Say It Before a Stranger Does

Age-specific scripts for talking with students about sexual extortion (sextortion), coercion networks, and swatting as sextortion.

Read this first. Keep it age-appropriate, but do not sanitise it into uselessness. Older secondary students in particular need to hear the phrase "swatting as sextortion" from a trusted adult, before they hear it from a stranger in a Discord DM at 2am. The purpose of raising the topic is not to frighten. It is to inoculate, to name the pattern so they can recognise it, and to make the path to telling an adult short, shameless and safe. The scripts below are written to be spoken almost word for word, then made your own.

THE SPINE EVERY AGE HEARS

Whatever the year level, these are the messages sitting under every script. Say them in the words that fit the age in front of you.

- **It is never your fault.** If someone online tricks, pressures or traps a young person, the wrong was done to them, not by them, even if they sent something first.
- **Tell a trusted adult today.** Not next week, the same day. Speed is safety.
- **Telling never costs you your phone.** Punishing the telling is exactly how these people keep a child silent.
- **Do not comply, pay, or send more.** It never makes the threat go away. It only proves you can be moved.
- **Screenshot, block, report.** Keep the evidence first, then block, then hand it to an adult who can report it to police and eSafety.
- **A friend's secret like this is the one you break.** If a mate is being threatened, or is talking about hurting themselves, tell an adult the same day. That is not betrayal, it is rescue.

01 Before you brief

- **Localise the reporting lines first.** These scripts are written for Australian and international schools. Before you present, swap in your own country's emergency number, online-safety regulator and child-exploitation reporting line from the list at the end of this sheet, so every instruction you give points somewhere real.
- **Never name the specific sites, apps or networks.** Naming teaches the search. Describe the pattern and the feeling instead.
- **Have your wellbeing team in the room.** Some students are living this right now. A disclosure during or after the talk is likely, and it is a good sign, not a disruption.
- **Watch the room, not your slides.** Look for the student who goes still, leaves, or will not meet your eye, and follow up privately and gently.
- **Make the path to you short.** Tell them exactly how to reach you afterwards. The whole talk is only as good as the disclosures it makes safe.

02 Upper primary (Years 5 to 6)

Keep it about tricks, secrets and feelings. No sexual detail, no method, none of the harder words. The goal is one unbreakable rule that a ten-year-old can hold: no problem is ever too big or too embarrassing to tell a trusted adult, and telling never gets you in trouble.

Name the trick

> *Sometimes people you meet in games or apps are not who they say they are. They can be really friendly at first, and then they try to get you to do something, or send something, that makes you feel funny in your tummy. That funny feeling is your body telling you to go and find a grown-up.*

The secret rule

> *Here is the most important rule today. If anyone online ever tells you to keep a secret from your parents or your teachers, that is exactly the secret you tell. A surprise party is a good secret. A secret that makes you feel scared or sick in your stomach is never yours to keep.*

No trouble, ever

> *If something like this has already happened, or it happens one day, you are not in trouble. You will not lose your games or your iPad. You just come and tell me, or your mum, or your dad, or any teacher, and we sort it out together. Fixing this is a grown-up's job, not yours.*

HOLD BACK AND EMPHASISE

Do not use the words sextortion or swatting at this age, and give no method or detail. The single takeaway they leave with is this: a scary online secret goes straight to a trusted adult, and telling never brings punishment.

03 Junior secondary (Years 7 to 8)

Now you can name that people online pressure young people for images and then threaten them, and that this is a trap and a crime committed against them. Keep the detail low, but make the shape of it clear, especially the switch from friendly to threatening, which is the part that catches them.

What actually happens

> *Someone online, often pretending to be around your age, spends a little while being friendly. Then they ask for a photo, or push you to say or do something private. The moment they get it, everything changes. The friendliness turns into threats. Send more, or I will show everyone. That switch is the whole plan. It was a trap from the very first message.*

It is a crime done to you

> *If this happens, you have not done something wrong. Something has been done to you, and you are the victim of a crime. The person on the other end is usually not a heartbroken classmate. Very often it is an adult, or a group of adults, running this on many people at once.*

The way out is out loud

> *The trap only works in silence, so the second you tell an adult, their power starts to fall apart. You do not reply, you do not send more, you do not pay. You screenshot, you block, and you tell someone that same day. You will not be in trouble, and you will not lose your phone.*

HOLD BACK AND EMPHASISE

You can introduce the word sextortion here, simply defined as threatening to share someone's private images in order to control them. Keep the detail low. The takeaway: it is a trap and a crime, complying never ends it, and telling an adult is what breaks it.

04 Middle secondary (Years 9 to 10)

Name sextortion plainly, and be honest about how organised it is, how the demands escalate, and that some groups push young people toward hurting themselves. Be frank and calm, without graphic detail. This is the age band where live cases most often sit, so have wellbeing staff ready.

