

Crohn's & Colitis Australia **YEP! Online** - Cyber security information for parents and guardians.

Take home strategies for making your child safer online:

- Establish a relationship with your child that is based on trust and openness.
- Be curious and ask questions about what your child is doing online.
- Create settings where a young person can be supervised.
- Educate yourself about online risks and strategies to avoid them.
- Talk about cybersecurity with your child and why it is important to be cautious.
- Read the safety reviews of the games, social media platforms and other applications your child is using.
- Know where to find help.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Crohn's & Colitis Australia is delighted to invite all young people between 12 and 18 years of age living with inflammatory bowel disease IBD to join and actively participate in our new online service, **Youth Empowerment Program (YEP! Online)**. We believe that empowerment is an important tool in allowing children to become stronger, better equipped, and confident to face challenges arising from IBD. This is the primary reason YEP! was created. Initially, we organised YEP! as a one-day face to face event where participants made connections, exchanged personal experiences, worked with mentors, and completed a fun challenge.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted directly CCA's ability to deliver our in-person programs, including YEP!. Consequently, CCA decided to co-design with teenagers an online equivalent of face-to-face YEP! that could offer young people connect with other people in a similar situation, access information, peer support, mentors and build their abilities to self-manage their condition.

Our new YEP! Online program resides in the virtual environment, which means that it can be accessed by young people from cities, remote and rural locations in Australia. Using any service online, regardless of whether it is a video game, a blog or a social media account comes with certain risks for the user. To prevent and minimise the risk of harm coming from engagement with online services, the users and, in the case of services offered to underaged users, their parents and guardians must understand that better knowledge about potential risks, the digital means (e.g., parental control options built in the applications and familiarity with legal regulations, together provide them with the tools to protect their children from internet-based harm. The United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has indicated that the teachers, parents, and caregivers are essential for young peoples' understanding of how to use digital technology in a safe and responsible way. [1]

Our safety measures.

CCA considers safety of the users of our programs very seriously. Our commitment to the safety of underaged users of our programs lies at the core of our values, intentions, and efforts, consistent with the recent changes in the child safety standards introduced on 1 July 2022. For the Yep! Online

program we would like to establish with the parents and carers of the program users a relationship based on transparency and mutual understanding of the roles involved in providing a safe virtual environment.

1. Technical security

For our day-to-day operations we have entrusted our cyber security to the high-end and widely trusted software products developed by Microsoft and the UK-based cybersecurity company Sophos. The latter offers multilayered and tailored solutions for businesses around the world. CCA has in place a dedicated IT team responsible for keeping our computer equipment and applications up-to-date. All our data is securely stored, and our staff receive the necessary information and training to understand the potential risks and security procedures.

Our new YEP! Online service is password-protected, and only registered users can access the service with parental/guardian consent and after identity verification by our staff. CCA uses best practice password management.

CCA has a current cybersecurity insurance policy in place for an unlikely situation of a security breach.

2. Transparency

The YEP! Online web platform is designed so that all communication is visible to all registered users and moderators. There is no capability for users to have a one-to-one chat beyond the view of the moderators. Activities within the program are monitored (and moderated if necessary) by child-safety trained volunteers and staff.

3. Child Safety knowledge

CCA is in the process of becoming a child safe organisation, which means that all our child safety policies and procedures are being updated, our staff are engaged in ongoing seminars and discussions regarding potential risks, safety measures and the reporting procedures. The new child safety regulations are also part of the recruitment and training process of the volunteers (including a criminal records check, a current working with children check, and a compulsory reference check). Suitability of the volunteer candidate to work in the YEP! Online program is also screened through interview.

All the YEP! Online program users receive a short document which includes the Code of Conduct and the essential information about YEP! Online internet-based activities to be read and acknowledged. The following section will explain the role of the parent/carer in providing security, as well as the necessary resources that can assist in discussing the issue of the informed internet use with a young person.

What you need to know to keep your child safe online.

Being online is most of the time a positive experience. As adults, generally we can navigate our activities online safely and usually recognise potential risks and hazardous situations. For young people, the use of internet is much more than just looking for information, work, shopping or streaming the latest TV show. It is a common way to socialise, interact, and shape their identity (or more specifically a digital identity), spending a significant amount of time online in the process.¹ The vast possibilities of interacting with others offered by social media and online gaming pose new challenges regarding one's well-being and safety. There is no ultimate safety solution that would keep young people safe from all the potential online risks. Therefore, parents' and carers' support is essential to keep children safe online. This can be done through the online safety awareness (including understanding of the safety measures embedded in software applications) and the necessary guidance to a young person.

The first step, each parent and carer should do is to educate themselves to better understand the potential risks, to know what to do when the need arises and where to seek help. To make this task easier, CCA provides some information about online safety . We have also compiled a resource base (see end of document) which contains links to essential services and detailed information regarding online safety.

In the most general sense, there are four major types of online risks your child can be exposed to:

1. Contract risks (this includes agreements one is signing);
2. Content risks (e.g., pornography, gambling, violence);
3. Contact risks (e.g., cyberbullying, grooming, stalking);
4. Conduct risks (e.g., financial abuse, data misuse, inappropriate behaviour).

Safer Kids Online indicates that 30% of teens have been contacted by a stranger, almost 50% children were treated in a harmful way online in the past year, and 1 in 10 have been the target of hate speech. [*]

The main and most effective line of defence against the risks listed above is developing a trusting relationship with your child. The culture of openness allows for a dialogue and consequently, a needed understanding of the motivations and actions of a young person. As a parent or a carer, we want to become the first person our child comes to seeking help in the case of a bad online experience or an incident. The ability to talk freely with a parent knowing that we would understand and provide the necessary guidance will help to reassure a young person that they picked the right person to confide in.

