

# STEPS TO SAFETY

## Helping Your Teen Make a Cyber P.L.A.N.

Technology changes daily and new sites and apps are launched all the time, so it is vital teens understand safe uses for the Internet and that parents consistently monitor their teen's use of the computer, tablet, phone, and all Internet devices.

- ✦ What are the rules for the use of the Internet in your home?
- ✦ Where is your computer located in your home? Is it in a public place in your home?
- ✦ What spam filters and safety settings are enabled on your computer and other devices?
- ✦ Create a list of Internet safety rules for your household. Post them in a conspicuous place, next to a computer, tablet, or a phone charging station. Review these rules with your teen and ask your teen to explain to you why each rule is important in helping them to make safe and responsible choices.
- ✦ Talk to your teen about their use of the Internet. Help them to understand that there are some people on the Internet who are not who they say they are. We really never know who we are communicating with on the Internet, so it is always important to make safe and responsible choices.
- ✦ Because the online community is much larger than our world, it is important that your teen understand that there are certain behaviors that are unsafe and inappropriate:
  - Communicating with someone they don't know
  - Posting personal information on the Internet
  - Posting pictures online or sending a picture to someone they don't know without permission from you or another trusted adult
  - Entering a chat room and engaging in a conversation
  - Visiting inappropriate sites
  - Posting inappropriate pictures
  - Using the Internet or social media to harass or bully anyone

### How to Help Your Teen Make a Cyber P.L.A.N.

Discuss the importance of each step of the Cyber P.L.A.N. with your teen:

#### ✦ Step 1

P stands for permission – Your teen needs to have your **permission** for the use of Internet devices. Stress the importance of protecting passwords for their computer and their phone.

#### ✦ Step 2

L Stands for Location – Your teen needs to understand that you or another trusted adult should have knowledge of the **locations** they visit online, including websites and game sites. They should never visit a site or use an app unless it has been approved by you or another trusted adult, and they should never go to chat rooms.

### Step 3

A stands for Activity – Your teen needs to understand that they should only use their devices for the permitted **activity** of a game, site, or app that is allowed by you or another trusted adult. Your teen needs to understand that using the Internet or social media to harass or bully someone is not an activity that is permitted, and that in some cases it can be an illegal activity.

### Step 4

N stands for Name – Your teen needs to know the **name** of anyone they interact with online to make sure that they know who they are really talking to, that they are a real person, and that they are who they say they are. Stress the idea that your teen should not chat with or reply to a stranger online, just like they would not give personal information to a stranger in person. Your teen should never agree to meet anyone that they have met online.

*Discuss that making safe choices on Internet devices is a condition of having access to those devices. Assure your teen that they should talk to you any time they have a question about anything that they encounter on the Internet that is confusing or makes them feel uncomfortable*

*While it is important to respect your teen's privacy, you have a responsibility as the owner and account holder of those devices to monitor the uses and activities of them. Your teen should also understand that it is a privilege to use these devices.*

