## Controlling Intimate Partners With Technology: Implications for Health Educators

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Teens and young adults embrace the use of communication technologies such as mobile phones, short messaging services (SMS), email, instant messaging, and social networking sites in record number (Martin & Crane, 2007; Neilsen, 2009). While these innovations and increased accessibility to them have afforded various social benefits and conveniences, they have also provided a mechanism for increased interpersonal intrusion, to the point of obsessive relational intrusion. The line between what is appropriate and what is intrusive is often unclear. For example, the use of frequent text messaging in early courtship is initially regarded as evidence of romantic interest. However this same behavior may eventually be used and viewed as annoying, obsessive, harassing or even as cyberstalking when the relationship ends. In this session, the presenters will explain the results from their research study examining the extent to which a sample of 804 undergraduates at a large southeastern university used communication technology (e.g., cell phone, email, social network sites) to monitor or control partners in intimate relationships and to evaluate their perceptions of the appropriateness of these behaviors. Results of the online survey revealed that half of both female and male respondents reported the use of communication technology to monitor partners, either as the initiator or victim. Females were significantly more likely than males to monitor the email accounts of their partners (25% versus 6%) and to regard doing so as appropriate behavior. Implications for health educators and suggestions for targeted safety prevention programs will be discuss