



# Be You In Focus Webinar Transcript

## Supporting Students' Diverse Online Safety Needs

Presented by Natalie Fanariotis (of Beyond Blue) and Greg Gebhart (Office of the eSafety Commissioner)

### Natalie Fanariotis

Good afternoon, everybody. We will start shortly in about four minutes, but just wanted to welcome our early arrivals to our webinar today. You'll see on the screen a little bit of information just to make sure you make the most of the experience and enjoy being online with us today. You've got a control panel on your screen, so just familiarise yourself with the GoTo webinar control panel and check your audio is connected to the right device. That might be your headphones or your phone or computer speakers - you just need to select the correct device. You can also ask for assistance via our moderators. Marnie is online today, along with Chantelle. Just enter your question in the question box via the control pane, but we also have on the screen a support number. If you are having any further difficulties, please feel free to contact that number directly and as we said at the start, everyone has been placed in listen-only mode for the webinar duration, which means your mic and webcams will remain off. So, please use the question box to chat with us. We will get started in a couple of minutes and I will be back online shortly.

We are going to get started in about a minute's time, just for those that have joined us already – welcome. We've got someone from Denmark online with us, so that's quite exciting. Thank you to everyone across Australia and internationally it seems, for joining us today and we'll get started shortly.

You do have the GoTo webinar control pane and there is a question box there. We really invite you to share where you're joining us today from and also send across questions throughout the webinar. We have placed everyone in listen-only mode, so your mics and webcams have been turned off but please again use the questions box as we go through – to ask questions, share comments or any of your reflections throughout the presentation. If you do need assistance, we do have our moderators online today - Chantelle and Marnie. They're here to help you and to respond to questions where they can but we also have a Q&A component of this webinar which will allow for myself and our other presenter to have a conversation and respond to some of your comments and queries. If you do need technical support again, please use the chat box, but you can also contact us via our technical support line, which is on your screen at the moment.

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We have reached four o'clock, so we are going to make a start. And as I said earlier: welcome, we're happy to have everybody online with us today and joining us for our In Focus webinar supporting Diverse Online Safety Needs. We're excited to have so many of you join us today. So again, welcome and thank you for being here. My name is Natalie Fanariotis and I'm the Implementation Lead for Be You here at Beyond Blue.

I work really closely with the teams across our Delivery Partners; Early Childhood Australia and headspace, and my background is in education and child/youth wellbeing in schools. This is an incredibly important topic to be learning about and discussing today and I'm really looking forward to introducing today's overview and our subject matter expert shortly.

As we get started now, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of lands and waters throughout Australia and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging. I am joining us today from Melbourne, Victoria, so I would also like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation.

As we gather online today from all across our country and internationally, I invite you all to think about which lands you're joining us from and reflect on what that connection means to you.

On behalf of the Be You team, we recognise the importance of continued connection to culture, country and community to the health and social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families. We continue to embed Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing to all our Be You practices.

Now whenever we talk about mental health, it's really important that we do look after ourselves and check in with how we're feeling and thinking. As educators we all come with our own experience and if there is anything that we cover today that raises any uncomfortable feelings for you, then feel free to opt out for a bit. So again, when talking about mental health, this is really important and also including online safety, which we're going to be discussing today.

We want this to be a really safe and open space for everyone, and our moderators are also here to answer your questions or respond to any comments throughout the session. Self-care is really important and an incredibly important aspect of the work we do within Be You, so it's important to prioritise your well-being and focus on every dimension of your health when we're looking after ourselves.

You might have seen some of this information already while you're waiting to join the webinar today, but just a few reminders before we get into Online Safety content. We recognise that you already come with a lot of expertise and knowledge today and we really encourage you to get involved and share this with others. So, please again use that chat functionality, ask questions, write comments. We'll also be running some polls throughout the session and also providing a feedback survey. The survey really helps us evolve what we're offering you and making sure that it's meeting your needs. We hope to respond to as many questions via the chat and especially during our dedicated Q&A time towards the end of the session. So please comment and we will respond. Please also note that this session is going to be recorded and available on the Be You events page with an approximately two weeks of today and you'll also be provided with a certificate of participation for attending today. As I said before, if you do have any difficulties, please chat to our moderators or contact our technical support line. The number is on your screen at the moment.

So, let's dive into our learning today - Supporting Student's Diverse Online Safety Needs!

You can see on the slide what we are going to be unpacking today with the expert support of our guest panellist who I will introduce shortly.

To set the scene for webinar, let's reflect for a moment on why we are all here together online today.

For children and young people today, being online, using social media, and exploring and using different online applications has become an integral part of their lives.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, our young people are amongst the highest online users, with those within the 15–17 year age bracket leading the way. At the moment we know 18 hours is being spent online each week for personal use, and these figures from 2016 have and will continue to be on a steady increase as our population and digital world expands.

We know there are many benefits to being connected to the online world, which we will highlight today, but there are also challenges which we know many educators joining us today would have either:

- observed in their learning communities

- had conversation with children, young people and their families about
- or unfortunately, played a part in responding to an online issue or aftermath of an online incident that has occurred in your learning community

Fortunately, we have you here today to share that knowledge with us and we have a fantastic guest panellist joining us. To lead us through all of this is our wonderful guest panellist Greg Gebhart, Senior Trainer at the Office of the eSafety Commissioner.

