

A person with blonde hair is lying on their back on a bed with white sheets. They are wearing a blue and white horizontally striped t-shirt. Their right arm is extended towards a black smartphone lying on the bed next to them. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The overall tone is serious, contrasting with the casual setting of a bedroom.

# **SEXTING... LOOKS FUN... NOT WORTH IT.**

**WELD COUNTY DISTRICT  
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

**#SEXTINGPROBS**

# SEXTING

**TEENS ARE CURIOUS.  
SMARTPHONES LET THAT CURIOSITY  
RUN WILD.**

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## **WHAT IS SEXTING?**

Sexting is the sending of nude or sexually suggestive picture(s) or video(s) by electronic means (i.e. cell phone, computer or other electronic device) to another person.

It's usually just about teens exploring, building relationships and having fun, but don't be mistaken; it can have serious consequences.

From cyberbullying to stalking and harassment, sexting can lead to a variety of long-term repercussions, not to mention destroying future job prospects.

Oh, did we mention it's illegal for juveniles to sext in Colorado?



## **WHAT DOES COLORADO LAW SAY ABOUT TEEN SEXTING?**

Up until the 2017 Colorado Legislative Session, there was basically one way to charge a teen for sexting, and that was a FELONY: Sexual Exploitation of a Child.

District Attorneys rarely filed this charge against juveniles, in large part, because of the stiff penalties and requirement to register as a sex offender.

This rarity put the criminal justice system at an almost impossible crossroads: how do you deter teens from sexting without reasonable punishments in place?

Thankfully, lawmakers in Denver compromised on a new sexting bill, one that creates a wide range of charging options for District Attorneys to utilize. Let's learn more about what's available.

## HOUSE BILL 1302 (2017)

Give it to me straight without all that legal jargon. OK. Here we go!

### CIVIL INFRACTION

This includes those teens who are willfully exchanging nude images or videos between each other.

A civil infraction could carry a \$50 fine and/or a required education course designed to teach teens about the dangers and repercussions of sexting.

### PETTY OFFENSE

Teens who possess the nude image of another juvenile (who is at least 14 or less than 4 years younger than defendant) without his or her consent have committed a petty offense.

If the juvenile possesses more than 10 images, however, the offense is a class 2 misdemeanor.

A petty offense could carry up to 45 days in a youth detention facility and a \$300 fine.

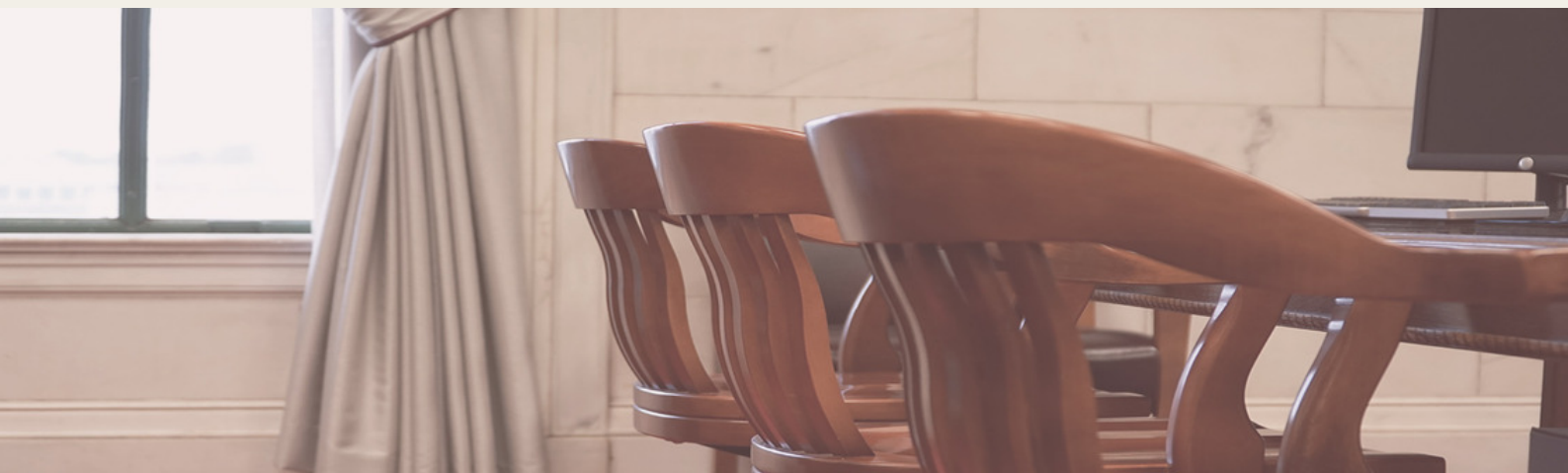
## MISDEMEANORS

Class 2 Misdemeanor - when a teen shares or posts a nude photo of another juvenile without their permission.

