



Selfies – pictures people take of themselves– are **everywhere**.

The craze is now so popular that it's guessed that **1.2 billion** selfies are taken every year in the UK.

There are lots of reasons why people take selfies: it could be to copy celebrities, for fun, to show off, as a way of talking to friends, or to express yourself.

In your Be Strong Online session with the Be Strong Online Ambassadors you will have looked at selfies and what the positives and negatives of the craze are.

On one hand, people are able to show others what they're up to and taking selfies could be a way of exploring their identity. It also gives people control of their own image – they can choose exactly how they want the photo to look.

But they could have a negative effect: taking lots of selfies makes people concerned with their appearance, instead of their personality and positive qualities. By sharing selfies on social media people are often looking for lots of 'likes' on their image and might feel bad about themselves if they don't get them.



Try not to compare yourself to others when it comes to selfies. Remember that there is more to you than just your appearance!



Use selfies in a positive way by sharing things that reflect your interests and hobbies or to spread positive messages.



Remember that most social networks have a **minimum age of 13**. This is in place to protect you so it's important to wait until you're this age before you sign up.



It can be tempting to listen to people who say 'picture or it didn't happen', but **you shouldn't feel pressured** to take selfies of everything you do just to prove to other people that you've done something or been somewhere.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is the way we think about ourselves.

If you have healthy self-esteem you generally feel good about yourself, be proud of your abilities and achievements, and accept yourself.

People with low self-esteem, on the other hand, don't feel good about themselves, focus on their failures and mistakes, and think mostly bad things about themselves.

Self-esteem is something which can change with your personal circumstances – such as your friends, family, achievements and setbacks. We all go through times where our self-esteem feels low and other times where it feels high. But it is possible to develop self-esteem.

The mental health charity Mind has the following tips for increasing your self-esteem, with more information available on www.mind.org.uk:

1. Do activities that you enjoy
2. Spend time with positive, supportive people
3. Be helpful and considerate to others
4. Try not to compare yourself to other people
5. Try to do regular exercise, eat healthily and get enough sleep
6. Be assertive – don't let people treat you with a lack of respect
7. Use self-help books and websites to develop helpful skills, like assertiveness or mindfulness
8. Learn to challenge your negative beliefs
9. Acknowledge your positive qualities and things you are good at
10. Get into the habit of thinking and saying positive things about yourself

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SEXTING

Selfies *can* have consequences if they become sexting.

'Sexting' is when people send and receive naked or near-naked photos online and on mobile phones.

Sometimes it's done to show off, show interest in someone, prove commitment or just as a joke.

But sexting can have extremely serious consequences for everyone involved - the person in the picture, the sender and the person who receives the picture.

If you're under the age of 18, sexting is illegal.

It's also important to remember that the internet isn't a private place. Photos can be very easily copied or sent to others. So what started out as a private conversation can become public very quickly and seen by anyone.

If you're feeling pressured to share naked images, remember:

- You should never feel pressured into doing something you don't want to do.
- Think before you post – once you send an image, it can be very difficult to get back. How would you feel if a parent, sibling or teacher saw this image?
- You can talk to Childline on 0800 1111 or visit the sites below for help and advice. You can also check out www.childnet.com/young-people/secondary/hot-topics/sexting
- If somebody is sharing an image like this, don't pass it on – it's illegal and could also be seen as bullying
- Have you been sent naked pictures? Or has someone made contact with you that you're uncomfortable with? In the UK, you can contact the Internet Watch Foundation (www.iwf.org.uk/) or the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre to report it (www.ceop.police.uk)

More information

If you would like more information on anything you've discussed in the lesson today, have a look at the following charities, support groups and campaigns:

The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign

The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign involves a number of different programmes aimed at reducing bullying in schools. The Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme which has trained over 20,000 young people across the UK to lead on anti-bullying campaigns in their schools, and the Anti-Bullying Pro website provides lots of information on bullying. www.antibullyingpro.com/

Beat

The UK's leading charity supporting anyone affected by eating disorders or difficulties with food, weight and shape. www.b-eat.co.uk/

Body Gossip

A campaign which explores people's experiences of body confidence www.bodygossip.org/

Changing Faces

A charity for people and families who are living with conditions, marks or scars that affect their appearance. www.changingfaces.org.uk/Home

Childline

ChildLine is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. You can email them, go to their website for a 1-2-1 chat online, or call for free on 0800 1111. www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx

Dove Self-Esteem Project

Practical resources for teens, parents and teachers to boost self-esteem www.dove.us/Our-Mission/Girls-Self-Esteem/Get-Involved/default.aspx

Mind

Leading provider of advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Mind's website features excellent ideas for increasing your self-esteem. www.mind.org.uk

You can also find Mind's top tips for increasing self-esteem on the next page.