Greg is one of Australia's leading online safety presenters. He has a strong background in leadership and change and has held senior positions including Regional Manager for the Victorian Industry and Education Partnerships program and Chair of his Regional Adult Education Board. Greg has been recognised for his achievements and passion for helping others, receiving a global achievement award through the International Society for Technology in Education.

On behalf of all our attendees, welcome Greg and I'm going to handover to you!

### Greg Gebhart

My pleasure Nat and thank you for the introduction, it's fantastic to be a part of the session today. And I believe you'll come back with us later today in the presentation to unpack some of the areas around wellbeing and the health of young people. And certainly, in the digital age, digital technology has a lot to do with that particular space, but let's start with a little bit about eSafety and give you some background. eSafety was established in 2015 to help Australians have safer experiences online. If you look at the left-hand side of the screen there, you'll note that while we formally started as the children's eSafety Commissioner and we're now doing lots of work right across the board. Certainly, we're working with parents, women online and we're working with seniors. In fact, those over 55 years of age are the most scammed group in Australia, and we've been providing support to them. But young people today really are connected, and it is very important that we are able to provide support in those particular areas. As a government agency, we were created and we now operate under legislation, which is the Enhancing Online Safety Act of 2015. As you'll see from this slide, there are so many different areas that we work in and that legislation assists us to try and support Australian citizens to keep safe.

We're in fact even starting to work in early childhood years at the moment with a new program for one to five-year-olds and early childhood centres. We have a focus on education and prevention and all of our programs are underpinned by our research and our research team is continually publishing content on our website. But despite all the education preventive efforts in the world not just by us, but all the other agencies, it's inevitable that online abuse still occurs.

And unfortunately, while that does happen, we're pleased to know that the eSafety Commissioner can assist when sometimes these issues are occurring and certainly the area we're going to talk about today is vulnerable young people and the mental health and the wellbeing of them. Australians turn to us for help knowing that we can investigate serious online abuse, like cyber bullying and image-based abuse and help with the removal and hold perpetrators to account for their actions in these particular spaces.

I want to talk about what might increase the student's vulnerability online and in today's session, we're going to look at some of the diverse needs of our young people online, especially as I said, those who are vulnerable. Many young people have vulnerabilities online and offline which means they are facing multiple vulnerabilities both bullying and cyber bullying in many other areas as well. Many of these young people also require additional education around the way they use technology and particularly around developing support networks for them so that they can have positive experiences in the online space. So as we begin to focus our attention of what might increase the students vulnerability we might start with a poll to gauge your understanding of what are the things that are increasing student vulnerability.

So, if you'd like to think about this for a moment, and if you like to tell us, what do you think could increase a young person's vulnerability. Now, this is not an exhaustive list, but there are some factors that perhaps get you to think about what I'm going to cover my presentation today. You might consider the students that you teach and work with now and the influences and their ability to feel empowered, controlled and have a voice. So, let's see you clicking on the button and we'll have a look at how our results go. I'm certainly seeing that those young people who are in out-of-home care, the foster care system, certainly issues for them and those particular areas. We're certainly seeing the cultural and linguistically diverse young people who are struggling sometimes with some of these issues, particularly the fact that they don't often report issues that happen living in remote and rural areas which often don't have the support in those places. And living with a disability, certainly sometimes technology is a great place to move to and often your disability is not recognised because you can hide behind the screen and those in the LGBTIQ+ area also. I'm looking at our results there and I can see that living with a disability seems to be the most popular answer in today's poll, so thank you very much for sharing that with us.

Vulnerability happen across a whole range of children. And certainly, when we break this down, we often see this multilateral and intersectional issues that impact on young people. If you look at the personal characteristics, the situational factors that cause issues in there, I think we have to realise that sometimes it could be ethnicity or race. It could be the culture. It could be something like your gender, it could be your sexuality, your age, could be cognitive social and emotional issues that are happening. And for many young people that have a combination of these when we certainly see the susceptibility to online risk, it can sometimes be shaped by many of these factors and everyone can experience vulnerability at different times of their lives. This really depends on the interplay of circumstances of life events and a vulnerability lens alone does not provide a complete picture of the factors that underline a young person's susceptibility to online risks and harm. It is increasingly apparent that an individual's vulnerability online is multi-layered, intersectional and can also be empowered by situational factors. For example, those in out-of-home care, those who are in areas where perhaps the family environment or perhaps the low literacy levels. This could include things like domestic violence in the home or being in the foster care system. Central to intersectionality is the recognition of the inequalities that are rarely the result of a single factor but can be shaped by different relationships and experiences. Sometimes these elements can also contribute to social exclusion and this could be through racism or gender inequality. Many young people have multiple factors to contend with and that becomes certainly a challenge for us. If we look at the Royal Commission and some of the findings here in the Commission's report on child sexual abuse.

There are indicators that children who are vulnerable to online harm are already at risk offline and in those instances, digital media is just serving to facilitate those issues when we look at young people who fit these categories. It could be young people who are in foster care, it could be special needs or additional needs children. It could be those living with mental health difficulties, it could be those living with communication difficulties. It could be a physical disability. It could be from the culturally and linguistically diverse community. It could be living in a rural remote area or they could be part of the LGBTIQ+ sector and certainly for them the issues that they deal with daily can often not be recognised by others.