Class 1 Misdemeanor - when a teen shares or posts a nude photo of another juvenile with the intent to coerce, intimidate, threaten or cause emotional harm.

Punishment - teens could face up to two years in a community youth corrections facility and a \$5000 fine.

**The District Attorney has the right to elevate the misdemeanor-level crimes to a felony if he or she sees fit.**



ALMOST FORGOT...

**IF POLICE HAVE TO OPEN  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO  
TEEN SEXTING...**

**THE DEVICE USED WILL BE  
TAKEN AS EVIDENCE...**

**AND NOT RETURNED...**

**EVER.**

Seriously, never.





WE'VE TALKED ABOUT LEGAL CONSEQUENCES...  
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING WORSE...

# EMOTIONAL EFFECTS



## PRIVACY

*There's no guarantee a sexual or nude photo will remain private. Once a couple splits, or a friend becomes angry, the pictures are often mass distributed as an act of revenge.*

## BULLYING

*Once a photo is out, it opens the teen up to bullying. Many are called vulgar names and ostracized for their appearances. Countless young women also report instances of "slut shaming."*



## GUILT

*Having private images shared with a mass audience can cause immense guilt and shame. It also impacts self-esteem, leaving some teens feeling vulnerable and exposed.*



WE'VE TALKED ABOUT LEGAL CONSEQUENCES...  
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# EMOTIONAL EFFECTS



## OBJECTIFICATION

*Throwing sexting and nude images into young and inexperienced relationships only complicates things. It can also raise the risk of being objectified - creating chances of victimization and sexual assault.*



## REPUTATION

*Once a photo is out, there's no way of knowing how many people have saved it, tagged it or shared it. It could even resurface years down the road during pivotal life moments, like college admissions and job interviews.*



## HOPELESSNESS

*As bullying and ridicule pile on, teens can start feeling hopeless and depressed. This can and HAS lead to suicide and suicidal thoughts.*

# TIPS FOR PARENTS

Warn your children to never share photos with people they don't physically know offline.

There are countless stories across the country where teens are sexually assaulted by online predators.

Share these stories with your teens. It could bring them into reality.

**WARN.**

Regularly monitor your teen's device to prevent sexting. Privacy settings can only go so far.

Don't risk having what could be deemed child pornography on your devices.

**MONITOR.**

Have calm, supportive conversations about the risks associated with sexting.

Have an adult conversation with them and talk about the possible psychological and legal impacts.

**TALK.**

Try to see if these behaviors are part of a bigger problem with self-esteem and confidence.

Teens like attention and reassurance, making it easy to turn to sexting.

As parents, make sure your teens know they're valued and respected.

**EXPLORE.**

Provide opportunities to share feelings and emotions, be it with you, a family friend or school counselor.

Let them know the people and places they can seek help or guidance.

The person they want to confide in may not be you, so ensure they have someone to talk to.

**PROVIDE.**

# TIPS FOR TEENS

More than likely, you'll send to or receive nude images from a close friend.

Now is the time to be a GOOD FRIEND! Have a conversation with them about the harmful consequences.

So the friend calls you basic? Maybe it's time to say Bye Felicia.

**BE A FRIEND.**

If you're receiving images or videos from someone online and you don't know them, find ways to block the sender.

Purely online relationships should never include pornographic material.

Why? You may think you're talking to someone your age, but the chances are high it's some 57-year-old IRL.

**EXPLORE.**

The safest way to avoid a picture getting into the wrong hands is to NEVER take it in the first place.

Don't be fooled - "Revenge porn" is a real thing, and it happens all of the time after a breakup.

Ask yourself, "What are the chances this will get out? Will my parents see it? My grandma?"

**THINK AHEAD.**

If you receive a nude image or video, don't reshare, repost or forward.

This could land you in big legal trouble. Do we need to go over the law again?

Just delete the photo immediately and tell the sender to back off.

Consider telling an adult if the problem persists.

**STOP.**

It's simple: love yourself.

If someone is demanding nude pics, evaluate your relationship and ask yourself tough questions.

Images and videos are forever. Once it's made, it's hard to delete for good.

Remember - digital experiences are available to the world - not just you and bae.

**LOVE YOURSELF.**



# RESOURCES



## Links

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[www.WeldDA.com](http://www.WeldDA.com)

[ConnectSafely.org](http://ConnectSafely.org)

[FamilyZone.com](http://FamilyZone.com)

[CommonSenseMedia.com](http://CommonSenseMedia.com)

[SafeKids.com](http://SafeKids.com)

[KidsHealth.com](http://KidsHealth.com)

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