The craze for 'selfies' – photos of yourself taken by yourself - is a huge phenomenon.

Fuelled by the rise in social media, the influence of celebrity culture and many other factors, selfies have become so popular that one study estimates that in the UK there are 1.2 billion selfies taken a year.

Young people growing up with technology and the internet at their fingertips could be seen to be the first 'generation selfie'. Taking and sharing selfies is one way that young people communicate with others, document their lives, express themselves and have fun. Taking selfies gives young people a means to create an image for themselves – when you're taking the photo yourself, you can present yourself in the best light. This can lead to some young people putting undue importance on their appearance and feeling under pressure to get lots of 'likes' on photos they share.

Helping children to feel secure about themselves and cope with being part of the selfie generation is really important. You can start by encouraging discussion about the reasons for taking selfies and what they think makes the 'perfect selfie'. Ask them if they edit their images in any way and if they do find out why. They might simply enjoy creating beautiful pictures but if they are trying to live up to an unrealistic image you might want to find out more.

These top tips should help:



Remind your child that age limits for most social media accounts are age 13 and over. Age limits help to protect your child on social media from inappropriate contact and content, so they should wait until they reach that age before they start using social networks.



Selfies aren't a bad thing and it's becoming the norm for young people to take lots of them to communicate with friends. But if you find that your child is behaving in ways that you don't recognise, try to **open up a conversation** with them about how selfies make them feel.



Your selfie is yours and it's up to you what you do with it. Set a good example for your child by thinking about their **online privacy** before posting lots of selfies featuring them.



Selfies are now so commonplace that people forget to ask permission before taking them. Talk to your child about selfies they take with other people **and remind them to check that others are happy** for those pictures to be posted online



Talk about self-esteem with your child. Does seeing selfies that other people have taken make them feel differently about their own image? If they're over 13 and share selfies on social media, how does it make them feel

when they receive likes? What would they think if they didn't get any likes on a picture of themselves?



Suggest they **think before they post** selfies as anything they do online could be there forever and visible to anyone. Ask them how a friend, teacher or relative might feel if they saw that particular image?

SEXTING

It's also a good idea to discuss whether your child ever feels pressured to share selfies that are sexually suggestive, naked or near-naked, online and via mobile.

Research indicates that the reasons people tend to engage in sexting are to show off, show interest in someone, prove commitment or just as a joke. But sexting can have extremely serious consequences – for the sender, recipient and subject of the image:

- If someone takes, holds or shares indecent images of anyone under the age of 18, they are breaking the law under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Even if they do so voluntarily in the context of a girlfriend/boyfriend relationship.
- Images can easily be manipulated, copied, posted online or sent to others within seconds

Although it can be a difficult topic to discuss it's better to have a difficult conversation than to wait for a problem to arise:

- Talk to your child about sexting now, but don't assume they are necessarily doing it. It's especially important if they are an older teen who is in a relationship or considering starting one
- Discuss sexting as part of a wider conversation about relationships. Let them know that you understand they want to explore their sexual identity but make sure they understand they should never feel pressured into doing anything they don't want to do
- Explain that it's illegal to take, hold or share indecent images of anyone under the age of 18 under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. They should avoid passing these kind of images on if they receive them, as they are breaking the law
- If you're concerned that sexting is taking place at your child's school, speak to their teacher. They might be able to take action as part of sex education classes or in line with the school's anti-bullying policy
- If you're concerned that someone has sent your child indecent pictures or videos or that a stranger has made inappropriate contact online, report it to Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Command of the National Crime Agency. It is also worth contacting your internet or mobile provider and the Internet Watch Foundation will be able to help to ensure the image is removed from the internet.

More Information

www.antibullyingpro.com

www.parentzone.org.uk

www.parentinfo.org/

www.vodafone.com/content/parents

www.vodafone.com/content/parents/advice/sexting.html

<http://www.ceop.police.uk/>



OUR PROGRAMMES

The Diana Award



www.diana-award.org.uk



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Network/Training & Mentoring



www.facebook.com/thedianaawardd



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Anti-Bullying Ambassadors



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PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK!

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/thedianaaward