of organisations like ChildLine to raise issues of safety online.
- Teach your child to be careful with personal information.
- Be a good role model of gadget use for your children.
- Create a family media plan with your children. This needs to be regularly revised.
- Keep on working at your relationship with your child as they grow and develop. This is the foundation for successful digital parenting.



3. Personal Reflection: Creating a Family Media Plan (30 minutes)

Say: *Creating a family media plan with your children can really help set clear boundaries and expectations. This avoids you having to make decisions every day about what is and isn't okay, and the child knows where these boundaries are. It should be written down and pasted somewhere public where everyone can refer to it – including the other people who look after your child. It should be a living document, which means that it needs to be re-visited and re-negotiated regularly as your child grows up. The idea is that by the time they are 17 and 18 they can manage their own use of media.*



A family media plan can include:

- *Agreements for social media and internet use*
- *Identifying “screen-free” areas in the house like the dining room table during meals, bedrooms after bedtime etc. This is to ensure that there is time that is free of the intrusion of technology to build relationship, communicate as a family etc. Also ensures that children are not groomed or lured into taking sexual images in bedrooms or bathrooms.*
- *Internet safety rules like keeping personal information private. This ensures that everyone in the house is “on the same page” with regard to general safety rules around information and who has access to that information.*

- *Specific programmes (and apps) children can or can't watch and the amount of time they can spend in front of screens. This provides an opportunity to identify age appropriate programmes suitable for each child in the house. Everyone knowing what these are reduces ongoing policing from parents and conflict in the household.*
- *For teens and pre-teens, a plan for responding to cyber bullying aimed at themselves or when they see others being on the receiving end. It is important that children can identify cyber bullying and when they or others are the victims of it, as well as have an avenue to discuss it with a parent.*
- *It should generally be framed around respect for each other in the household. Again, this is to develop a common understanding and reduce constant policing by parents, which can impact on the parent's relationship with the child.*
- *Different children would have different arrangements, depending on age. A child's development stage should frame decisions about what constitutes suitable IT access, TV programmes etc.*



Step 1

Give participants 10 minutes to start the thinking around this process.

Note to the facilitator: If two parents are on the course, they can do this together, otherwise it should be an individual task. They do not need to complete it, but just start the thinking around it as it is best done together with the children in their home. If children are a part of the process, they will own it better and are more likely to stick to it than if the parent just enforces it. There should be some negotiation between parent and child around it. Otherwise it risks becoming an additional thing to wrangle about!

Step 2

Then ask participants to share their thoughts with another person. They have a further 10 minutes for this.

Step 3

In plenary,

Say: *What you have done today is to start thinking about the process of introducing a media plan to your family. It is important that you do it together with your children and partner so that everyone buys in to it. If there is no buy-in, it will be the source of additional conflict rather than a support.*

Ask: *How will you get buy-in from your partner and your children?*

It would be important for them to see the benefits – that it will make the use of technology clear and fair for everyone. That it will change over time. It would be important for you to get your partner on board up-front because you can then be a united front.

session 5

stepping up

TIME: 30 minutes

OUTCOMES:

By the end of this session we want parents to:

- Have clear take aways and surface what they have learned.
- Provide workshop feedback.
- Give a positive affirmation to another participant.

SKILLS

- Self-reflection
- Feedback skills

activity	time	materials
What are we learning?	10 minutes	Coloured A4 cards, markers and Prestik
Feedback	10 minutes	Feedback form
Acknowledging others	10 minutes	

Preparation: Read through the session the night before and make sure you understand the process of each activity and that you have the materials needed.

Write a colourful A4 sign and stick it on an open wall:



1. What are we learning? (10 minutes)

Say: *Our workshop is now coming to an end. There is so much that has been shared and learnt in this group. Thank you for your honesty. This is challenging territory, and it is comforting to know that we are all in this together.*



I am going to give you a marker and a piece of coloured card. Please sit for a few minutes and reflect on what your greatest learnings have been and what you will take away from this workshop. It may be something from the content, but also from the experiences shared by others in this group. You are welcome to write 1 – 3 things on this flipchart that you plan to implement at home.

Give participants 3 or 4 minutes to do this and then ask them to come up and read it out and paste it under the “What are we learning?” poster on the wall.

2. Feedback (10 minutes)

Distribute the feedback form and give the group time to complete it. Say that it can be anonymous, or people can choose to write their names on it.

Collect the forms afterwards.

3. Acknowledging Others (10 minutes)

Say: *Now look around the circle and see who the person is sitting on your right. For a moment, think about what this person has brought to the group – it might have been particular knowledge, a good sense of humour, a quiet gentleness, a male perspective, loads of experience parenting etc. This should be shared in one line only – no long stories please!*

Start with the person on your right, and give them short, positive feedback. Allow each participant to do the same.

Thank participants for their willingness to engage with this topic.

