For immediate release

Reducing the risk of cyber attacks, and being supportive when children talk about online experiences are both important tools in confronting cybercrime

October is "Cyber Security Awareness Month" in Canada

Vancouver, B.C. (October 28, 2020): Smartphones, PCs and laptops, computer networks and IoT (the internet of things) continue to become a bigger part of our daily lives – and that makes us even more vulnerable to cyber attacks.

Using unique passwords or passphrases with letters, numbers and symbols for each device, avoiding phishing messages (emails) and "smishing" scams (the SMS text equivalent), keeping your Wi-Fi and employer networks secure, making sure your browser is up to date and changing privacy settings are some of the ways to prevent cyber attacks. These and other tips are available at the Government of Canada's cyber security website getcybersafe.gc.ca

In addition to technical preventative measures like these, parents also have an important supportive role in helping keep their children safe from cybercrime. It's mainly a matter of having a trusted person to talk to.

"As children are actively using a wide variety of internet tools, a consideration for parents and caregivers is to understand how the evolution of the technology that connects us also creates complex dynamics of how we teach children about the risks associated to online communications," says Jesse Miller of mediatedreality.com, a technology and social media education company based in Vancouver. "When children are messaged by friends, peers, or individuals from the internet, the most important safety tool is an understanding of who can be relied on to communicate concerns about their experiences online.

"While reducing risk should be a priority, over the past decade, we have learned that it is equally important to minimize the harm that children experience from online threats," Miller adds. "Talk to your children about their online experiences, be open, and trust open dialogues compared to tech gadgets or filters because rather than simply trying to reduce risks, we as adults need to lead internet concerns with good examples of healthy use of social media and technology in the home and supporting, not shaming, our children when they come forward with concerns about the online behaviour of others."

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Anonymous tips about cyberbullying or any other cybercrime may be provided though Crime Stoppers' downloadable "P3" app, by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-855-448-8477 or 1-800-222-8477, online at solvecrime.ca, or by following the link on the Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers Facebook page.

About Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers
Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is a non-profit society and registered charity that offers rewards for anonymous tip information about criminal activity and provides it to investigators in the communities of Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Crime Stoppers accepts tips in 115 different languages. If the information provided results in a charge or an arrest, a cash reward of up to $5000 may be offered. Tipsters stay anonymous by using code numbers to collect their rewards.

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is not the police and operates solely on funds donated or generated through fundraising events. Tax-deductible donations are gratefully received anytime by accessing the "donate" link at solvecrime.ca. Follow us on Twitter: @solvecrime

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