REMS TA Center Releases Cyber Safety & Security Fact Sheets

By Laura Black, Illinois School and Campus Safety Program Coordinator

In today’s world we are surrounded by technology. From smartphones to tablets, Cloud storage to online banking, most of us use technology on a daily basis. We even use it in school and campus safety efforts. However, with people’s personal information at stake, certain security measures must be taken.

In order to help ensure cyber safety and security, the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center has recently released new fact sheets for K-12 schools and institutions of higher education (IHEs).

According to the REMS TA Center, “the ability to securely connect to virtual systems is an important element within a safe and supportive learning environment.” Using the following fact sheets can help schools do just that.

The Cyber Safety Considerations for K-12 Schools and School Districts fact sheet addresses cyber threats that can harm students, such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content, sexting, oversharing, and online predators.

The Cybersecurity Considerations for K-12 Schools and School Districts fact sheet addresses threats to information and technology networks used by schools and school districts. The fact sheet discusses topics including data breaches, phishing, malware (including ransomware), service denials, software vulnerabilities, and even problems with removable media.

Lastly, Cybersecurity Considerations for Institutions of Higher Education discusses Federal regulations that IHEs must follow. The fact sheet also discusses security issues including cloud security, denial of service, malware, phishing, and unsecured personal devices.

Using an App to Help Keep Schools Safe

By Laura Black, Illinois School and Campus Safety Program Coordinator

The lead article of this issue highlighted the importance of safety and security in technology usage. This article highlights importance of technology in helping ensure safety and security. More specifically, it provides an example of how school safety can be improved through the use of a mobile app.

The Justice Technology Information Center (JTIC), a program of the National Institute of Justice, offers the mobile app School Safe - a Security and Safety Assessment App for Schools that helps evaluate the school’s safety. According to JTIC, the app “takes you step-by-step through the building and school grounds to identify and address trouble spots.”

In short, after an administrator or SRO downloads the free app, the individual then enters information about the school and answers questions while examining/assessing the various parts of the campus. The app then provides feedback, which includes areas for improvement. In essence, the app helps educators look for potential areas of concern so, if possible, they can be addressed before a situation arises.

For more information about the School Safe app and other school safety information provided by the Justice Technology Information Center, click here.
Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

By Laura Black, Illinois School and Campus Safety Program Coordinator

February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “nearly 1.5 million high school students in the United States are physically abused by dating partners every year.” With the prevalence of teen dating violence, it is important that schools become aware of the issue and take steps in preventing it.

One resource for helping educators learn to prevent teen dating violence is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention. The objectives of this free online training for educators includes:

- “Identify examples of teen dating violence.”
- “Identify how teen development affects teen dating violence and consequences of teen dating violence.”
- “Identify risk factors, protective factors, warning signs, and challenges for seeking help for teen dating violence.”
- “Compare and contrast healthy and unhealthy relationship characteristics and behaviors.”
- “Identify ways educators can be a resource to students regarding teen dating violence.”
- Describe skill development so educators feel empowered to take action—if/when needed.”

For more resources on teen dating violence, see page 4.

Need Training for Your School, District, Campus, or Department?

The Illinois School and Campus Safety Program offers a variety of free courses and training upon request. To learn more about the courses available, to view scheduled courses, and to request a course for your area, visit the Ready Illinois website at ready.illinois.gov and view the Schools/Campus page under the Plan and Prepare tab. For additional questions regarding the Illinois School and Campus Safety Program contact schoolsafety@iletsbei.com.

K-12 Courses

- Student Behavioral Threat Assessment
- Advanced Student Behavioral Threat Assessment*
- Developing Emergency Operations Plans K-12 101 Train-the-Trainer
- Earthquake Preparedness for Schools
- Understanding and Planning for School Bomb Incidents
- Incident Response to Terrorist Bombings*

*Prerequisite
What if an App Could Help Prevent College Student Sexual Assault?

By Laura Black, Illinois School and Campus Safety Program Coordinator

What if a smartphone app could mimic a phone call or text to help students remove themselves from potentially risky situations? What if that same app could notify a friend if the student didn’t reach a destination in an allotted amount of time? Or provide a fake drink recipe that students could show to bartenders discreetly letting them know help is needed? Or even provide guidance in the event of sexual assault? It would be pretty amazing, right? This technology isn’t something to hope for in the future. The uSafeUS app, which was developed at the University of New Hampshire Prevention Innovations Research Center (PIRC), does all of these things and more.

uSafeUS is a smartphone application with sexual assault prevention and response features. According to Dr. Sharyn Potter, Executive Director of Research at PIRC, the concept for uSafeUS came about when a former state trooper had the idea of putting sexual assault resources directly into the hands of college students. As the app was developed, PIRC used input from their target audience, college students themselves, to find out how to make the app both useful and appealing. With that feedback, the app’s features were created.

uSafeUS’s prevention features include Time To Leave, Expect Me, and Angel Drink. Time To Leave allows users to set a customizable text message or phone call, which can be programmed to sound immediately or later. Expect Me allows users to set up an alert that will be sent to a friend if the user doesn’t reach his/her destination in time. Angel Drink consists of a list of drink recipes that has the “angel drink” recipe hidden among them. That particular recipe can be used to let the bartender know that help is needed.

The app’s response features include Need Help Now, What Now?, and Helpful Answers, all of which are dedicated to helping victims understand their options and find resources.

Lastly, the uSafeUS features a virtual guide, the Bystander Bae, which helps users navigate the app.

Although students can choose to download the app for free on their own, uSafeUS also has a platform for institutions of higher education (IHEs). IHEs who choose to subscribe to uSafeUS can provide customized information for their institution, ensuring that students using the app are getting specific information on resources available to them. Presently, the information can be updated as needed by PIRC. However, after an upcoming release, IHEs will be able to update the information themselves.

Additionally, to help IHEs promote the use of the app by students, uSafeUS has an Implementation Toolkit featuring a variety of resources including social media campaigns, kits for campus events, implementation checklists, and more. Campus administrators wanting to preview uSafeUS can do so by visiting https://campus.usafeus.org. Those wanting more information about uSafeUS can visit the website or contact Dr. Sharyn Potter at Sharyn.Potter@UNH.edu.
The Illinois School and Campus Safety Program is a partnership between the Illinois Terrorism Task Force and Western Illinois University. Program administration is performed by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board Executive Institute at Western Illinois University.

The Illinois School and Campus Safety Program provides awareness and preparedness training to enhance organizational capacity to plan for, respond to, and recover from an emergency or disaster. Contact schoolsafety@iletsbei.com for a digital copy of our brochure.

January is human trafficking awareness month and the 11th is human trafficking awareness day. In promoting human trafficking awareness, the Illinois School and Campus Safety Resource Center has links to several human trafficking resources, including the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) website and the Polaris Project website.

Among the resources offered by the NHTH is the Educator Assessment Tool, which “is designed to help educators identify the risk factors and indicators of human trafficking in their students and to offer guidelines on how to respond and access resources.” In addition to the assessment tool, the NHTH has statistical information, a resource library, outreach and awareness materials, and other helpful resources.

The Polaris Project also offers an abundance of human trafficking resources, including the Human Trafficking Awareness for Educators webinar, a 35 minute presentation with the following objectives:

- “Define human trafficking and equip professionals with trafficking indicators.”
- “Provide recommendations for how to respond to human trafficking in a school setting.”
- “Discuss risk factors and identify promising practices for prevention.”

The Polaris Project provides information on sex trafficking and labor trafficking, traffickers and victims, and even includes survivor stories from those who have experienced trafficking.

About Us

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