Encourage them to stay in touch with each other and to support each other in this ever-shifting landscape of digital parenting.

stand-alone session: dicing with danger



room set-up

Set the room up well in advance and be ready to welcome each participant as they arrive.

Prepare the room with chairs in a circle. There should be no tables in front of the participants.



materials

- Notebooks (1 per participant)
- Pens
- Name tags
- Flipchart stand
- Flipchart paper
- Marker pens
- Oil pastels
- A4 paper
- A4 coloured card

printing

- Social media icons
- Danger samples

stand-alone session: dicing with danger

TIME: 2 hours 10 minutes

OUTCOMES:

By the end of this session we want parents to:

- Be familiar with all the current big social media platforms
- Be aware of the dangers their children face online.
- Identify their primary concerns for their own children online.
- Strategies methods of mitigating these dangers by guiding their children towards positive online communities.
- Learn from real life scenarios and share tips.
- Understand how to respond to their child as a victim and perpetrator of cyber bullying.

SKILLS

- Identifying primary areas of concern.
- Informal risk assessment.
- Managing online safety.

activity	time	materials
Activity: Welcome and Introduction	n/a	Name tags Markers
Activity: Getting to Know You	15 minutes	Social media icons Icon descriptions
Discussion: Our Worries	10 minutes	
Activity: The Waiting Dangers	40 minutes	Flipchart and markers Danger samples
Group Work: Dealing with Challenging Scenarios	40 minutes	Scenarios handout
Personal Reflection: Creating a Family Media Plan	15 minutes	Pen and paper
Closure: Seeing the Light	10 minutes	

Preparation: Read through the session the night before and make sure you understand the process of each activity and that you have the materials needed.

Prepare a flipchart with the following questions:

- *What does this mean?*
- *What is the potential impact?*

Make a copy of the Scenarios handout (see end of session) and cut out each scenario – 1 per group.

Note to the facilitator: the following scenarios are real incidents that happened in Namibia and South Africa. You should choose only 5 from the 7 that are included in the manual. Make your choice based on the local context and the scenarios that are likely to be most relevant.

Each scenario chosen should be given to a group and each group needs to come up with suggestions for next steps for the parent. In blue below each scenario are a few possible action steps the parent might take. **This should only be shared with the group as additional information if the group is unable to come up with clear and viable options themselves.**

If you are working with a group that is not comfortable in English, it will be well worth translating these scenarios into their local language and typing them up for this exercise.

Scenario 1: Credit card access for online purchase

You discover your 9-year-old son and his 11-year-old cousin have used your credit card to buy an online game. In addition, the game they purchased is gambling game for adults.

- It would be important to explain to the children why this action is unacceptable.
- Explain why it is important to never share credit card and other personal information online and why they shouldn't.
- Speak about privacy and security online.
- Speak about age appropriate games and risks associated with gaming i.e. inappropriate contact and content through gaming.
- Possibly, depending on the situation, the parent of the 11-year-old would need to be contacted.
- The parent would need to contact the gaming people and explain the situation to stop the payment.
- The parent would need to change all passwords and privacy settings on bank cards and technology.

Scenario 2: Cyberbullying

Your 13-year-old daughter has been unusually withdrawn and sullen. After an outburst at a meal over a petty issue, she runs from the dining room in tears and shuts herself in her bedroom. You follow and find her crying in a desperate heap. She finally tells you that an awful photo of her kissing a boy at the Grade 7 end-of-year party has been doing the rounds on social media. The terrible thing is that she never kissed that boy – in fact he is a “real nerd” - and wouldn't dream of kissing any girl. She finally tells you that she has recently been excluded from the “cool” girl group and that these girls photoshopped two photos to make it look like she was kissing the boy. All the boys in her class and the “cool” girls have been teasing her at school and she has been sitting alone at break for the last 10 days.

- Reassure the child this is not her fault.
- The child may need to access counselling at school or from an organization like Lifeline/Childline.
- Ideally this would be a situation where the parent involves the school.

- Discussion with your child about the best way to do this would be critical with regard to who to approach.
- Understand that the child will be anxious that any intervention and involvement at school might make the situation worse. Finding out what route feels safe to the child would be important. Ideally this should be dealt with by a school counsellor.
- The school would need to ensure the picture comes down and should involve the other parents in discussion and mediation.
- Assist the child to think about how they might connect with other children at school not a part of this group.

Scenario 3: Others permitting excessive TV exposure

You work long hours in a demanding job. Your 2-year-old and 4-year-old stay home with a young family member who helps take care of the kids. Your friend pops over to collect something at the house and gives you a call. She is concerned that the kids were like “zombies”, watching inappropriate TV shows. You talk to your 4-year-old and discover that the two children are allowed to watch TV from when the eldest comes home from creche at 12 noon until just before you arrive home at 6pm. This explains their difficult behaviour in the evenings.

