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Cyber Bullying Can Be a Child Killer

Children Are At Risk from the Dark Side of Social Media

This is no exaggeration. There are documented cases where children as young as fourteen have been driven to suicide after reading denigrating remarks about themselves on chat lines. Parents and carers need to be aware of the dangers. Some of the apps may seem innocent enough, and they are easy to download by IT-savvy teenagers; but they are more than just colourful icons on a smart-phone screen. They open the door for a litter of vindictive trolls who take delight in posting cruel comments that hit the kids harder than might be imagined. These apps can be deadly, and they need to be deleted from your children's phones!

Most children seem to have smart phones. There's no denying they are handy communication devices; and the apps that provide chat lines give kids the means to share thoughts and confidantialities with their peers that they might prefer not to discuss with parents. It is understandable that, when it comes to sensitive and very personal matters, children often find it hard to talk about them with adults; so, respecting the privacy of youngsters is important and really precludes spying on them. Anyway, carers might reason, friendly banter happens in the school yard every day, so where's the harm in some back-and-forth on-line chat? The truth of it is, there are dangerous individuals lurking in the shadows of Social Media who use some of the sites to cause pain and suffering simply because they can.

It should be remembered that young people have limited experience of life's problems and how to cope with them. They also respond to criticism and personal insults in ways that reflect their personality which is still only developing. Although those with a strong sense of self-belief may be inclined to dismiss the odd casual smears as inconsequential; the sensitive ones will take demeaning comments about their appearance or attitude on board. These particularly cruel attacks are intended to undermine self-esteem; and despite there being little or no truth in the content, the vulnerable start to believe the lies. If the slurring continues, very soon the victims of this cyber bullying are at an all-time low and on the point of desperation.

Who are the bullies, anyway? Some may know their victims, many don't; all but the most brazen keep their identity a secret. They can do that. Social Media provides them with the opportunity to be whomsoever they wish. Fake on-line profiles are created all the time; but on some sites they are unnecessary. There are apps for chat rooms that don't require them, and exercise practically no control over who uses their services and what is said on them. I am not meaning Facebook, which continually reviews its policies and restrictions regarding public usage to deter and prevent unsavoury postings. I believe that is because the organisers care – about their reputation; about the millions who use the facility. This other lot, however, just don't seem to have consciences. And the concern for all parents should be that the children in their care may possibly have one or more of these dangerous apps on their smart phones. Following is some information that should be taken very seriously and, hopefully, passed on.

These are the dangerous apps. If your children have them on their phones, they need removing **Immediately!**

10 APPS TEENS ARE USING THAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW



Calculator%

This app looks like a calculator, but functions like a secret photo vault.



Omegle

A free online chat website that promotes chatting anonymously to strangers



Yellow

This app is designed to allow teens to flirt with each other in a Tinder-like atmosphere.



Whisper

An anonymous app where the creators promote sharing secrets and meeting new people.



Ask.fm

Ask an anonymous question and get an answer. This app has been linked to the most severe forms of cyber bullying.



Hot or Not

Strangers rate your profile. Goal is to lead to a hook up.



Burn Book

Post anonymous rumours about people through audio messages, texts and photos.



Wishbone

An app that allows users to compare kids against each other and rate them on a scale.



Klik

Messaging app. Klik has built-in apps and web content that would be filtered on home computer.



Instagram

Many kids are now creating fake accounts to hide content from parents. Kids also like to text using Instagram because messages are deleted once a user leaves conversation.

FOR MORE INFO: APPSOLUTELYAPRIL.COM

You don't want your children to become one of these statistics:

In 2016, suicide was the leading cause of death of Australian children between 5 and 17 years of age.

According to the American College Health Association, the suicide rate among young adults, ages 15-24, has tripled since the 1950s and suicide is currently the second most common cause of death among college students. Suicides among girls ages 15 to 19 doubled from 2007 to 2015, when it reached its highest point in 40 years. The suicide rate for boys ages 15 to 19 grew by 30 percent from 2007 to 2015.

Parents and carers please be vigilant. Your children are at risk from some types of Social Media; and preventing them from accessing the dangerous ones isn't bullying on your part. That is exactly what you are trying to prevent.

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