So, with these young people being in the digital space and the digital space also being a very important place for them, we do see the impact of trauma when it happens. We've seen for many of these young people the previous maltreatment or trauma that happened. Perhaps it's a situational, maybe in the home maybe the community. It could even be society that's causing those issues. We see the loss of connection to family and culture perhaps the child has been relocated through the foster care system or moved in and out of home or perhaps a homeless person. Maybe it's someone that's got a sporting contract and has moved from an environment perhaps in the Northern parts of Australia to the South with a culture that is so different. We also see this multiple placement and parade of strangers both sometimes in foster care where children are dealing with a multitude of family members to support them. But also, for many of them coming across the wide good number of support services and the fact that even their counsellors are not regulated in those particular spaces. These young people who suffer from trauma often have a limited knowledge of education about sex, sexuality and respectful relationships. They don't have the family environment that could really assist them to understand what happens in these digital spaces and in the context of their environment. The higher risk of online grooming sexual exploitation is certainly happening for those looking

for connection. Those in foster care those with perhaps disabilities who are looking for someone who can relate to them and to share their own experiences.

Our research has been very clear that some of these groups are probably targeted in quite different ways. We've often found young people living with the disability perhaps have contact with strangers more often. And if we look at someone perhaps with Asperger's syndrome, their attraction to gaming and how well they function in there and the fact that they're accepted in there. And for many young people they may not even be aware that the person they're talking to knows that they have a disability. We look at our CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) community and certainly young people there, almost in a situation where they sometimes feel it's very difficult to be able to communicate. What we do know is that they're unlikely to talk about these things and that could be because perhaps the cultural background they were brought up in perhaps the country they grew up in, the technology was quite different or perhaps they don't believe that their parents understand the technology and struggle with that conversation. Students in care are at a higher risk of sexual exploitation and grooming and again, probably foster care support services where a young child is trying to get something that becomes a connection in their life and those living in rural remote areas are less likely to have professional support. We see less specialised support as we move away from the big cities. The distance to support means we have to travel and sometimes the support there is not specialised as one person may have to fulfil the role of 20, 30 or even 40 people.

So young people really have diverse needs and we need to think about how we work in these areas. These young people may be less able to distinguish between reality and fiction. If we look at the gaming world for many young people, particularly boys who move across to this particular space and often say I have more friends than I've ever had in my life. I spend more time with my friends and mainly because we're in the gaming world. We also see girls who are using social media with large numbers of friendships. And again, the challenge is for them to understand; is this a real friend or is it not a real friend? They often believe that the casual acquaintances they build online people that they can trust and they trust them accordingly. Some of you have heard of the term FOMO (fear of missing out). We look at peer pressure and we also look at the exclusion and I'm reminded of a 16-year-old girl who said to me, "I'm pretty safe online. I don't have too many problems. No one can see my stuff except my 3655 friends". So, I think what you can see in there, is that some of these young people really have no concept about what a real friendship and relationship is about. For many of them, they find it hard to manage financial issues particularly relating to online activities. They don't have a good understanding of things like in-app purchases and how these things can be real money and how they can trick you into spending online. And of course, we actually see them more likely to post inappropriate content without understanding the consequences. They don't often understand about intimate photos, the emotional fallout and the legal issues that may go with posting an image like this online.

But there are certainly plenty of possible impacts that this has on the wellbeing and mental health and it's been an area that the eSafety Commissioner has begun to focus more on and certainly the support services we need and the understanding of this area is growing. In fact, we might ask Nat if you'd like to come back for a little while and talk a little bit about the impact of the online usage on the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people.

## **Natalie Fanariotis**

Thanks so much Greg and thank you for unpacking that in this introduction as well. Definitely a lot of thinking on my end too and reflecting on the students that I've worked with in the past. A lot of what you've brought up really resonates with me. So I'd really encourage again everybody; please use the chat box. If there are things that Greg has spoken about that resonate with you that you can relate to your context or you have more questions. Please check in with our moderators because we'd love to talk through that through our Q&A session. So it was really interesting as well Greg, that you unpacked that intersect with one another of each of those factors and what we need to be really mindful of when considering students in our learning communities. A couple of things again that you had said some young people don't report as well when things are going wrong. And so, they're missing out on the support and care that their educators can provide to them. And also looking at those risks that occur offline can be exacerbated, or I guess reflected in the online world too.

So, what I wanted to highlight now, which Greg has touched on with a couple of points, will hopefully affirm what Greg's been saying, but just to get you to think a little bit further about the mental health impacts. For example, we start to think about how engaging in the online world impacts their wellbeing and their mental health and especially those who are more vulnerable.

The presence of digital technologies in the lives of children and young people is not a new phenomenon. However, educators, parents and policymakers are questioning the effect that technology can have on the mental health and wellbeing and now more than ever. It is important that as we talk through this, we do remember that digital platforms are an extension of the offline worlds in which children and young people play, where they learn and where they connect with others.

Our student's may be digital natives and we do have some catching up to do in this space to understand both the benefits but also the potential risks and how we can promote safe and mentally healthy online engagement.

The concerns we have are understandable, given that there is an increase in media and policy debate on this topic and there is a lack of evidence-based research on strategies available to date on whether digital technologies, including social media, cause mental health problems in children, and young people. There is, however, some research available globally that shows the association that exists between the type and frequency between online use and a state of wellbeing. Many of the impacts are interrelated, so a discussion around each of these must be integrated. Everything you see on your screen at the moment, I'm going to unpack in a little bit more detail. We know that online usage can exacerbate feelings of anxiety. Research undertaken by the Australian Psychological Society in 2015 found that over half of Australian teenagers connected to social media 15 minutes before bed every night. And almost two in five connected within 15 minutes of waking up. I guess I ask our audience as well to think about the statistics and research that I'm showing you, for our children and young people and how that might actually resonate in your own personal lives too. More than one in two teenagers found it difficult to sleep or relax after spending time on social networking sites and 60% felt brain burnout from being constantly connected to social media and young people, as Greg mentioned, express their fear of missing out. Fear that other people are having more fun than them or experiencing different things to them and stated the importance of keeping connected within their social networks online. So making sure they weren't missing out on what their peers were actually engaged in.