- It would be important that all people who deal with your child are aware of how you wish your children to engage with technology when they are in their care. This may include Granny! Discuss what TV shows are age-appropriate and also the negative effects of too much television and the importance of managing screen time.

Scenario 4: Social Inclusion through IT

Your daughter in grade 8 volunteered to help at the senior Valentine dance at school. She is in charge of drinks in a dark spot outside the school hall. She ends up having to use her cell phone to see what drinks she is handing out. Towards the end of the evening, she drops her Christmas gift – her first smart phone – into the big bath of water holding the drinks. She is absolutely heart broken. You explain that you cannot afford another cell like that in February. She tries everything to persuade you to buy her a new one – she nags, she threatens, she cries and life at home becomes very unpleasant. You eventually sit her down and chat to her. She explains that not having a phone keeps her away from all social interaction between her friends. She feels isolated, lonely and is experiencing terrible “FOMO”, a fear of missing out.

- Essentially this was an accident.
- Be empathetic to your child and their strong need at this age to connect with peers.
- It is important to remember that children will gain access to technology even if they haven’t got their own phone or laptop.
- Try to find solutions that are affordable, like the purchase of a second-hand phone to keep the connections going for the child.

Scenario 5: Online Grooming

You don’t have a computer in your home so your son, who is 10, looks for every opportunity to go and play computer games next door. One day he mentions that he and his friend are going to get a cell phone from a man they have been talking to online who lives in Swakopmund. The man has promised them gifts of cell phones if they meet him the next time he visits Windhoek. He wants a photo of your son now and your son asks you to take the photo on your cell phone. The man told him to just be wearing his PE shorts and no t-shirt.

- This needs a serious response.
- Share this information with your neighbor and see if they would like to be involved in taking it further to the police.
- Contact Lifeline/ChildLine on their toll-free numbers 106 or 116 for advice, support and counselling for your child if necessary.
- Talk with your child about the dangers of online interactions, what is appropriate behaviour online and what information may not be shared with others.
- Explain how a paedophile will befriend them to build relationships with children and their friends. Also explain how grooming can happen through online games.
- Explain that they should not accept gifts from people online or meet people in person that they have only met online.
- Talk about the risks associated with sharing pictures (and particularly intimate pictures) online.
- Encourage your child to keep talking with you about any concerns they may have about their “digital life”.
- Discuss with your neighbor about on-going protection and supervision for both your children. If you are not able to reach an agreement or understanding, you may need to reconsider your child going next door.

Scenario 6: Cyberbullying

Over the weekend, your 16-year-old daughter opens up to you and tells you that she is being bullied by some of her female classmates who she thought were her friends. For the last 3 weeks, they have been accusing her of stealing their boyfriends. She is friends with several of the boys but in fact, she says, she doesn't even have a boyfriend yet and isn't interested in dating. On top of verbal bullying of her at school, the girls have created a Facebook page where they have been uploading pictures as if they were her, and saying nasty things. Now, students from other grades who she doesn't even know are talking about her and life at school feels unbearable.

- Empathise deeply with your daughter – this is a traumatic thing to happen.
- It would be important to engage the school on this matter as soon as possible and to see if a school counsellor could be involved in providing support and counselling to your child and mediating with and disciplining the “bullies”.
- If you do not have a response at the level of teachers and/or counsellors, it would be important to take the matter to the principal.
- If counselling is not available through your daughter's school, arrange for her to talk to a counsellor at Lifeline/Childline by calling 106 or 116.

Scenario 7: Perpetrator and Victim!

You notice that over the last few weeks, your 12-year-old son has been behaving differently. He has been quieter than usual and seems withdrawn. You decide to deliberately spend some time with him and invite him for a walk where the two of you can have some time to talk without being disturbed by others. It is during this walk that he confesses to you that he has written nasty, disrespectful and hurtful words about one of the most popular girls at school, on Facebook. He said he was dared to do it in order to join the group of popular boys at school. At first, he had thought that these boys were really cool and he desperately wanted to be friends with them. He felt that he was willing to do anything to be accepted by them but now he feels guilty and ashamed for hurting the girl who he doesn't even know very well. He is

angry and disappointed with himself because he never thought he would hurt someone in that way.

- Your empathy and compassion in this situation is very important. Shame is a difficult emotion for a child to process.
- Essentially he has been a victim of peer pressure and in a way, bullying, by the “popular boys” and at the same time has become a perpetrator of bullying of the girl.
- Speak to him about being responsible and respecting others online.
- You will need to help him work through his options on how to begin to repair the situation. For instance, to help him to apologise to the girl. He may also have to talk to her parents and a teacher or the principal at his school.
- Involvement of an understanding school counsellor would be very useful because the situation involves other children at school. Not involving the school risks the chance that your son is reported to the school by the girl and/or her parents and he is then treated only as a bully, whereas the situation is more complex than this, so talking to the school first may well be to his advantage.
- Prepare him for possible consequences at school. It may not be comfortable for him, but it’s a sign of maturity that he takes responsibility for his actions. Don’t forget to acknowledge that. Just because he did something wrong or harmful does not mean he is a bad person.
- Encourage him and make sure he is sufficiently self-confident in himself in future.
- If you feel unable to help your son through this, consider outside counselling from a professional or through Lifeline/Childline by calling 106 or 116.

