



BOSTON COLLEGE

WILLIAM F. CONNELL SCHOOL OF NURSING

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Donna Rice Hughes
President and CEO
Enough is Enough
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May 25, 2011

Dear Donna:

Government, school, and community interest in advancing Internet safety for minors continues with little sign of weakening. As we have discussed, however, nearly all Internet safety education targets minors and is delivered in a school setting. While student education is important, minors are not capable of resisting a committed predator nor are students able to resist the many temptations or opportunities offered by those seeking to hurt them or expose them to harmful material. The Enough is Enough, *Internet Safety 101*, curriculum is a comprehensive Internet safety curriculum focused on teaching parents in a way they can understand about how minors actually use the Internet and the challenges and risks they face. This is something that is not readily available through other programs. In addition, because the information provided is broad based and addresses far more than Internet predators and pornography, it is useful for educating front line professionals that interact with minors, but are not Internet safety professionals or specially trained cyber crime investigators.

As a professor, researcher, and expert on issues related to child sexual abuse and exploitation, including such crimes committed via computer, I have had an opportunity to work with many of the individuals or agencies that are included in the curriculum. In reviewing the material, I noted that the type of critical information that law enforcement desires every parent to know was clearly provided on the instructional DVD teaching series and accompanying workbook and resource guide. One example of this is your inclusion of

children who spoke of interacting with unknown individuals on the Internet who sought information and who *minimized* the danger and risk when they retold the account of the incident. This is important information for parents. So often children fail to alert their parents to inappropriate Internet contact, and it goes unaddressed because parents assume that their children will raise some type of alarm. When parents don't hear from their children, they assume that there are no problems or no danger. Another significant and unique inclusion in the teaching series is the personal account of an anonymous predator who serves as a personal witness of the real threat of online predation. The DVD demonstrates, through the eyes of children and predators, how vulnerable children are and that such contact by unknown individuals is a common, not rare, occurrence. The DVD's inclusion of experts, such as Ernie Allen, of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children talking about the risks of predators, and Dr. Jill Manning and Dr. Dean Belnap addressing the harm done to children from viewing pornography on the Internet, demonstrates a breadth of subject matter that is not usually present in materials I am familiar with.

As a professor at the Boston College Connell School of Nursing, I am constantly looking at educational efforts aimed at adults, especially those addressing health concerns and preventive medicine. The most effective programs use language and material that is understandable to the intended audience. Your instructional teaching filmed in front of a live audience and compelling video vignettes are powerful. While young people and teens are familiar with the truncated language and jargon of texting, Facebook, and tweets, their parents are not. The pace, clarity, and personal examples meet parents and most adults who are not particularly tech savvy where they are and helps make confusing information understandable. As demonstrated by the interest shown by law enforcement and parent teacher organizations, the curriculum is effective at explaining technology and helping adults to understand and focus on solutions for them and for their children. The curriculum avoids the temptation to try and turn viewers into Internet investigators or tech savvy users. In so doing, it accomplishes the one necessary goal, turning adults into computer users who are knowledgeable about what they can do to address risks and dangers to themselves and their children.

After reviewing the program, I have come to the conclusion that it is both effective and accurate with respect to the information it imparts. In addition, those of your partners who use the curriculum to educate parents and other adults can rely on the following:

1. The *IS101* curriculum is evidence based and factually accurate. By using nationally recognized experts who protect, investigate, prosecute, and treat individuals harmed by or who prey on children, the curriculum opts for a fact based presentation rather than theoretical treatment.

2. The *IS101* curriculum is current and will continue to be relevant into the future, regardless of technological developments. This is critical to any decision regarding whether to invest in the curriculum and continually make it available since material that is out of date may actually create greater danger and risk. The curriculum accomplishes this by focusing on what people can do with technology rather than how the technology works.

For example, viewers will come to understand that a computer or Internet enabled device that is mobile represents a greater risk to minors because it allows a greater ability to avoid supervision. How or what type of technology allows mobility varies so greatly that it will not help a parent to gauge risk. Knowing that it can cause risk, however, may cause a parent to think twice whether to permit its purchase or condition its use.

3. The *IS101* curriculum includes information for parents of both boys and girls and uses their own words to engage the viewers. The ability to engage and provide parents and adults with a window into the world of teens, tweens, and younger children is important. The DVD allows parents to develop a greater understanding of the pressures, dangers, and risks children face while still balancing concern with prudent action. Girls face significant risks because of the increase in pornography consumption by boys. Likewise, the curriculum makes clear that girls are consuming such materials with boys or by themselves and that such consumption is influencing conduct that raises significant health and safety risks. It is my view that without such a careful and complete explanation of the risks and dangers, adults will simply lack any sense of urgency or ability to judge risks, leaving children to protect themselves.

4. The *IS101* curriculum also addresses emerging issues associated with the evolving interactive Internet, which is now being used by youth via Internet enabled mobile devices such as cell phones, PDAs, laptops, iPads, and online gaming devices. The program effectively and powerfully addresses the increasing risks and associated safety measures.

Because the curriculum is evidence based and coincides with research demonstrating that parents need to understand the risks and dangers of activities in order to make good decisions and engage, it is my opinion that further evaluation of the curriculum is unnecessary. Finally, since Enough is Enough collects data pertaining to whether an audience viewing the curriculum is better educated and aware of the risks, dangers, and solutions relating to Internet use after taking the course, it will remain able to evaluate when and whether it should adjust the language, examples, or factual information contained in its presentation to reach the next generation of parents and interested adults.

Sincerely,



Ann Wolbert Burgess, DNSc, APRN, BC
Professor of Psychiatric Nursing