The frequency of use was also shown to contribute to feelings of connectedness and self-worth. When we're thinking about the links between technology and depression, the Lancet recently published a UK study about social media use and mental health in adolescence. These findings showed that greater social media use related to online harassment, poor sleep, low self-esteem and poor body image which in turn related to high depressive symptoms.

And again as we're talking through, remember there is a lack of evidence-based research on all that we're talking about so keep that in mind and keep in mind that the online world is an extension of that offline world and what those protective and risk factors are for that child or young person. Sleep has also been closely shown to link with mental health outcomes and social media use has been associated with experiences of short sleep hours, the time it takes to fall asleep and sleep disruption. I definitely know that for myself when I have my phone near me at night-time and this is true for our children and young people.

Yet many young people sleep in close proximity to their phones, so screen exposure before bedtime also impacts their melatonin production and the circadian rhythm. Therefore, it's altering that body's natural sleep mechanism. Spending a long time on social media might also lead to reduced sleep duration, which, if a child has a phone next to them and has incoming alerts turned on at night also with that fear of missing out of new content, that could also cause sleep disruptions. Sleep quality and quantity could also be affected by levels of anxiety or worry resulting from experiences of online harassment and bullying. We also know that mass media has been a problematic area for a long time, and this really impacts a person's

sense of self and perception about their body. Media, including social media, often highlights lifestyles and beauty that at times is unattainable to the everyday person. Many young people see images of bodies that don't actually exist in the real world, thanks to photoshopping and filtering. And the era of influences also continues to impact body image eating patterns and self-esteem. When young people spend longer periods of time on social media platforms or engaging with more appearance related content, images on social media, their mental health can be impacted. Appearance comparison can also play a critical role in the relationship between social media and body image and with young people holding that fear of missing out. They are connected to both the positive body image messaging available to them. But as well the messages that are detrimental which can result in higher levels of anxiety and that feeling of inadequacy. As we continue to explore research further and across Be You, we will continue to bring our educators more information about each of these impacts.

So, it's really important to remember as we've highlighted already, it's not all bad. And on the flip side, the digital environment can be a great equalizer for children living with those vulnerabilities or additional needs as Greg has highlighted, as it can have a destigmatising effect for young people who might otherwise feel or be left out. Technology can support independence and freedom, especially when a young person feels they may not be able to experience that in their offline reality. In addressing these needs, eSafety research has found that digital and online technology can be of enormous benefit. This can be the form of social engagement, which is particularly important for young people who have limited opportunities to socialise outside their immediate family circle. For example, they may be limited by physical disability or have difficulties in communication or social anxieties or have highly protective family members. So being online actually allows them and enables them to have that social engagement that they may be missing out on.

Technology can also help break down barriers that may be faced in the physical world enabling communication and socialization with their peers, combating isolation and provide opportunities to join communities of interest, play games and access device and support. Greg had mentioned gaming briefly and gaming is one of those examples that I think receives a lot of negative attention and again with working with families and students this has always been a point of contention with discussions. Not only between the school and the family but in the family home too. Gaming can definitely have a contributing factor to negatively impact mental health, but we also need to challenge some of our thinking and reflect on the benefits. So, if you have a student, a child or young person that you've been working with or know of, that games a lot, I'd really invite you to think about and share your comments through our questions box.

“What's in it for that young person? Why do you think they are gaming? What do they get out of it? Might they feel a sense of achievement or accomplishment? Might they feel a sense of purpose or a challenge in being able to work through problem solving? Does it help build their persistence and their resilience by levelling up each time through gaming and does gaming provide them with that sense of community and connectedness through an online gaming community?”

Don't forget this next time when you are talking with the concern family or a child or young person as is often those positive aspects along with those negative connotations with gaming. Digital online technology can also support young people to break free from low expectations. An example of this a young person who might struggle to read or write may experience success online. They might be able to develop skill in coding or learn about online hacks that create that optimal experience for them or others online and they may be able to support others with technical solutions which gives them a sense of purpose and accomplishment and just that satisfaction of being able to be successful within that environment. Finally, an important benefit also includes what the online world allows for access to help seeking information and support avenues. Avenues that we know and that I've used with students include headspace, Kids Helpline, eSafety, Reach Out and Youth Beyond Blue. There are so many out there and different applications that can be accessed without any charge all provide pathways to find out information about protecting mental health as well as provides support when it's responding to mental health needs. There are many moderated online chat spaces and these can provide a safe and confidential place to talk through concerns for a child or young person with a trusted and experienced mental health professional and confidentially, which is really important.

We've started a bit of a conversation about some of the negative and positive experiences, I just wanted to unpack before I hand over to Greg again some of the signs an educator or a family member may notice when a young person may be experiencing an online issue. We know that some people don't report when they are experiencing an issue, but these are some of the indicators that a young person could be seen to

have, that shows a heavy impact by social media issue or cyberbullying. Some of these include becoming secretive about their online experiences or changing their online usage habits. They may also withhold some information or delete certain accounts. They may be talking about social media in a different way that they used to, or you notice that with their peers in conversation. They might be avoiding people places or activities. This can be a sign that they don't want to be faced with a personal group that may have bullied them online or behaved online in a way that made them feel uncomfortable or upset. They might demonstrate a bit of a change in their personality, becoming a bit more withdrawn or anxious or sad or angry. This might be an instant change you notice or a change that occurs over time. It may be noticed directly when a young person receives a text or is actually online at that point in time.

