

My name is Amanda Prince and I am a Senior Sociology major and Psychology minor. As a sophomore in Hampton, NH. a girl in my grade sent her boyfriend pictures of her naked and then she broke up with him. The boyfriend exacted revenge, printed out the pictures, and made poster size printouts of the "sext." He plastered them all over school. Administrators and friends tried to remove the pictures. But, the harm was done and it was too late. She was so distraught she transferred schools and never showed her face at my school again.

Sexting is influenced by the adolescent's brain and lack of development.

Self-perception is a component in sexting. Adolescents may have a negative self-perception so they sext to make themselves feel better. The reason for this negative self-perception is because their medial prefrontal and parietal cortices are not fully developed until adulthood.

Social cognition involves our ability to understand rules and concepts that govern social interactions. Brain areas that deal with social cognition are the dorsomedial prefrontal cortex, temporal-parietal junction, and posterior superior temporal sulcus. These brain areas do not develop until adulthood. Due to underdevelopment of the brain areas that govern self-perception and social cognition, adolescents rely on others perceptions of themselves.

The last area of the brain that influences adolescents' choice to sext is the Prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex, a central area of the brain that controls planning, complex cognitive behaviors, personality expression, decision making, and moderating correct social behavior. This does not fully develop until the age of 23 and is the last part of the brain to develop. A main component of the prefrontal cortex that influences adolescents to sext is the dorsal lateral prefrontal cortex. This area of the brain is implicated in decision making and is a factor as to why adolescents do not understand that sexting is not in anyone's best interest. The right lateral prefrontal cortex is also underdeveloped and regulates inhibition of inappropriate actions.

Adolescent brains are underdeveloped and are not fully capable of making good decisions. This lack of development in the adolescent brain may be the reason why they do not understand that sexting is a bad decision and they do not understand the consequential damages of that bad decision.

References

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