In situations when our child is in danger, we may experience feelings of anxiety and our initial reaction can be anger. We should not overreact or let our emotions dictate our actions such as cutting the young person's internet access. This will likely be counterproductive. It is more effective to remain calm, listen and be supportive, as it is likely that the young person may be experiencing the feelings of distress, shame, and self-blame. The ability to remain calm and focus on the discussion is more likely to assist us in addressing the incident. We want our child to know that we will provide help, support and reassurance to find the best ways to avoid similar situations in the future. The trusting relationship with a young person is invaluable when an incident of a criminal

¹ Among the social media platforms, YouTube is the most popular (96%) among young people, followed by TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook.

nature occurs, and the evidence of the crime must be collected (any online communication, screenshots etc.) and the situation needs to be reported to the authorities (e.g., e-Commissioner, Kids Helpline or the Police 000 emergency).

The best way is to start the conversation about online safety with young people is to start as early as possible. We need to be curious and remain involved, ask questions about the young person's activities, even play games together. Your involvement means that you can provide the necessary supervision and spot the potential risks early before the actual harm is done (e.g., conversation about privacy and sharing the information). One of the effective mechanisms to improve online security is a family agreement that specifies rules and boundaries, i.e., what, when and how. For instance, a time allocation each family member can spend using the internet at home, where the mobile devices are stored, no mobile devices use 60 minutes prior to going to bed (the night-time is the most likely time for predators to become active as there is no direct supervision), making a rule that gaming is done in the common area, etc. Of course, the agreement must be fair for all family members including the consequences when a rule is breached.

The good news is that young Australians are aware of the online risks. A survey conducted by ESET (digital security company) showed that around 84% of respondents (children between 6 and 13 years old) indicated that they are fully or quite confident regarding their ability to manage the online risks. Even more reassuring is the fact that most of the group (85%) would ask parental help if approached by a stranger online. [2]

To obtain more specific information about the cybersecurity, online risks, strategies, available podcasts, and webinars about online safety, please refer to the below resources.



https://www.esafety.gov.au/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMIslndnNDI_QIVzZlmaAh0PHAGPEAAAYASAAEgL1ZPD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds

e-Safety Commissioner provides evidence-based knowledge and advice to foster safer online experience for Australians of all ages. The website provides a comprehensive knowledge base and materials that are age specific. The approach is focused on prevention, protection, and proactive systemic change. **e-Safety Commissioner** has the necessary power to protect people from abuse and harm through four schemes:

- an Adult Cyber Abuse Scheme
- a Cyberbullying Scheme for Australian children
- an Image-Based Abuse Scheme
- an Online Content Scheme for illegal and restricted content.

Section of the service dedicated to parents <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents>

Detailed information about the common online risks can be found at:

- *Cyberbullying* <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/cyberbullying>
- *Online porn* <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/online-porn>
- *Sending nudes and sexting* <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/sending-nudes-sexting>
- *Gaming* <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/gaming>
- *Grooming* <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/grooming-or-unwanted-contact>
- *Screen time* <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/screen-time>

Information about games and applications used by young people: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide>

Online safety publications:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/resources/online-safety-book>

Reporting online harm: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/report>

Discover what can be reported and how: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/report/what-you-can-report-to-esafety>

Counselling and support: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/report/counselling-support>



Cyber Safety Project <https://cybersafetyproject.com.au/>

The service focuses on educational programs aiming at teaching Australian communities to develop knowledge and skills helping in using internet safely.

Section of the service dedicated to families where the workshops and webinars are available for the whole families or just parents and carers:

<https://cybersafetyproject.com.au/families/>

The blog section provides useful information about various topic areas and cybersecurity, including games and apps safety reviews:

<https://cybersafetyproject.com.au/blog/>



Youth Law Australia provides free, confidential legal information and help for young people under 25. <https://yla.org.au/>

- Information and services around cybersecurity:
<https://yla.org.au/vic/topics/internet-phones-and-technology/>



Service provides information that is age specific and covers a vast range of information dedicated to children.

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/>

- The webpage dedicated to the entertainment and technology comprises many interesting topics such as cyberbullying, gaming, gambling, pornography, and sexting <https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/entertainment-technology>, as well as the useful resources such as talking about pornography with teens (and other tricky topics): <https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/entertainment-technology/pornography-sexting/pornography-talking-with-teens>

IMMEDIATE CRISIS SUPPORT IN AUSTRALIA

1800RESPECT

Confidential counselling, support and information for people affected by sexual abuse or domestic and family violence. Available 24/7.

1800 737 732

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

Kids Helpline

5- to 25-year-olds. All issues. Confidential phone counselling available all day, every day. Online chat available 24/7, 365 days a year.

1800 55 1800

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling>

Lifeline

All ages. All issues. Phone counselling available all day, every day. Online chat available 7pm to 4am AEST daily.

13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au

References:

1. Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development (2019). Child online safety: Minimizing the risk of violence, abuse and exploitation online. ITU and UNESCO.
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00003743_65?posInSet=1&queryId=1a93f340-75cf-42d8-adfe-4f4b718fcad3
2. <https://www.eset.com/au/about/newsroom/press-releases1/press-releases/eset-survey-reveals-that-australian-children-are-confident-in-dealing-with-online-risks/>