

Zipit UK



Type of intervention



Online/App

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:

Primary prevention

Children and Young
People (Victims)

Young People (12-17 Years) | Male & Female | Online/App | Internet Specific Interventions | English

Target population

Young people aged 14 -16 years, who may experience pressures to send or receive 'sexts'. Sexts are sexually explicit texts, images or videos sent using mobile phones.

Delivery organisation

ChildLine – a free and confidential helpline dedicated to children and young people in the UK and managed by the NSPCC.

Mode and context of delivery

Zipit is an app for mobile phones to do with sexting. It has been developed by ChildLine with the aim of giving young people tools to help diffuse pressures they may experience around sexting. 'Sexts' are sexually explicit texts, images or videos sent using mobile phones. Consultations and research with young people have shown that these are very common, but that young people are reluctant to seek help in dealing with them. Zipit was developed for use on Android, Blackberry and Apple phones. It offers funny images to send instead of explicit sexual material and encourages young people to contact ChildLine if they need advice or support. ChildLine is a free, confidential helpline dedicated to children and young people, which provides telephone and online counselling, advice and information. Zipit was launched and promoted with a digital and media campaign.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

The Zipit app was developed by people with specialist technical knowledge and creative skills in relation to the design and development of apps for mobiles. They worked with people expert knowledge of children and of sexting and with young people directly. Media and communication specialists designed and implemented a promotional plan to ensure young people heard about and downloaded the app.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Downloading and using the app takes only a few minutes. There is additional material available on sexting on the ChildLine website, including a video which lasts for 10 minutes.

Download: www.childline.org.uk/zipit

Help and advice for young people: www.childline.org.uk/sexting

Help and advice for parents: www.nspcc.org.uk/sexting

Description of intervention

Sexting is sharing self-generated, sexually explicit texts, images or video via mobiles. It can include photographs of young people in underwear and naked and sexual images. NSPCC research shows sexting is seen as commonplace by many young people. However it can be coercive and very distressing, especially when images that are shared as part of a relationship are misused and circulated via social media. Young people experience peer pressure to sext but are unlikely to seek help to deal with this, so Zipit has been developed to empower them by providing tools to diffuse the pressures associated with sexting.

Zipit targets 14 – 16 year olds of both genders, through an app which can be used on Android, Blackberry and Apple mobile phones. The app is free. Its tag line is 'keep flirty chat on the right track' and it offers a series of funny images to send in response to requests to sext, instead of explicit material. It is suitable for use by straight as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual young people.

Zipit also offers advice and support through ChildLine's free confidential online and telephone service, where there is more information about sexting as well as the opportunity to speak to a counsellor. There is a ten minute video drama called Exposed, which is about a girl who sent a naked picture of herself to her boyfriend. It also considers other issues around sexting, including:

- What could happen to a sext?
- Who might see it?
- What are the risks?
- Who are you sending it to?
- Why do you want to send it?

ChildLine is also working with the Internet Watch Foundation to help children get images taken down from public websites and social networks if they are under 18 years old.

Evaluation

An evaluation of the app is currently underway. For up to date findings contact ChildLine.

References

Ringrose, Jessica, Gill, Rosalind, Livingstone, Sonia, Harvey, Laura (2012) A qualitative study of children, young people and 'sexting': a report prepared for the NSPCC. London: NSPCC.

NSPCC (2012) Children, young people and 'sexting': summary of a qualitative study. London: NSPCC.

The above reports can be accessed on-line at www.nspcc.org/inform.resourcesforprofessionals

Contact details

See ChildLine website www.childline.org.uk. 0800 1111

App is available from Apple, Android and Blackberry app stores

For further information contact Hannah Flynn, ChildLine 0207 8252 960 hannah.flynn@nspcc.org.uk