Prepare a flipchart:

Developing a Family Media Plan

- Say when devices (phones, laptops) can be used.
- Say where these can be used.
- Write up internet safety rules like keeping personal information private.
- Say which programmes (and apps) children can or can’t watch and the amount of time they can spend in front of screens.



- For Teens and pre-teens say how they can respond to cyber bullying (of themselves and of others).
- The plan is about being respectful to each other in the house.
- Different children would have different arrangements, depending on age.



Inspiration for the Family Media Plan:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>

1. Introduction and welcome (15 minutes)

- Welcome parents as they enter the room.
- Ask parents for their names and make sure you can pronounce them correctly.
- Invite parents to write their first name clearly on a name tag and choose a seat.
- When all the parents have arrived, introduce yourself and your co-facilitator.
- Ask participants which languages are in the room. Appreciate the diversity and. make sure you take care of any possible needs for translation.
- Give a brief overview over the workshop as follows:

Thank you so much for joining us here today start a process of learning more about the online lives of our children, some of the dangers they may face and how we can help to protect them and strengthen our relationships with them.

Say: *During our time together, we will spend time*

- *Getting to know each other and the process we are about to embark on*
- *Delving into our own use of social media and the impact this has*
- *Understanding the benefits and dangers our children face online from themselves and others*
- *Looking at the positives of technology and media*
- *Looking at how we can mitigate some of the dangers of online life through active parenting and building stronger relationships*
- *Thinking about how to put some of our new knowledge into action.*

Ask the participants if they have any questions.

2. Getting to Know You (20 minutes)

Step 1

Say: *In the interests of getting to know one another, we will do two quick rounds of introductions. In the first round, we will share our name and the names and ages of our children. In the second round we will share our number one way of connecting with our children.*

Start the group off by sharing your own name and the names and ages of your children. This may include stepchildren, grandchildren or godchildren. Make sure each parent shares.

Step 2

Say: *In this second round of introductions I would like to invite each of you to share one thing you do to build trust with your child or children.*

As before, start the group off by sharing your own experience.

Step 3

After this round of introductions, explain that you will now share some of the most popular social media icons.

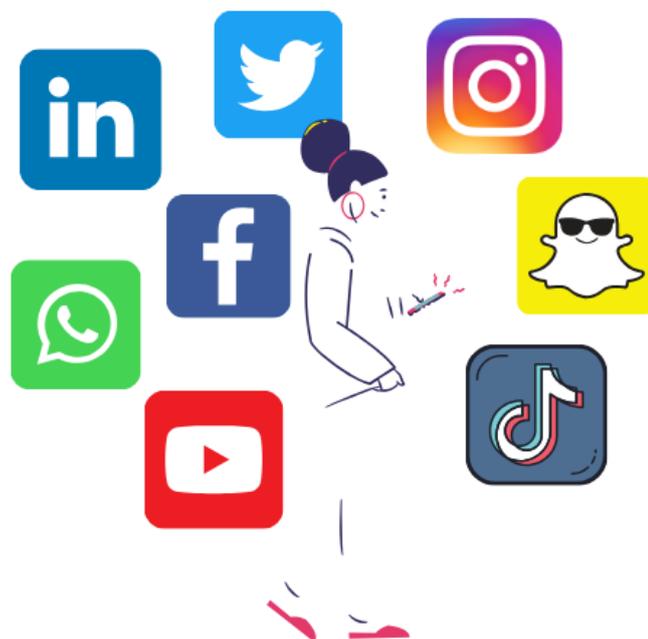
Parents can indicate their familiarity with each icon by holding up their hands.

no hands	=	I have never heard of it
one hand	=	I know about it, but I don't use it
two hands	=	I have an account (or installed it), but only use it occasionally
two hands + waving	=	I am a regular, passionate user of this social media platform

One by one, hold up the social media icons. Present each icon and ask parents to show their familiarity by waving their hands, or not! Throughout the activity, place icons on the floor in order of their popularity; the one parents are most familiar with should be at one end, with the platform parents are least familiar with at the other.

Step 4

Lead the parents through a brief activity where they can volunteer to share the biggest risk or the best benefit of each social media platform.



