

Risky Online Relationships

*** DID YOU KNOW ...**

“Catphishing” is when someone pretends, online, to be someone whom he or she is not, often for the purpose of trying to get someone’s romantic attention, friendship, or financial support.

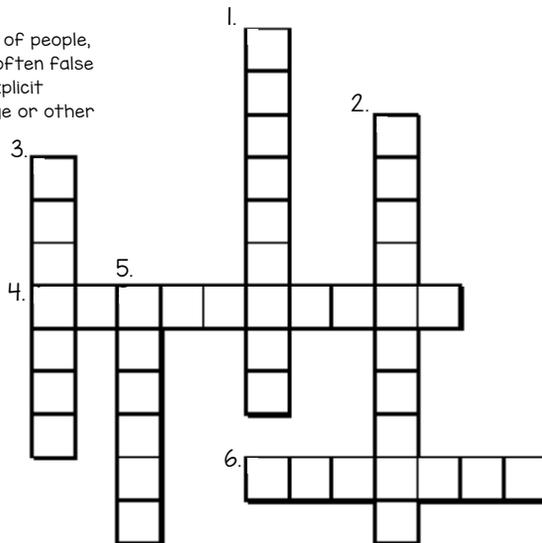
Crossword Puzzle

Across:

- 4. a popular belief about a group of people, based on assumptions that are often false
- 6. sending or receiving sexually explicit photos or videos by text message or other digital technologies

Down:

- 1. without a name or other information that identifies who you are inhibited: careful or restrained about your actions or impulses
- 2. trying to influence somebody to do something they might not otherwise do, for one’s own benefit
- 3. an image and personality that you show to others
- 5. a set of principles and morals governing people’s behavior, including honesty and respect toward others



*** WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Why is the term “online predator” misleading? What is the reality when it comes to risky online relationships?

1. Family Activity

Tadashi really liked his new boyfriend, Max, and he couldn’t stop thinking about him. He loved that he could stay in touch with him all the time by texting. Max was crazy about Tadashi, too, and he really liked getting his text messages. The only problem was the quantity: Tadashi was sending Max messages nonstop. If Max didn’t respond right away, Tadashi would keep texting him to make sure everything was OK. First, he would send a row of question marks, then “hello??” and then, “are you mad at me?” Max tried to tell Tadashi that the texting was too much, but Tadashi got defensive and said that if Max felt that way maybe they should just stop texting altogether. Max didn’t know what to do -- he liked Tadashi, but even other people in his life were starting to comment on how much Tadashi texted him.

*** DO YOU REMEMBER ...**
How you can tell when an online relationship is risky?

2. Think Out Loud!

- ~ What is your immediate reaction to this situation? What seems realistic or unrealistic?
- ~ What advice would you give Max in this situation?
- ~ What would you do if someone was texting you too much? Have you ever been in a situation like this before?
- ~ Have you ever gotten the sense that someone else felt like you were texting them too much? How did you manage that situation?

3. Common Sense Says ...

If you’re communicating with someone you meet online, ask yourself the following questions: Has this person asked to keep anything about our relationship a secret? Has this person hinted at or asked about anything sexual? Have I felt pressured or manipulated by this person? Do I not feel true to myself -- am I not sticking to my values -- when I communicate with this person? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, log off or quit the conversation and talk to a trusted adult or mentor to let him or her know about the situation.

