



LINCOLN Medical Education Partnership  
Strengthening Families through Health Education

## RISKY BEHAVIORS ON MYSPACE March 2009

In a recent research study, as reported by Reuters on January 6, 2009, randomly chosen teen profiles on the social-networking site MySpace found that 54% of profiles available to the public showed information regarding high risk behavior.

Adolescents and young adults tend to use this technology for entertainment. Sometimes they create an identity for themselves that is not completely accurate in terms of all the information they post. Some teens are posting accurate information. Either way, there is a concern. There is a risk with engaging in such behavior.

Do our youth know that a person's online social networking can impact their applications to college or career paths? It is important to help youth understand what the risks are and to help them to modify their behaviors to prevent them from revealing too much information to the world. Sexual predators, as well as future employers and universities view this material alike.

### **How Can I keep My Teen Safe on MySpace?**

These are a few resources from various organizations that may help you learn how to keep your children from abusing or misusing MySpace and the Internet:

- **Digital Technology 10:** Sponsored by The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, this website offers a "crash course in the most popular communication tools used by teens today" and "offers guidance and advice to help parents monitor their teen's activities on these devices."
- **MySpace and Your Child:** Norton (Symantec Corporation) offers a brief primer for parents on what MySpace is, and simple rules for protecting your child.
- **MySpace 4 Parents: Learn How to Protect Your Child in MySpace:** This digital "e-book" not only helps parents understand MySpace, but also teaches parents how to "access pictures, videos, blogs and comments left on their child's MySpace pages to help them monitor their child's activities." Copies are available for \$12.95.
- **Computing Safely and Privacy Online and in the Home:** This About.com index of numerous internet safety factsheets provides separate guides on MySpace safety for teens and their parents, as well as other information on cyberspace safety.
- **Parents: Protect Your Children From Online Dangers:** Internet Protection for Kids offers parents the service of tracking information on Children's MySpace pages.
- **Internet Safety Tips for Middle School Kids:** This website, sponsored by CommonSense Media, provides age-specific online safety resources including a video on internet safety, tips and pamphlets, and a discussion board for concerned community members.

(Source: jointogether.org, 1-12-09)