3. Our Worries (15 minutes)

Say: *We are all aware that there are dangers out in the world that our children will have to face and navigate.*

Ask:

- *What are you most worried about for your children when it comes to technology and online life?*
- *For you, what aspects of technology and online life are the most difficult to understand or connect with?*
- *What is it like, trying to navigate this with your children?*

Say: *There is so much pressure to be the perfect parent and to always be on top of everything, but we know that although we do our best, this is not always possible. Many of us are in the same boat and it is refreshing to share our concerns and figure this out, together.*

4. The Waiting Dangers (40 minutes)

Step 1

Ask: *What dangers do you think children face from technology and social media?*

List parent's responses on a flipchart. Make sure the list includes

- Exposure to pornography
- Exposure to violent content
- Exposure to self-harm content
- Unfiltered search engines
- Harmful political and social messaging
- Social media addiction
- Technology/gaming addiction
- Negative news overload
- Jealousy and social pressure
- Cyber bullying
- Grooming by sexual predators
- Online scams
- Sexting
- Revenge porn and Sextortion



Step 2

Say: *These risks can be divided into 5 categories:*

- *Child sexual abuse*
- *Inappropriate content*
- *Inappropriate conduct*
- *Inappropriate contact and*
- *Commerce and addiction*

Our main focus is learning to identify and stop child online sexual exploitation and abuse. It will be helpful for us to learn a little bit more about each of these categories, so we are going to do some brainstorming in small groups.

Split the participants into 6 groups and give a sample of dangers to each group. Invite the group to spend 20 minutes discussing each danger on their list in more detail using the following questions:

- *What does this mean?*
- *What is the potential impact?*

Step 3

Once the 20 minutes is up, invite each group to present their thinking and receive feedback and input from other groups. Add in any information they may have missed and be prepared to share resources for further support with parents.

Lifeline/Childline 106/116 are toll free numbers that parents and children can call to receive guidance and help from trained counsellors.

7. exposure to pornography

Pornography is any photograph, video, audio or writing that shows sexually explicit scenarios. Pornography can be very harmful to both older and younger children and can leave them with harmful ideas about sex.

grooming by sexual predators

Online grooming is the process of building a relationship with a child through the use of the Internet or other digital technologies to make online or offline sexual contact with that child.

8. harmful political and social messaging

Some websites target young people who are vulnerable to harmful messaging and recruit them to causes such as hate groups, groups that promote anorexia and more.

negative news overload

Being exposed to overwhelming negative news from around the world can have a negative impact on emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

9. social media addiction

People are increasingly living their lives online and social media can become addictive. An addiction means that you are dependent on something and cannot stay for long without it.

technology/gaming addiction

Technology and gaming addictions badly affect the social, emotional and cognitive development of children and young people. It can also have negative physical impacts such as carpal tunnel and problems with posture. Another risk faced in gaming is online grooming, sextortion and live streaming.

10. jealousy and social pressure

Social media exposes us to the best parts of other people's lives and creates unrealistic pictures of what life is like. Seeing people with the 'perfect' body or lifestyle on social media can lead to negative social comparison, jealousy and submitting to social pressure.

cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when one or more people bully a person or group of people publicly on social media or privately through direct messaging. This bullying takes many different forms and can be seen in the form of videos, “pranks”, memes, pictures or hateful messages.

11. online scams

Scammers are people who use technology to illegally obtain money or information. Children are especially vulnerable to this.

unfiltered search engines

This is when your search engines, such as Google, have no restrictions placed on them. If search engines are fortified with parental controls, a child will not be referred to material that is inappropriate for them.

12. sexting

Sexting means using your phone, computer, or camera to take or send sexy messages or images. Sexting can cause serious problems whether you send them or share them. The pictures may be posted online, where people like your family, teachers, and friends can see them. Sharing these pictures or messages without permission is a serious violation of privacy and isn't ok. And if the pictures you send or share are of someone under 18 (even if that's you), you could even be arrested for child pornography, which is a serious crime.⁵

revenge porn and sextortion

A sex tape is a video made of any sexual act. Sex tapes or nude photographs will always have the potential to be leaked publicly and this can have huge negative impacts on social life, mental and emotional health and even for future job prospects. Sextortion is the threat made by others to release this material and to coerce the victim into further acts, to silence them and prevent them from reporting these crimes or for financial gain.⁶

Note to the Facilitator: It will be important to continue to remind parents that when these things happen, it is not their fault nor the fault of their child. When a child approaches us, it is important that we remain calm and supportive.⁷

5. Dealing with challenging scenarios (45 minutes)

Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5. Explain that you will be giving out a short parenting scenario to each group. The group should imagine they are the parent in the situation and come up with next steps or solutions on how best to respond or intervene. Give them 10 minutes for this discussion.

During the feedback from the groups, start writing up a list of “Tips for Parents” that emerge from the scenarios so that they become shared collective learning.

