

Screen time and Digital Communication for Kids & Teens: How to Manage it All?

Session 6 of 10



Your host, Alison Meredith:

Alison Meredith taught High School Math in the 1990s, at Dobyns-Bennett and at schools in North Carolina and Massachusetts. She received a national award in 1997. Alison and her husband Tim have been home-educating their kids for 20 years; they have 7 kids ages 8-20.

Tim and Alison own Holston IT, a business which provides cybersecurity to other businesses throughout Southwest Virginia and the Tri-Cities.

Alison is a best-selling author. She and other IT leaders wrote **You Are the #1 Target**, to help business owners implement cybersecurity. She also has a Kindle book about protecting kids in digital communications.



Kids and Teens
Have EASY ACCESS to stuff that is
inappropriate and dangerous.

Stuff is ***thrown at them,***
even if they are working hard to
do the right thing.

They shoot themselves in the foot with:

- innocent ignorance or
- misplaced friendliness

If your kids are using *any* type of digital communication, then they:

quite possibly are communicating with

Sexual Predators or Cyberbullies.

almost certainly have seen and read stuff you would find shocking. . . *without ever asking to see or read it.*

Alison's Stories

1. A texting group involving two of my teenaged sons
 - Peter (on the call with us now, as an adult)
 - Paul (fake name, real son)
2. Reading messages on one of my teenager's Discord chat
 - John (fake name, real son)

THE FACE YOU MAKE...

**WHEN THE PERSON YOUR STALKING
FINDS OUT YOUR STALKING**



SWISS ARMY MANIA!



Wrong place wrong time

ROSES ARE RED, NUTS ARE BROWN

skirts go up, pants go down.

body to body, skin to skin.

when its stiff, stick it in.

It goes in dry and comes

out wet and the longer

it's in, the stronger

it gets, its comes out

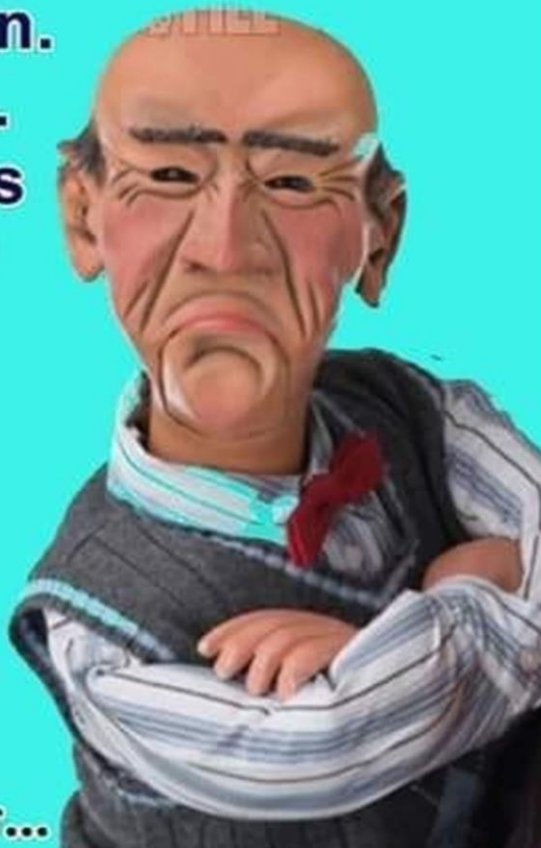
dripping and it

starts to sag. Its not

what you think its a

LIPTON Tea bag.

get your mind out of the gutter...



One of my friends gave excellent advice on how to respond to this desensitization.

She sat down next to her son and had the following conversation, holding the phone in her hand next to him, displaying one of the inappropriate memes (he'd already seen it. So, nothing new in showing it to him again). The conversation went something like this:

Mom, calmly: "Look at this." (points to the meme, counts to 5 silently)

Son: (No comment, just sitting and looking)

Mom, calmly: "Think about this." (continues to point to it, counts to 5 silently) Son: (No comment, just sitting and thinking)

Mom, calmly: "Would your dad or I ever post something like this?" (pauses, waits) Son: (shakes head slowly)

Mom, calmly: "Do you know any respected adults in our life who would say or post this?"

Son: (pauses, shakes his head).

Mom, calmly: "Explain to me why this is wrong."

Son: Pauses, then talks—conversation between son and mom continues.

There were about a dozen people on the text thread I described on p.18-19, and I knew many of the parents of others in the group. So we parents have spent lots of time debriefing, sharing stories, trying to figure out how to handle this. One big shocker is how our own boys don't think this stuff is a big deal.

The most common responses they give us are, "It's just 8th -grade locker room stuff. No big deal," or, "Yeah, it's bad, but that's the kind of stuff that's out there." The "aha" our kids need is not just that they shouldn't post stuff like that—of course—but also that they must speak up if they are present when such content is shared. Yet, they can't speak up if they don't even notice it, if they are just shrugging their shoulders. How do we address the de-sensitization of these Digital Natives?

<https://www.holstonit.com/files/2019/10/How-Can-We-Protect-Kids-20191011.pdf>

A chat I discovered on Discord

- one of my teenaged sons
 - (We'll call him "John")
- A random girl

This 1-on-1 chat started right after the two of them had been on the same League Team together, playing League of Legends

John: "That was fun."

Her: "Yeah. af."

John: "That was fun."

Her: "Yeah. af."

John: What's af?

John: "That was fun."

Her: "Yeah. af."

John: What's af?

Her: as fuck.

John: "That was fun."

Her: "Yeah. af."

John: What's af?

Her: as fuck.

John: Oh.
I didn't know that was a thing.

My son: "That was fun."

Her: "Yeah. af."

My son: What's af?

Her: as fuck.

My son: Oh.

I didn't know that was a thing.

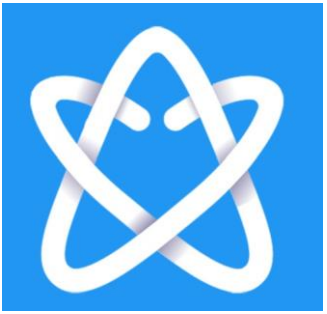
Her: It's a thing.

What can we do?

- Put Bark and Safe Lagoon logos here (copy from session 2 or 3, there was one or two slides with their logos and a link to Kendra Fletcher's Youtube page)

What Can We Do?

Use Parental Monitoring Apps



Safe Lagoon <https://safelagoon.com/en/>

Gives more accessibility to parents
Shows parents everything



Bark <https://www.bark.us/>

Gives more privacy to the kids
Shows parents helpful snippets, flagged
for violence/depression/etc

Parental Monitoring Apps— How to Begin Using Them

Have a Conversation:

Ask Your Kid/Teen for Input.

Don't just "lay down the law." Listen.

Not sure how to lead this conversation?

See page [11 of this document](#)

Configure Your Tool Thoughtfully and Thoroughly:

[Posted here](#) is an excellent 26-minute guide by Kendra Fletcher for configuring both Safe Lagoon and Bark, by Kendra Fletcher.

Kendra's YouTube channel also has an excellent 11 minute review of Safe Lagoon.

What can we do?

- Listen to your kids.
 - Talk with your kids.
 - Communicate.
 - Open and Honest.
-
- Teach them how to communicate
 - Use the APCs as a parent (link from whitepaper)

What can we do?

- “Talk with your children and start early. Don’t have one conversation on the day that you give them their first cell phone and think you’re done. *Talk to them often* – have many different conversations over their childhood and into adulthood.”

This quote and the content of this webinar are taken from Are Your Kids Naked Online by Lisa & Chris Good

Questions?