An online experience, these all shape a young person's perception of what relationships look like. What's healthy? What's positive? What's unhealthy? What's a negative relationship? You might see that change in how they interact with their peers, with their families or as you are with yourself as educators. They might make unexpected decisions about friendship groups, there might be a friendship fallout that you notice or that they come and speak to you about. There may be a decline in school engagement or achievements this might be from heavy online use, they're feeling tired, they're lacking energy or it might be about the experience they had online. There may be a decline in their mental or physical health indicators including their connectedness to peers, their confidence and self-worth, their resilience, their coping abilities and energy levels. These might not all be signs that are visible to an educator, but it is important to consider the possible link between these behaviors and interactions and online experiences this information is also valuable to think about if concerns are raised by family members that you're working with. Before I do pass over to Greg, I just want you to take a moment from what I've presented so far, but especially with these signs. Do these indicators resonate with you? Have you had an experience that you can share with us? Have you observed some of these signs with your students and what other indicators have you noticed? This is not an exhaustive list but food for thought when you're thinking about what to notice and what that actually means and what those behaviours actually relate to. Please again, add your comments to the question box. And if you do have specific questions, please also send them through to us. So moving on to our next slide. This is really looking at what prevention strategies can be implemented and how we can provide early support. Greg back over to you.

### **Greg Gebhart**

Thank you Nat. I think it is important to recognise how important technology is for vulnerable youth. It really is part of their life, but it's also important that many of these young people don't pick up the clues of the risks that they're exposed to online. It's also important to realise that while technology often facilitates the abuse for young people the reality is it's the behaviour behind the technology is causing the issue not the technology itself. I think that's a critical thing that we need to think about. We can certainly develop protection for children to deal in these particular spaces and I think many of you have heard the story it takes a village to raise a child. To build the resilience of most vulnerable children, we need to create layers of protection around them. We need to work with young children particularly at the individual child, teaching them how to develop coping skills, resilience, self-regulations and self-confidence. I think it's one of the things that eSafety is really focused on lately, building what we call the four R's of technology that every young person should have a good understanding be able to put in place these four R's. Which is respect, respecting what you do online and respecting others. Resilience, how you deal with issues online. Your Responsibility to help your friends, responsibility to be a bystander and your responsibility to put good content online. And the last one is Reasoning, critical thinking skills or managing what you do online.

The second layer is really around the child's environment, the family, the extended family, the relatives, the parents and I think one critical part in here is how parents have conversations and giving parents the skills to have the right conversations and ask the right questions. Their community is also another layer where we have peers, we have our education settings in schools and our teachers, our support staff providing opportunities for children to participate in what sometimes we would call healthy risk-taking activities. Of course, the broader society we need to be sure that public policies legislation, eSafety and social media companies all have a responsibility ensuring that children are safe online.

Educators are ideally placed to really work in this particular space, and I think that's important for you to work right across the board. I mean as educators we can teach young people about safe and non-safe spaces and unsafe spaces online. Perhaps about online safety programs which are structured but also just embedding key messages into these spaces. We can help direct young children to safe online spaces, find a place where they can manage, they can feel safe and they can thrive in these areas and be safe from outside intrusion. We can assist learners through a co-creation activity to define what we call "do not share reminder list" for these young people. Sometimes they just need a structure in place to assist them and things like what to do and why we need to do those. We can look at problem solving skills and decision making to enable children and young people to make informed choices about what they do online and what they don't do online, and I would suggest using case studies. Look what's in the media have a look at other students experience to be able to deliver that and we can empower children and young people to use their voice and for me it is a trust their gut feeling if it doesn't feel right there's something wrong. I think it's important we provide support without judgment and particularly when there are issues being experienced online. I think about young people who've shared a photo with someone else and they've given consent and, on that trust, has been broken. Is it the person to share the photo that is the issue or is it a person whose broken that trust? I think there's so much that we can empower young people with when it comes to information.

I think we need to know the facts about how we work with these young people and understand that common Internet safety programs that are delivered in schools work extremely well for most children, but not necessary for vulnerable children. We need to understand these learners and the context of where the school places their learning and how we deliver programs that are perhaps tailored or provide additional support for these vulnerable groups. We need to have online safety messages that are consistent and they're developmental and culturally appropriate for kids. Certainly when we look at the sensitivity of young people online and the fact that often we are judgmental about the behaviours that they think are important in their life, and we need to focus on the needs of individual or groups when deciding how and what to deliver. Think about bystanders and how we can help others to seek support and how bystanders can make a significant difference in helping those young people.

Developing strategies for us is very important that we can actually develop these and put into what we call whole learning communities. We've developed lots of resources sitting on the eSafety website and they are all developed coming from our research both primary and secondary and they're trusted and reputable sources where we find that information.

We've mapped them out to the national curriculum including our parenting resources, kids' entry points and our youth portal. Understanding school ICT policies and considering what they look like is important but even more important is understanding the procedures. What do you do in an education setting when someone has a mobile phone when they're not supposed to? We need to identify and assess risk areas and informally and formally through research. Ask students, hear the student voice in our school, but more important it is to identify what how where and when these things are happening. We need to understand that students prior knowledge has an impact on everyone and perhaps many will be more expert in the online space than others and we need to understand that they are all at different levels and we to explicitly teach online safety and provide individual support to those who are more vulnerable. We need to align that with our school mission statements, the national curriculum embedded in the curriculum as one and ensure that we have support for every vulnerable child in schools.

