

WHAT YOUR TEEN WANTS YOU TO KNOW ABOUT BEING ONLINE

We know you care. We know you worry. And while it might not always seem like it, most teens do want to feel safe online. What we often struggle with is how to talk about it in a way that doesn't feel like a lecture.

Here's a little insight into how your teen might be thinking about their digital life.

Use this to build understanding, empathy, and connection—not control.



WE KNOW THE INTERNET CAN BE SKETCHY

"We've seen the weird DMs, the creepy friend requests, the fake giveaways. We know not everyone online is who they say they are."

We might not always tell you when it happens, but that doesn't mean we aren't aware. It helps when you remind us we can come to you without getting in trouble.

WE HATE BEING JUDGED FOR WHAT WE LIKE ONLINE

"Just because we use TikTok or play games doesn't mean we're wasting time. Sometimes it's where we feel most ourselves."

Instead of banning everything, ask us why we like it. Chances are, you'll learn something new—and maybe even connect.

WHAT YOU SEE ISN'T ALWAYS THE WHOLE STORY

"Our posts are curated. Our stories are edited. It doesn't always reflect how we're actually feeling."

If we seem "fine" online but distant in person, check in. Mental health isn't always visible—even to ourselves.

WE DO CARE ABOUT PRIVACY... BUT WE DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHAT TO DO

"We hear about data leaks and hackers, but we also just want to sign up and use the app."

Help us without lecturing. Show us how to turn on privacy settings or set strong passwords.

WE WANT RULES THAT MAKE SENSE, NOT JUST CONTROL

"Screen time limits feel random if they aren't explained."

Let us help set the rules. If we understand the why, we're more likely to respect the how.

WE ACTUALLY LIKE IT WHEN YOU ASK QUESTIONS (EVEN IF WE ROLL OUR EYES)

"Asking questions means you care. Keep doing it."

WHAT TO ASK:

What's the coolest/funniest/weirdest thing you saw online this week?

What do you wish grown-ups understood about social media?

Is there anything online you've seen lately that bothered you?

REMEMBER ... TRUST IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Building trust means letting your teens make choices, helping them when they mess up, and being there without judgment. **Keep trying to connect, they notice more than you think.**