

# Protect yourself . . . and your future!

## A TEEN'S GUIDE to the dangers of "sexting"

Falling in love when you are a teenager can be extremely exciting. But don't let that excitement lead you to do something that can ruin your reputation – and possibly get you charged with a crime!



### "Sexting" tragedy

Consider the case of Jesse, a teenager from Ohio. She sent a nude photograph of herself to her boyfriend. That photo then made its way to hundreds of other students in Ohio and other states. Jesse was repeatedly harassed and teased by other students.

Several months later, Jesse took her own life.

Don't put yourself in Jesse's shoes.

A new phenomenon among teen-agers is "sexting" – taking nude or suggestive photographs of yourself and sending those photographs via your cell phone to another person.

"Sexting" might seem harmless, especially if it occurs between you and your boyfriend or girlfriend. You might believe your significant other would never hurt you, damage your reputation or violate your trust.

But stop and think. What happens to the photograph after the relationship ends? Once a picture is sent it can't be taken back. And if that picture is posted on the Internet, anyone in the world can see it.

It can get even worse. In addition to damaging your reputation, you could be charged with a crime for making such a photograph. If you are under 18, any photograph you take of yourself in a nude or provocative pose is technically considered child pornography. And if you send that photo to someone, you are disseminating child pornography.

**Teens in some states have been charged with felony crimes!** If you are found guilty, a felony record could follow you for life and you may have to register as a sex offender. This registration requirement will follow you to your college or university campus and your future places of employment.

**Stop and think before you jeopardize your reputation and your future.**



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