

LEADER GUIDE to Teaching Healthy Content Choices

Written in collaboration with Dr. Megan Maas.

Please watch the Scout leader video available at iKeepSafe.org/Scouting for specific tips on Healthy Content Choices. Scout leaders are in a unique position to help youth develop these skills.

- Foster an environment at your meetings where Scouts feel comfortable approaching you for help or advice. Demonstrate that you are a trusted source of non-judgemental support.
- Youth need a personal plan to remove themselves from a feedback loop of unhealthy content online. Teach Scouts to **ACT**:
 - Alert yourself: This is porn. I know unhealthy content when I see it.
 - Close the lid / turn off your device.
 - Tell a parent or trusted adult. They can help you.
- Explain that trusted friends and adults will never ask them to look at unhealthy content, and will *never* ask them to share unhealthy content of themselves or others.

Ultimately, we hope this program can be incorporated with the entire Cyber Chip. For now, the purpose of this content is to easily bring Healthy Content Choices into your normal Scouting events.

Help your Scouts fulfill the following requirements.

1. Read, commit to, and sign the *Internet Safety Pledge Level I*.
2. Read the book or watch the video *Faux Paw and a Time to ACT*, found at iKeepSafe.org/Scouting.
3. Participate in the *Pack Meeting* discussion (outline provided)
4. Participate in one of the *Den Activities* to demonstrate what they have learned about making healthy content choices.
5. Discuss with their family and friends what they have learned.

You will need printed copies of:

- This Leader Guide
- Parent Tips (one copy for each Scout parent, 1-pager & short tips-only versions available)
- Internet Safety Pledge Level I (to be signed by Scouts)
- Pack Meeting Outline (step by step outline for your pack meeting)
- Den Activities (to participate in as a group)

BACKGROUND ON HEALTHY CONTENT

Healthy content choices are increasingly harder to make in our digital world, where a few clicks can lead you to just about anything. They are also vitally important, as so much of our social behavior is learned from media. From an early age, youth need the knowledge and skills to navigate the world of violent video games, internet pornography, sexting, and social media, as these types of content are heavily embedded into their social and sexual developmental trajectories. Simply telling kids to avoid certain types of unhealthy content is insufficient for providing them with life skills to navigate the inevitable online experiences they will have.

By teaching youth skills like the **ACT** acronym, we address the following challenges posed by unhealthy content:

- Unhealthy content is primarily processed through the “feeling brain” (limbic system). Since young brains do not have fully developed “thinking brains” (pre-frontal cortex) to filter this stimuli, it is easy for them to be “trapped” by unhealthy content.
- Popular pornography portrays sex as aggressive toward women, without human connection, and often without consent.
- If pornography is the original and most comprehensive sexual education youth receive, that does not prepare them for healthy and satisfying romantic relationships.

1-5 GRADERS

Young children are often first exposed to pornography or obscene violence on the internet by accident. Therefore, they need to know what kinds of content are healthy or unhealthy for them to understand when they have come across something they should not see.

Although we try, parents are not always fully aware of what their children are doing online. Children *themselves* must have the skills to reach out to adults when something disturbing happens online. Providing them with different ways to disclose uncomfortable experiences, online and offline, to adults will help build lifelong skills in this area.