

# Cyberspace Safety

Facebook, Myspace, Instant Messenger, and many other forms of electronic communication have become a popular for college students. Even though those forms of communication provide a sense of anonymity and safety, students often times find themselves caught in dangerous situations. Here are some tips for being safe on the internet:

## **Be Yourself—**

Make sure you know your limits and you are not letting someone on the internet pressure you into being someone you aren't. By letting your guard down or not being aware of your limits you increase the chance of something expected happening.

## **Treat Others the Way You Want To Be Treated—**

People who are disrespectful and aggressive online are at a greater risk of being harassed themselves.

## **Guard Your Personal Information—**

Personal information is used to find people. So make sure the people who have your personal information are people you want to find you.

## **Post Carefully—**

Sharing controversial photos of you and your friends even in emails can get you in trouble. You never know who might end seeing the information and using it against you.

## **Be Cautious —**

Meeting new people for friendship or romance may be fun and exciting, but be aware that some people are

nice and other just act nice because they are trying to manipulate you. Often times flattering or supportive messages have ulterior motives other than friendship or romance.

## **Don't Talk About Sex With Strangers—**

USE EXTREME CAUTION when communicating with people you don't know. You do not want to lead them on and you do not want to be the target of a predator's grooming. Set boundaries and if the person is persistent call your local police.

## **Use Privacy Setting—**

Facebook, Myspace, and other social networking sites are good for keeping up with friends and family. Use the privacy settings to protect yourself by allowing only the people you know access to view personal details such as contact information and pictures.

## **Avoid Meeting People In Person—**

Meeting people off the internet puts you at risk. If you really must get together with someone you "met" online do not go alone, make sure the meeting is in a public place, and tell someone where you are going.

## **Follow Your Gut—**

If something or someone online is making you feel uncomfortable disconnect from that site or do not chat with that individual.

Being safe on the internet is easy if you know what to do. If you are having difficulties in cyberspace contact the Counseling and Career Center at [205.665.6262](tel:205.665.6262).

## UM COUNSELING & CAREER CENTER

Providing free and confidential **PERSONAL** and **CAREER** counseling services to UM Students.

Call [665.6262](tel:665.6262) or stop by the lower level of Main Hall



[www.montevallo.edu/counselingcenter](http://www.montevallo.edu/counselingcenter)