Add any ideas from the list below if they don't emerge from the group in the discussion:

⁵ <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/bullying-safety-privacy/all-about-sexting>

⁶ <https://parentinfo.org/article/what-parents-need-to-know-about-the-online-blackmail-known-as-sextortion>

⁷ <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/trauma-and-children-tips-for-parents>

Tips for Digital Parenting

- Keep all passwords for your bank cards and digital devices confidential.
- Build a good relationship with the principal and teachers at the school in case you ever need to liaise with anyone there. Finding yourself an “ally” – an understanding teacher or school counsellor will help you resolve a range of issues that may crop up for your child.
- Talk to all the people who look after your children about how you would like technology to be handled (Granny, domestic workers and other family).
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- Talk with children about what is isn’t affordable for your family.
- Talk with parents in the homes your child visits (and whose children visit you) to agree on how supervision of devices could happen.
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- Be prepared to take action when you do discover something dangerous for your child and others.
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- Talk with your children about the dangers they might encounter.
- Use opportunities like TV shows and awareness building of organisations like ChildLine to raise issues of safety online.
- Teach your child to be careful with personal information.
- Be a good role model of gadget use for your children.
- Create a family media plan with your children. This needs to be regularly revised.
- Keep on working at your relationship with your child as they grow and develop. This is the foundation for successful digital parenting.



6. Personal Reflection: Creating a Family Media Plan (30 minutes)

Say: *Creating a family media plan with your children can really help set clear boundaries and expectations. This avoids you having to make decisions every day about what is and isn't okay, and the child knows where these boundaries are. It should be written down and pasted somewhere public where everyone can refer to it – including the other people who look after your child. It should be a living document, which means that it needs to be re-visited and re-negotiated regularly as your child grows up. The idea is that by the time they are 17 and 18 they can manage their own use of media.*



A family media plan can include:

- *Agreements for social media and internet use*

- Identifying “screen-free” areas in the house like the dining room table during meals, bedrooms after bedtime etc. This is to ensure that there is time that is free of the intrusion of technology to build relationship, communicate as a family etc. Also ensures that children are not groomed or lured into taking sexual images in bedrooms or bathrooms.
- Internet safety rules like keeping personal information private. This ensures that everyone in the house is “on the same page” with regard to general safety rules around information and who has access to that information.
- Specific programmes (and apps) children can or can’t watch and the amount of time they can spend in front of screens. This provides an opportunity to identify age appropriate programmes suitable for each child in the house. Everyone knowing what these are reduces ongoing policing from parents and conflict in the household.
- For teens and pre-teens, a plan for responding to cyber bullying aimed at themselves or when they see others being on the receiving end. It is important that children can identify cyber bullying and when they or others are the victims of it, as well as have an avenue to discuss it with a parent.
- It should generally be framed around respect for each other in the household. Again, this is to develop a common understanding and reduce constant policing by parents, which can impact on the parent’s relationship with the child.
- Different children would have different arrangements, depending on age. A child’s development stage should frame decisions about what constitutes suitable IT access, TV programmes etc.



Step 1

Give participants 10 minutes to start the thinking around this process.

Note to the facilitator: If two parents are on the course, they can do this together, otherwise it should be an individual task. They do not need to complete it, but just start the thinking around it as it is best done together with the children in their home. If children are a part of the process, they will own it better and are more likely to stick to it than if the parent just enforces it. There should be some negotiation between parent and child around it. Otherwise it risks becoming an additional thing to wrangle about!

Step 2

Then ask participants to share their thoughts with another person. They have a further 10 minutes for this.

Step 3

In plenary,

Say: *What you have done today is to start thinking about the process of introducing a media plan to your family. It is important that you do it together with your children and partner so that everyone buys in to it. If there is no buy-in, it will be the source of additional conflict rather than a support.*

Ask: *How will you get buy-in from your partner and your children?*

It would be important for them to see the benefits – that it will make the use of technology clear and fair for everyone. That it will change over time. It would be important for you to get your partner on board up-front because you can then be a united front.

7. Seeing the Light (10 minutes)



Say: *After doing these activities, it is difficult to see anything except danger online. In the world we live in today, we know that the online world and technology is going to form a big part of our children's lives. The good news is, that there are also many positives to technology and the internet. When used in a healthy way, it is the great equaliser when it comes to education and poverty eradication. It is a source of support, community, connection and learning and as parents, we can guide our children towards this positive, constructive and fulfilling side of the internet.*

Invite each participant to share one word for how they are feeling.

