CT Suicide Advisory Board Advisory
The Blue Whale Challenge App

- **What is it?**
  - Method of extreme Cyberbullying that targets vulnerable youth to perform self-harm over 50 days and encourages suicide. It is not a game.
  - Blue Whale challenges youth to tag others to "play" using social media. Once the Blue Whale app is downloaded, it hacks into their personal information and cannot be removed.
  - The app uses threatening messages related to the teen's personal information or family safety to bully them into self-harm behaviors.

- **Advice for parents/guardians and teens**
  - **Monitor your children's use of electronic devices and computers**. Know what types of websites they're visiting, and what apps they're attempting to access and are using. Talk with them about what they're doing on their devices. Regularly review their browsing and search histories.
  - **Provide guidance to your children/teens** on what to do if someone challenges them to use the app, or if they know of someone using the app. Encourage them to tell a trusted adult who can then help address the problem, report it to authorities, connect at risk youth to help, and address the infected device.
  - **Know the warning signs of mental distress.** Changes in behavior. Physical or verbal expressions of hopelessness, sadness, extreme boredom, depression, and/or anxiety. Displays overwhelming pain or distress. Talks about, writes about or makes plans about committing suicide. Experiences stressful situations including a loss, change, personal humiliation, trouble at school or with the law, etc.
  - **Know what to do.** Call 9-1-1 in an emergency when someone makes an immediate threat to hurt or kill themselves, and restrict their access to anything they may use to harm themselves. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 2-1-1 in CT, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or a mental health professional if someone shows warning signs, but is not in immediate danger.

- **Resources:**
  - Parent Guides on Cybersafety: https://www.connectsafely.org/guides-3/
  - Prevent Cyberbullying: www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/prevention
  - A Parent's Guide to Cyberbulling: www.connectsafely.org/wp-content/uploads/cyberbullying_guide.pdf
  - What Parents Need to Know About Self-Injury: http://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/parenting-2.pdf
  - Prevent Suicide CT: www.preventsuicidect.org

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