

## LEADER GUIDE to Teaching Healthy Content Choices

Please watch the Scout leader video available at [iKeepSafe.org/Scouting](http://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.
- Help youth devise a personal plan to remove themselves from a feedback loop of unhealthy content online. Present the ACT acronym and have Scouts decide what their strategy will be:

**Alert yourself:** This is porn. I know unhealthy content when I see it.

**Close lid / turn off your device.**

**Take action.** Talk to a parent or trusted adult, they can help you.

- Explain that true friends and trusted adults will never ask them to look at unhealthy content. Also explain that sharing nude images of themselves or others is illegal.

Ultimately, we hope this program can be incorporated with the entire Cyber Chip. For now, the purpose of this content is to make it easy to 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 II*.
2. Watch the video *Wise Tech Choices: Healthy Content*, found at [iKeepSafe.org/Scouting](http://iKeepSafe.org/Scouting).
3. Participate in one of the *Meeting Activities* to demonstrate what they have learned about making healthy content choices.
4. Discuss with their family and friends what they have learned.

You will need printed copies of:

- This Leader Guide
- Parent Tips, 6-12 Grades (1-pager & short tips-only versions available)
- Public Health: Why Encourage Healthy Content Choices?
- Internet Safety Pledge Level II (to be signed by Scouts)
- Meeting Activities, 6-8 Grades (to participate in as a group)

## **BACKGROUND ON HEALTHY CONTENT**

In the digital culture, we are constantly faced with choices over what content to consume, share, and create. Youth in particular need the background information and support system to develop skills for choosing healthy content. As a leader, you can prepare Scouts for life by informing them about their media sources and help them understand how their content choices affect their bodies, brains, and relationships. You can also make yourself available as a source of support and information should they need it.

Youth have constant access to hyper-stimulating sexual and violent material online. Internet porn affects development in two major ways:

1. **Psychologically:** social norms unhealthy relationships. For example, promotes violence against women.
2. **Physiological development:** creates neural pathways that train consumers' brain to only be aroused by something specific to porn.

## **6-8 GRADERS**

Children under 12 should continue to have a mediated online experience, through monitoring and filtering. Filtering software is useful in blocking porn and violent content, but it is even more helpful for parents to manually monitor internet and media use. Manual monitoring (e.g. checking Facebook pages, Instagram profiles, etc) allows you to provide direct advice and guidance, and to model the self monitoring skills youth will need to manage their own consumption and sharing. For tips on intervening in case of problematic media use, watch the Scout leader video at [iKeepSafe.org/Scouting](http://iKeepSafe.org/Scouting).

In middle school youth will likely show increased interest in autonomy, privacy, and romantic relationships. It is important when filtering out unhealthy content to provide access to educational resources about bodies, development, and romantic relationships. This can include information directly from parents as well as digital resources.