Thank them for their participation and hand out the at home thinking pack.

printing

FACEBOOK



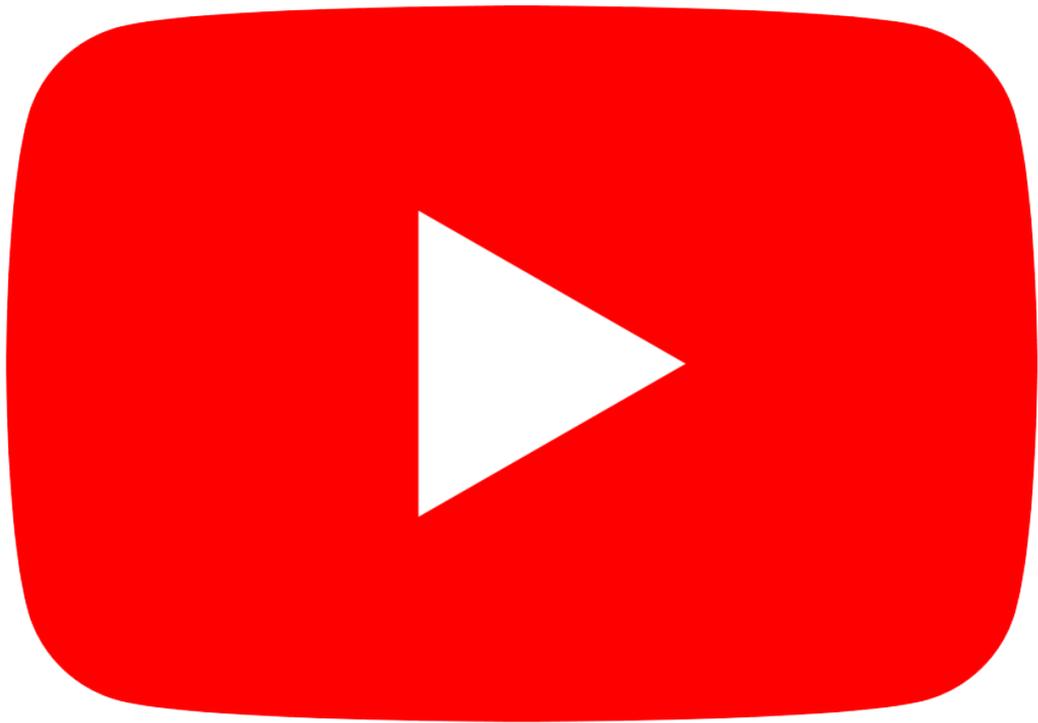
INSTAGRAM



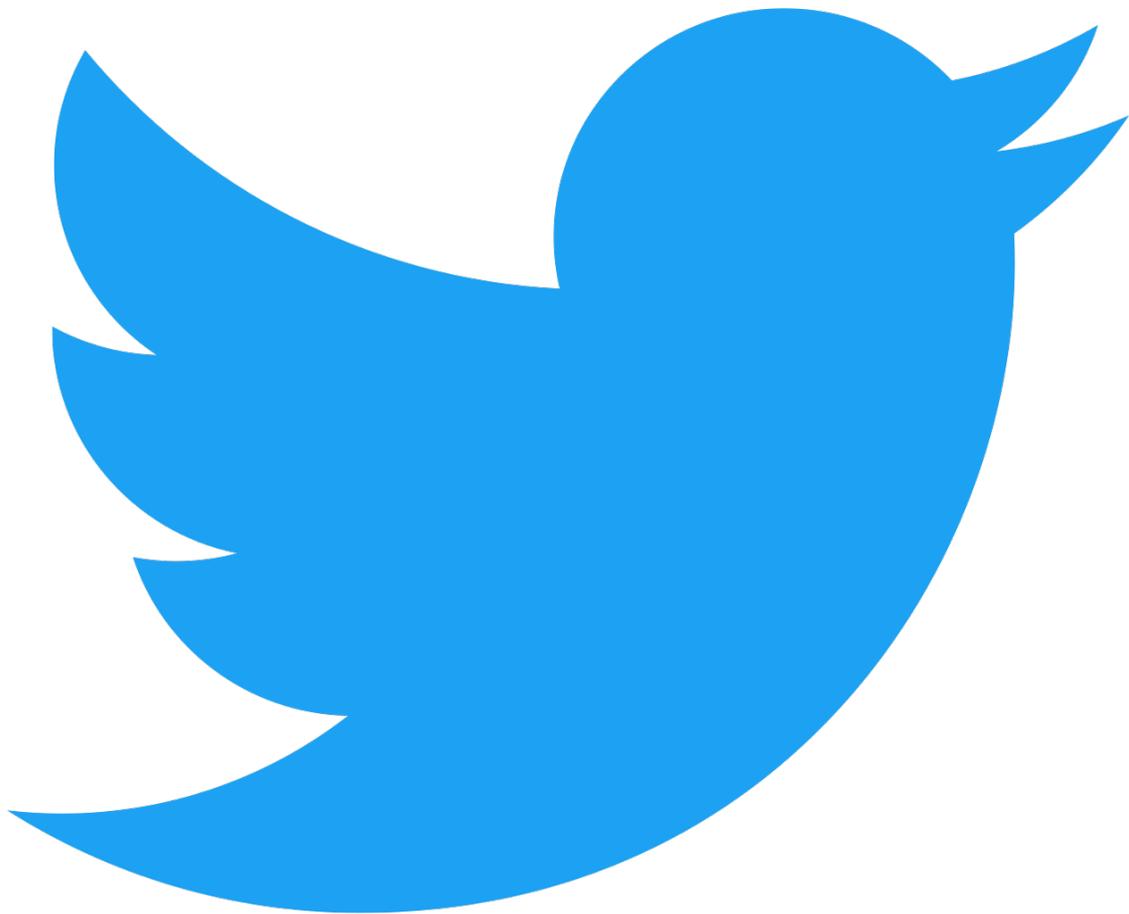
WHATSAPP



YOUTUBE



TWITTER



SNAPCHAT



LINKEDIN



TIKTOK



**exposure to
pornography**

**grooming by
sexual
predators**

**harmful
political and
social
messaging**

**negative
news
overload**

**social media
addiction**

**technology/
gaming
addiction**

**jealousy and
social
pressure**

**cyber
bullying**

online scams

**unfiltered
search
engines**

sexting

revenge

porn and

sextortion

Scenario 1: You discover your 9-year-old son and his 11-year-old cousin have used your credit card to buy an online game. In addition, the game they purchased is a gambling game for adults.

Scenario 2: Your 13-year-old daughter has been unusually withdrawn and sullen. After an outburst at a meal over a petty issue, she runs from the dining room in tears and shuts herself in her bedroom. You follow and find her crying in a desperate heap. She finally tells you that an awful photo of her kissing a boy at the Grade 7 end-of-year party has been doing the rounds on social media. The terrible thing is that she never kissed that boy – in fact he is a “real nerd” - and wouldn’t dream of kissing any girl. She finally tells you that she has recently been excluded from the “cool” girl group and that these girls photoshopped two photos to make it look like she was kissing the boy. All the boys in her class and the “cool” girls have been teasing her at school and she has been sitting alone at break for the last 10 days.

Scenario 3: You work long hours in a demanding job. Your 2-year-old and 4-year-old stay home with a young family member who helps take care of the kids. Your friend pops over to collect something at the house and gives you a call. She is concerned that the kids were like “zombies”, watching inappropriate TV shows. You talk to your 4-year-old and discover that the two children are allowed to watch TV from when the eldest comes home from creche at 12 noon until just before you arrive home at 6pm. This explains their difficult behaviour in the evenings.

Scenario 4: Your daughter in grade 8 volunteered to help at the senior Valentine dance at school. She is in charge of drinks in a dark spot outside the school hall. She ends up having to use her cell phone to see what drinks she is handing out. Towards the end of the evening, she drops her Christmas gift – her first smart phone – into the big bath of water holding the drinks. She is absolutely heart broken. You explain that you cannot afford another cell like that in February. She tries everything to persuade you to buy her a new one – she nags, she threatens, she cries and life at home becomes very unpleasant. You eventually sit her down and chat to her. She explains that not having a phone keeps her away from all social interaction between her friends. She feels isolated, lonely and is experiencing terrible “FOMO”, a fear of missing out.

