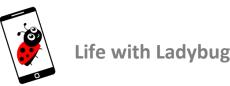# WebQuest: Sharenting

This WebQuest deals with the harmful phenomenon of sharenting, which currently affects many young people or may affect them in the future. Our goal is to raise awareness of this phenomenon among parents and teachers. The WebQuest will consist of various tasks that you can complete individually or in a group.

The WebQuest is aimed at parents or people who work with children and parents, however, even if you do not have frequent contact with children, you may find thistopic interesting. In our society, issues of privacy, especially children's privacy, are becoming (rightfully so!) more and more important due to advancing technology.

Exercise 1

Read Gabbie's story. Gabbie's life has been affected by the dangers of sharenting; she's a fictional character, but such situations do happen in real life. You might have heard a story similar to Gabbie's — sharenting is a widespread issue.

Life with Ladybug

After many years of trying for a baby, Gabbie finally gets pregnant. When her baby girl, Olivia, is born, Gabbie falls in love with her the very moment she embraces her for the first time.
Gabbie wants to share the love for her daughter with the world, so soon she starts a blog where she uploads photos and describes every day in the life of a young mother. She calls the blog "Life with Ladybug" as Gabbie has been fondly calling her daughter "her little ladybug" since the day Olivia was born.
Gabbie's husband, Peter, sometimes participates in content creation for the blog, but tends to keep to himself, as he is not comfortable with showing his face online.
To Gabbie's great delight, the blog quickly gains popularity. Many young mothers leave supportive comments and share their experiences. Gabbie unintentionally manages to create a small space for dozens of readers — a community filled with empathy and warmth.

Throughout the years as Olivia grows up and Gabbie comes back to work, the blog becomes less and less important in the daily life of the family. Gabbie occasionally publishes posts, but her readers, who used to visit "Life with Ladybug" several times a week, now visit the blog sporadically or not at all. Over time, Gabbie abandons the blog as it has become a long-closed chapter of her life.

Or so she thinks.

One day, a now 12-year-old Olivia comes home from school, visibly upset. Although she has so far had a close relationship with her mother, she does not exchange a single word with her. Instead, she slams the door of her room and refuses to speak with Gabbie.

The situation persists for a week. Olivia hardly eats anything; in the morning she simulates a stomach ache to avoid going to school. Her face is swollen from constant crying, but despite her parents' insistence and pleas, she doesn't want to explain what's wrong.

Gabbie is distraught and heartbroken. Her friends warned her about how nerve-wracking it can be to watch your child transition into a teenager, but she didn't expect it to sink her relationship with her daughter so quickly.

Peter tries to console Gabbie by claiming that this is normal behaviour at this age and their family will sooner or later get through it; Gabbie considers his approach too carefree.

A few more anxious days later, Olivia finally comes downstairs to talk to her mother:

"My classmates found your blog… The whole school saw that awful video with me on the potty... Everyone calls me Ladybug now! Sophie has already made a series of TikToks about it... I don't want to ever go back there again... How could you do this to me, Mom?…"

Olivia bursts out crying and locks herself in the room again before her parents even manage to respond to her desperate plea.

Gabbie is devastated. She has no idea what to do and feels guilty because she knows that her daughter is right — it will be difficult to get out of this situation and it definitely is her fault. Peter advises Gabbie to delete all digital traces of "Life with Ladybug'' immediately. She does so with a heavy heart, but it soon turns out that it doesn't improve the situation — Olivia's peers have already managed to download all the videos and photos and are continuing to create cruel memes that are circulating around the school. To add insult to injury… The boy on whom Olivia has had a crush for a long time seems to be laughing at her the loudest.

The bullying of Olivia doesn't stop. The memes are getting increasingly more mean-spirited and vulgar, despite repeated interventions by the school counsellor, psychologist, and the whole teaching staff. "Hi, Skittle Princess! It's me, Pixel Ninja! Did you really think you'd get rid of me so easily? Let's grab a coffee together and clear up a few things."

Scared for her life, Maggie runs away as fast as she can.

Eventually Gabbie and Peter decide that they will move to another city, where Olivia can have a fresh start in a place where no one will know that "Life with Ladybug" ever existed. After months of therapy, Olivia recovers. It's not easy at first, but after some time she finds new friends and a new life for herself.

Unfortunately, Gabbie will always feel that something has changed, and her daughter will never trust her as she once did. Their relationship has suffered irreparably.

Exercise 2

When Gabbie tells her friend, Karen, about the situation at home, she rolls her eyes and says: "What you've done to her is called sharenting and it always ends like this! I would never let anything like that go online. You're lucky that it's only her peers who've seen it, and not some pedophile ring! But truth be told you might never be sure who's seen all these pictures and videos… Olivia has a right to be mad at you! How could you do this to your own daughter?"

Gabbie is confused — sharenting? What is that?...

Search the web for information in order to find out:

- **What is the definition of sharenting and what forms does it take?**
- **How does the law in your country regulate publishing images of a child online?**
- **Consider how such content can be shared without affecting the child negatively.**

Exercise 3

Imagine you're in Gabbie's shoes — why was the young mother so eager to publish photos and videos of her daughter online?

- What needs did Gabbie fulfil in this way?
- How did it benefit her?
- In what other ways could she possibly share her experiences as a young mom with the world?

! If you are working in a group, organise a discussion. This can help broaden the perspective!

Exercise 4

Change the story in such a way that Gabbie can still have her needs met, but with respect for Olivia's privacy.

- How can Gabbie create a supportive community for moms without using her daughter's image?
- How can she run her parenting blog without showing her baby?
- How can Gabbie look for support outside of the Internet?
- How should the people around her react if she publishes something personal?

Exercise 5

Imagine that a close friend of yours has just become a dad. You notice that he has been uploading photos of his child to Instagram and Facebook increasingly more often, documenting more and more details of family life.

So far, he hasn't uploaded anything particularly compromising; it's mostly adorable baby pictures, however someone could easily recognise the neighbourhood where he lives just based on the photos. The friend posts many pictures with his house in the background, the local park, the nursery his son attends, nearby coffee shops... You don't want to interfere, but on the other hand you are concerned that the friend is unaware of the dangers of sharenting.

How would you talk to him about sharenting? Create a guide for a young parent that pinpoints the risks and dangers of sharenting, but also describes how to safely share your love for your child with the world.

Remember — it's less about becoming paranoid and more about using the Internet wisely while maintaining respect for the boundaries of others, including children.

Exercise 6 – extra ✳

If you are a parent who is active on social media, this is an assignment for you.

Review the content you post to your profiles:

- Could the content help someone identify where you live, what kindergarten or school your child attends?
- What are the privacy settings of your profile, who has access to it?
- Could some of the pictures or videos be potentially compromising for your child in the future?
- Imagine your child in a few years: what would he or she say about the material you publish? Keep in mind that teenagers are particularly sensitive to how they are perceived by their peers.
- If you haven't found anything like this, keep it up! If you have found something, don't worry — it's not too late to delete it or limit access to it.

Thanks a lot for your participation in the WebQuest. If you'd like to know more, we've included some links to verified sources below.

Sources

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharenting
- https://www.tabasco-erasmus.eu/crossmediaplatform/
- https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-to-safely-share-photos-of-your-kids-on-social-media-5191030
- https://www.verywellmind.com/the-impact-of-sharenting-6361714
- https://www.verywellmind.com/think-about-what-you-share-online-when-it-comes-to-the-kids-in-your-life-5201141
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpirtXdzkII&
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRPUZ3pufAg&