When we look at some of the things that we can really develop, I think employing a variety of communication methods is very important and maybe perhaps brainstorming with young people, using scenarios to unpack the issues online and how they can occur. We need to think about embedding online safety every time we use technology and ensure there's a common approach and it's accepted by all staff in your school. We need to develop and distribute a resource library that is accessible for everyone, look at how we can build this into our internet and our learning management systems. We need to work on these resources and our curriculum planning days and identify resources, perhaps even in different languages for those children in multicultural families. We need to ensure learning and resources are available to all learners, especially the more vulnerable so that they understand how to find those and where to find them.

We know that least 50 percent of young people who have issues online search for support online rather than go to the school or to a known body. Our strategies working here becomes more and more important. How do we put these in place? Each child will have a unique circumstance and they may have different

vulnerabilities, there are no two children the same. It may be their age or may be their upbringing, may be the type of bullying they're being subjected to. It may be previous maltreatment and the emotional maturity levels or the resilience of children in these particular spaces.

With that in mind, I want to share a case study with you and think about how we might manage with a young person who in their particular case has to deal with some of the issues in the online space. Tara is a 13-year-old student in your class and she's recently joined Instagram. And her main thing is to keep in contact with friends both outside of school time and at home time. Tara's received a direct message on Instagram from an unknown person. She's chosen to ignore the initial message but receives follow-ups. The unknown person has stated that they're a friend, but then what is a friend and what's not a friend. Tara's unsure and feels uncomfortable. Is this really a friend or not but then she comes and asks the teacher, what should I do? I think when you look at case studies like this, it's not a matter of you know, if a child will be contacted by stranger but when a young person comes in contact. It's a matter of supporting students about their awareness and skills in managing the contact.

Youth with disability are far less likely to disclose personal fake or general information about themselves and I think when we work with young people, it is about our ability to assist them because you may be the ask able person that they go to. when we talk about ask able person it is the person that perhaps can be the key in putting assistance in place.

If we look at some of the strategies that you would need to put in place in this particular case study for her to build some of the features into her app, putting better privacy settings in, teaching you how to block, teaching her about passwords and adhering to a password practice that's best practice, discuss what consent means in the online space and how to filter interrogate online messages that are appropriate and inappropriate, to highlight our reporting avenues and again inform her about the issues and family so that support structure in the next layer is sitting there in that particular space. With that I'd like to do a bit of a poll and have a look at some of the issues that we talked about in these particular spaces particularly around talking to strangers online in the case of Tara. Our poll today is what percentage of children used the internet to chat to someone they didn't know? In this particular case, we are looking at around grade 3 through to year 12.

When we are talking about the issues online we have to consider that children who are contacted, how many of these young people take the opportunity to continue to have that message. What we do know from our research is that when talking to a stranger, the stranger can often be known to have a fake profile and certainly in those particular cases we found that 14% of all reports of eSafety commissioner involved fake accounts, illegal accounts, image-based abuse, cyber bullying but fake accounts was one of the big ones. I can see there from our results today that you've certainly come through with our results and 52 percent of children is the most popular answer in this particular space. What we did find for us is the answer was actually 38% in the green. It was 50% for teenagers and 27% for primary children. When that was averaged out it came across to 38% so thank you for sharing that probably that's a little bit of good news that it's not as high as what we thought.

Let's have a look at another case study in how we perhaps work in this particular space. This is Ryan he's 11-year-old student who has a speech impediment. His peers often laugh at him and some of his classmates have bullied him on social media. He loves playing online games and he only plays games that use a text box to communicate so that no one knows about his disability. Ryan has made many online friends and tries to foster these friendships by sending photos and details of himself. In conversation with you he innocently discusses that one of these online friends has asked for photos of him at the beach and in the shower. He also mentions the cyber bullying of his classmates. This is again another challenge for us with young people in the digital space. We know that one in two children played multiplayer games with people they didn't know and young people often turn chat functions into bullying, but the challenge here is that and being anonymous is all part of the gaming community.

If we look at strategies to put in place to help young people like Ryan, perhaps we could think about how we discuss privacy settings and online friendships. We have a look at how we actually put support structures in including family and friends. We upskill a class and not just him but his peers around online behaviours, respectful relationships, recognising and celebrating differences. Perhaps we could discuss the role of the

eSafety Commissioner to remove serious cyber bullying from the internet and how we can support and perhaps for Ryan we would look at things like having an eSafety plan for follow-up.

In fact, let me unpack that on our next slide. When we talk about an online safety plan. It may include a review of technology, having a look at how well they've set up structured and how they use their technology and their apps and devices. We might look at some key information relating to the students most used applications and perhaps using some of the case studies that are about what sort of apps you are using and what some of the dangers may be in there. We might look at some of the online support and reporting avenues as mentioned before kids' helpline, eheadspace, eSafety and others. We could have a look at some of the expectations about what is a safe online practice and come up with a support person to take an active role in developing that plan within the school. But certainly, we know that many young people have been bullied in gaming sites. Let's put up another poll and see what your understanding is of the gaming world. Again, we did research into online gaming and we looked at young people aged 8 to 17. How many children do you think have been bullied or abused in the last 12 months when it came to online gaming? We're talking about games like Fortnite, Call of Duty, League of Legends, Counterstrike, Apec Legends or Overwatch. Well, I'm quite surprised that the figures we've got through there and I'm going to tell you there is some good news, the answer is that only 17% of children had been cyberbullied in the last 12 months in gaming sites. However, even though that percentage might seem 'low' that figure is still 200,000 children. So that's certainly where we have seen some real issues in that space. Let's look at one more case study before we start to do our wrap-up.

