

- Anger / Emotions

THE IMPACT OF FEXTING ON YOUR HEALTH

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We all know the saying, you should “never let the sun go down on your anger”. Perhaps the equivalent of that in this digital-centric age, is to not fight over text message.

“Fighting over text, known colloquially as ‘fexting’, tends to exacerbate the worst aspects of any disagreement, leading to misunderstandings and heightened emotions,” says Murray Hewlett, CEO of Affinity Health.

“In the digital age, texting has transformed how we communicate, offering instant access and responses.

However, this convenience comes with drawbacks, especially when it involves disputes or disagreements.”

Hewlett explores the impact of “fexting” on health and strategies for promoting healthy communication.

WHY FEXTING FAILS

Arguing through text can sometimes strip away the human element, making it easier to say things you wouldn’t usually say face-to-face.

Without the visual and auditory cues that remind us we’re interacting with another person, it’s easy to detach and become harsher.

When communicating via text, you also miss out on seeing the immediate impact of your words.

For example, if a face-to-face argument brings your partner to tears, you’d likely soften your tone or offer comfort. Moreover, you never really know what someone else is doing when they receive your message.

Texting’s permanent record can also complicate future interactions; unlike verbal conversations, text arguments are documented and can be revisited, potentially reigniting past disputes.

THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL TOLL OF FEXTING

The nature of fexting allows for impulsive responses without the buffer of time to consider the impact.

This can cause arguments to spiral quickly. The constant barrage of notifications and the pressure to respond immediately can heighten feelings of anxiety and stress.

Persistent conflicts and unresolved issues from fexting can erode trust, hinder communication, and reduce intimacy.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF STRESS FROM FEXTING

Beyond its psychological and emotional effects, the stress from fexting can also manifest physically.

Chronic stress is linked to a range of health problems.

Individuals involved in fexting might experience physical symptoms such as muscle tension, headaches, and stomach discomfort, all of which can aggravate the distress caused by ongoing digital conflicts.

WHEN IS FEXTING OKAY?

Fexting can sometimes be positive. For trivial matters, such as a misunderstanding over a grocery list, it can be an efficient way to express disappointment.

Fexting can also offer benefits if handled thoughtfully. It allows time to gather and express thoughts clearly.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING FEXTING PITFALLS

- Practice mindful communication: Before sending a text message, take a moment to consider the tone and content of your message.

Avoid sending impulsive or emotionally charged messages and strive to communicate with empathy and understanding.

- **Take breaks and set boundaries:** If a conversation becomes heated or escalates into an argument, consider taking a break from texting to cool off. Set boundaries around texting frequency and response times to prevent excessive communication and minimise stress.

- **Use voice or video calls:** When emotions run high or complex issues arise, consider transitioning to voice or video calls to facilitate more nuanced and empathetic communication.

Hearing the tone of voice and seeing facial expressions can help clarify intentions and resolve conflicts more effectively.

- **Seek support:** If fexting becomes a recurring pattern in your relationships, consider seeking support from a therapist, counsellor, or mediator.

Professional guidance can help you develop healthier communication skills.

- **Prioritise face-to-face interaction:** Whenever possible, prioritise face-to-face interaction to foster genuine connection and intimacy in relationships.

In-person conversations allow for richer communication and understanding, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings. — Affinity Health.