Scenario 5: You don't have a computer in your home so your son, who is 10, looks for every opportunity to go and play computer games next door. One day he mentions that he and his friend are going to get a cell phone from a man they have been talking to online who lives in Swakopmund. The man has promised them gifts of cell phones if they meet him the next time, he visits Windhoek. He wants a photo of your son now and he asks you to take the photo on your cell phone. The man told him to just be wearing his PE shorts and no t-shirt.

Scenario 6: Cyberbullying

Over the weekend, your 16-year-old daughter opens up to you and tells you that she is being bullied by some of her female classmates who she thought were her friends. For the last 3 weeks, they have been accusing her of stealing their boyfriends. She is friends with several of the boys but in fact, she says, she doesn't even have a boyfriend yet and isn't interested in dating. On top of verbal bullying of her at school, the girls have created a Facebook page where they have been uploading pictures as if they were her, and saying nasty things. Now, students from other grades who she doesn't even know are talking about her and life at school feels unbearable.

Scenario 7: Perpetrator and Victim!

You notice that over the last few weeks, your 12-year-old son has been behaving differently. He has been quieter than usual and seems withdrawn. You decide to deliberately spend some time with him and invite him for a walk where the two of you can have some time to talk without being disturbed by others. It is during this walk that he confesses to you that he has written nasty, disrespectful and hurtful words about one of the most popular girls at school, on Facebook. He said he was dared to do it in order to join the group of popular boys at school. At first, he had thought that these boys were really cool and he desperately wanted to be friends with them. He felt that he was willing to do anything to be accepted by them but now he feels guilty and ashamed for hurting the girl who he doesn't even know very well. He is angry and disappointed with himself because he never thought he would hurt someone in that way.

Participants' Feedback

1) **What I liked:** What was interesting, new and/or important for me, and why?

2) **What I did not like:** What was not so valuable for me or the group, and why?

3) **Any other Comments, Questions or Suggestions?**

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