This one is a story about a young girl and her name is Arjun. Arjun is 15 and she's moved to Australia three years ago from India. She struggled to make friends at school and uses social media to fill the void. She has a number of boys who admire her, and she sent several intimate images. She now regrets doing this by sending pictures and she's highly stressed as they are threatening to share these images with her parents and schools unless she sends more. Due to a cultural background and conservative family Arjun is too scared to tell them and is fearful that parents will disown her. She has no support structures outside her immediate family in Australia. We have seen many cases like this where young people have got caught up and perhaps been convinced to send photos to someone that they trust and then those images have been non-consensually shared. Looking in the structures that we can put in place here in the strategies. We can firstly really work around supporting the young girl and talking to her about how brave and what a big step it is to talk about the fact that images has been posted and shared online. We can develop an action plan for and discuss how best to involve her family. The eSafety Commission under our image-based abuse platform can assist in the removal of that content from the internet. We can arrange support and counselling services. We can educate others and the learning community about respectful relationships and practices in these cases. We may engage the local police or youth liaison police officer to support further education and to discuss the relevant online laws. We could engage supportive peers and family to focus on her experience and this is very important to make sure we do this without blame and shame. Provide steps for her and her parents to report to the e-safety website if they're unsure how to put that in place. We've been contacted by people online and sharing photos. We have seen a considerable number of these cases happening.

Let's throw up another Poll for us. This is again coming from the eSafety research what ratio of young people have had some experience with sexting? I'll be interested to see your thoughts in this one what experience of young people 14-17, this is a grade 8 through to year 12. What percentage do you think has had some experience with sexting is it one in twenty, one in ten, one in five or one in three? The answer here is one in three. This is not involved in doing sexting or sending them but this is involved either sending, being asked so they may not have done it but just ask to be involved in sending one, have received one without consent, have received one without asking at all or someone has just come across and show them an image of someone else. Girls are more likely than boys to be asked to send a nude image - 22 percent of girls were asked to send one, eight percent of boys were asked to send one and of those people who sent an image 90% said they did so because they completely trusted the person who was involved. With that I think that gives you a bit of an overview of how we can provide steps and things to put in place. I'm going to pass back to Nat and perhaps we can have a bit of a chat in question time and unpack some of the things that are happening in this particular space.

## Natalie Fanariotis

Thank you, Greg. And thank you everyone who has contributed to our questions today. Greg, I am going to ask you a couple of questions. And I think we've got a probably about 5 minutes to spend on this Q&A section. One of the questions that came through which is a question I have had from families to how much time online is normal and appropriate? I've heard that question many times myself. I guess there's so many different factors when it comes to the child that's online. It's again the maturity and depends on where the child fits in the family. If you've got your first child you can generally hold off that technology to 12 years of age. But if you've got three other children, one who's seven and one who's three, they've got access to the 12-year old's technology at the same time, so every child is a bit different. Generally, what we've been saying is there's some key things in here around what they're doing online, where they're doing it online and who they're talking to. So again, you may have a child that spends two hours a night online and say that's a lot of time but if it's two hours of homework, it's probably good that they're doing the homework. Maybe it's longer than what you like. But you may have a child who only spends five minutes online and suddenly you are seeing aggressive behaviours and hostility because they're not happy with what's in the game. One of the key things for us now is not necessarily time. It's when the technology impacts on the behaviour or the wellbeing of the child.

Thank you so much for sharing that. Do you have any advice I guess to answer that question about how families can have those conversations with children and young people? I think many families I've spoken to find it uncomfortable or difficult to have the conversation and there might be resources through eSafety that you can recommend on how to have that conversation about the length of screen time?

## Greg Gebhart

Yeah, we certainly do have some parenting advice on how to put things in place and have those conversations. I think one of the traps that parents sometimes get into is we tend to focus too much on the negativity, and we don't recognise the positive parts of the internet. As you mentioned with the game example before yes, you're being cyberbullied you know, you're struggling to be in that space because of the abuse that's happening. But you must remember that's where all your mates are. And that's where you like hanging out. That becomes a challenge and I think parents when they have a conversation about dangers online and changing practices, you've got to acknowledge to children that there are some positives to that space to get the conversation happening. Certainly why we're developing our program for one to five year old's is the amount of children with technology and spending a large amount of time early on is concerning but I think you've got to get the practices in as early as possible in there and I'm a great believer in timers. I think some type of digital clock that's right in front of you, you can see the time you can look at the content. I think that management and also explaining to your children why we're putting in management structures. I think that's an important part as well.

## Natalie Fanariotis

Yeah, definitely and something I know that I've spoken to the family about is having a technology box at the end of the night as well and everyone puts their phones and laptops away at a certain time and then it's you know screen free time for that period as well and I guess it's as you're saying setting up some of those practices and those boundaries early on so everyone gets used to that too. Thank you for sharing that. We also have another question. Is there specific curriculum that educators can use in their classrooms to teach some of these online safety skills that you've been speaking about?