Call it by its name

> *This is called sextortion. Someone gets a private image, or talks you into sending one, and then uses it as a lever. The demands escalate, more images, money, or doing things you do not want to do, and they threaten to send it to your family, your followers, your team. It feels like the end of the world. It is not, and there is a way through it.*

Know who is really there

> *Most of the time this is not a person who likes you. It is organised, often adults, sometimes whole networks who run this like a business or a game, targeting hundreds of young people at once. Some of these groups go further and try to pressure young people into harming themselves. Understanding that it is a script being run on you, not a real relationship, is part of getting free of it.*

The three things that get you out

> *One, stop. Send nothing more, pay nothing, negotiate nothing. Compliance is fuel, not a fire escape. Two, keep the evidence, then block. Screenshots, usernames, all of it. Three, tell an adult today and report it, to the school, to the police, and to your country's online-safety line, which here in Australia is eSafety. You will be believed, and you will not be blamed, even if you sent the first image yourself.*

HOLD BACK AND EMPHASISE

Be frank, stay calm, no graphic detail. Name that the coercion can extend to self-harm, then pivot straight to help and hope. Keep your wellbeing team close, because a talk at this level often surfaces a student who is in it right now.

05 Senior secondary (Years 11 to 12)

This is where you do not sanitise. Name swatting as sextortion out loud and explain it, because these students are the ones the newest tactics are aimed at. Give no instructions for carrying anything out and no site names, but do not leave the room without them understanding the pattern and the way out.

The phrase from me, not a stranger

> *You are old enough to hear this plainly, and I would rather you hear it from me than from someone in a group chat at 2am. There is a tactic now called swatting as sextortion, and you need to know what it is before it is ever used on you or someone you know.*

What swatting is

> *Swatting is making a fake emergency call, a bomb threat, a hostage claim, so that armed police are sent to a real person's home. It is not a prank. People have been terrified, injured and in some cases killed when an armed response arrives at an ordinary front door. And now it is being used as a weapon of control.*

How it becomes sextortion

> *The coercion networks that target teenagers use it as leverage. Do what I say, send another image, hurt yourself on camera, or I will send police to your house, or to your family's house. The threat of that violence is the lever. Sometimes it sits alongside a threat to leak images, sometimes it replaces it. Either way the goal is the same, to convince you there is no way out except doing what they say.*

The truths that break it

> *So hold on to these. They are organised strangers, not someone who cares about you, and they are running the same script on many people. Complying never ends it, it only escalates. The way out is the single thing they are betting you are too ashamed to do, which is to tell an adult and report it, today. It is not your fault, and you are not in trouble, whatever happened before the threat began.*

If it is your friend

> *And if it is not you but a mate, if someone is being extorted, or pushed to hurt themselves, or shows you a threat like this, you tell a trusted adult the same day. Do not try to handle it inside the group chat, and do not confront the person doing it. Bring an adult in. That is how people in this exact situation have been kept alive.*

HOLD BACK AND EMPHASISE

Name swatting as sextortion out loud, and still give no method and no site names. Make clear that taking part in a swatting, or forwarding a coerced image, is itself a serious criminal offence. Close on where to get help, and stay in the room afterwards, because this is the talk students most often act on.

06 After the assembly

- **Expect disclosures, and treat them as the point.** Some come in the corridor, some by email at midnight. What matters is that they know how to reach you.
- **Two adults, always,** for any follow-up conversation with a student, for their protection and yours.
- **Do not investigate.** Preserve evidence, do not delete accounts, and route it to your safeguarding lead, the police, your national online-safety regulator (in Australia, eSafety), and for anyone under 18 the child-exploitation reporting line (in Australia the ACCCE, in the US NCMEC, elsewhere your national equivalent).
- **Never promise total secrecy.** Be honest that keeping them safe means bringing in the right people, and that this is the help working, not a betrayal.
- **Look after your staff.** This material is heavy to carry. Debrief the adults, not just the students.

If a student discloses. Stay calm and believing. Get a second trusted adult. Say early and plainly that it is not their fault and they are not in trouble. Take a screenshot before anything is deleted, then help them block. Report to the police, to your national online-safety regulator (in Australia, eSafety), and for a minor to the child-exploitation reporting line (in Australia the ACCCE, in the US NCMEC, elsewhere your national equivalent), and connect them to counselling or a crisis line the same day. Then follow up, so the disclosure becomes a protected child, not just a brave moment.

Where to get help

Australia

United Kingdom: CEOP / Report Remove · Report Harmful Content · Childline 0800 1111 · Samaritans 116 123 · Police 999

European Union: INHOPE report hotlines · Better Internet for Kids · national police / 112

United States: FBI IC3 (ic3.gov) · NCMEC CyberTipline & Take It Down · 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline · 911

Canada: Cybertip.ca · Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 · 911

New Zealand: Netsafe · 1737 Need to Talk? · Police 111

Elsewhere: Your national police, online-safety regulator, and child-protection hotline · INHOPE (inhope.org) lists reporting lines by country

> **The heart of it.** The first adult to say these words out loud changes what happens next. If a young person has already heard “swatting as sextortion,” and “it is not your fault,” and “tell me and I will not take your phone,” from a trusted adult in a bright room full of their friends, then when the message comes in the dark, they already know the two things that save them, what it is, and where to run. That is the whole reason to stand up in front of them. Everything else is detail.