## Greg Gebhart

Yes, the eSafety website has a section just dedicated to educators and has been mapped out to the National curriculum. We have a variety of resources in their particularly middle years of primary right through to our upper high school with video content that's in there. Real-life case studies re-enactments of children in Australia with issues they've had around cyberbullying image-based, excessive use of technology and all those come with resources for teachers use and then in the early years, we've got a lot of animated content which also has lesson plans and content and I'm pleased to say that in the near future we will be rolling out some resources with guidelines for schools on how they can implement their eSafety programs in much more detail and that we're trying to do a lot of the legwork for you. It'll all be there. You can grab those new resources, we haven't come up with a name yet, but it's not far off being finished and we'll make that available for schools to think about how they manage their technology in the education system.

## Natalie Fanariotis

I know that will be so helpful. We know educators are time poor, there's lots of competing priorities, but with so many schools having laptop programs and being in the digital world for learning to, these policies and what you're talking about and support and how to teach safety online is going to be so incredibly important and useful for educators.

We've got time for one more question that's come through and I'll write this out for you Greg. Is there any research or evidence underway about the impact of seeing explicit or nude photos on the mental health or wellbeing or their engagement in school? Do you know of any research in that area?

## Greg Gebhart

Well, what I do know is we've just published some research about how parents have dealt with the fact that their child sees pornography. I guess that's probably the only bit that I can think of directly but what I did have a look at is did parents expect their child to see pornography? What type of pornography they saw? Did they have a conversation? How do they have a conversation? What do the strategies they put in place to deal with it look like? From that we also developed some resources on how to have a conversation with a child and we built that into three frameworks. We built how to have a conversation with a child under 8 years of age that has seen pornography, this is very early on. We built resources around how to have a conversation with an 8-12-year old's and how to have a conversation with a teenager. That's probably a fair bit of research sitting in our website about the parent's reaction. But as far as the mental health and wellbeing, I do believe there are a few people starting to work in this area and we'll probably see more in that space coming soon.

## Natalie Fanariotis

Yeah, great and we know pornography, is a significant issue and that it impacts so many of our children and young people in terms of their expectations on what a healthy normal relationship looks like and a healthy sexual relationship. That research that's being undertaken is critical. I'd invite everyone to check out the eSafety resources and we're going to unpack a little bit of that as we move on. Thank you so much for that Greg. I am going to move on from the Q&A section. Now any questions that haven't responded to we will have some post webinar material that will be able to add to that. We will be asking Greg to support with developing that to make sure that we give you the best advice for any of those questions.

So as wrap up some of that further learning Greg has mentioned that from the eSafety Commissioner what is actually available. We probably won't have time to unpack each of those. But again, these will be available through the recording so that you can access these again but would really encourage you to check out the eSafety website. For Be You specifically we're talking about the importance of building resilience in our children and young people. Learning resilience domain and early support domain provides really great professional learning for educators from early learning, primary and secondary about how you actually build those skills and support, notice, enquire and provide that support when there is an issue that may arise.

As we are finishing up just a recap on what we've looked at today. We've looked at those factors that may increase a student's vulnerability to online harm and how these intersect. We've looked at the impacts that online harm can have on the student's mental health and how to provide early support. We've also looked at the benefits of being online. So even when a student's vulnerability is present, what are the benefits and what are the positive aspects of an online world for a child or young person? We've looked at some of those universal and targeted strategies to support student's diverse online safety needs. It was really great to unpack those case studies that you presented Greg. Thank you so much for that.

The next steps, I guess from a Be You perspective, we really encourage everyone that's attending today to make sure that you have registered as an individual user but also to see if you're learning community, your early learning service or school has registered as a whole Be You Community to make sure that you're up to date with our resources and our event offerings as well so that you can be in touch and check out the resources. We've got the links we make with great organisations, like the e-safety commissioner.

We also would like you to consider the benefits of the online world as we have said when you're having those conversations we often go to a deficit approach with technology and to try and flip that around and think of what are the benefits of the child or young person at that point in time and also to reflect on the policies the practices and the curriculum that's currently in place.

We have some great Be You implementation tools that allow you to do a bit of a pulse check in your learning community about what's working and what are those areas for a continuous improvement so all fantastic avenues. Also, we encourage you to check out the eSafety resources that we have spoken about to. We're about two minutes until finish time which allows me enough time to say a big thank you for joining us today. This is an important topic to discuss about online safety. And we really thank you all for your contributions. A big thank you to Greg to for your time, for your planning around this and for all your talking today it's been really insightful and I know that if anyone's joining us via the recording you're going to really enjoy this webinar, so thank you so much Greg for all your time here. I want to say a big thank you to the team behind the scenes as well to make sure this webinar has run smoothly today. Thank you everybody. When you do exit out of this webinar, you're going to be prompted with a short five question survey. This really helps us to know what you've liked, what we can improve on as well as any other topics you're interested in for future webinars. So please be honest with your responses.

We really love to hear from you, we want to make sure Be You continually meets your needs. As another reminder you will receive a certificate of attendance today that will be made available to you within about two weeks so look out for that in your email and the link to the recording will also be provided but that will be on the Be You website on the events page in the next fortnight or so. Thank you again. We hope to see you next time as you join us. We have two other webinars coming up this year too so please take a look at our Events page for that and run again in collaboration with Early Childhood Australia and headspace. But until then, please take care of yourself. Thank you for listening and let's continue to work together to grow a mentally healthy generation. Bye everyone for now. Thank you so much for joining.