

Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY)
(Cyber Laws & e-Security Group)

Dated : 27 Aug 2018

Subject : ADVISORY ON "MOMO CHALLENGE GAME"

It is reported in the media that there is new online challenge game called "the Momo Challenge" which started on Facebook where members are "challenged" to Communicate with unknown numbers . It went viral on social media platforms, especially WhatsApp.

The Momo Challenge consists of a variety of self harming dares which becomes increasingly risky as the game progresses and it finally ends with suicide challenge. The game involves challenges that encourage teenagers/ children / any other user to engage in series of violent acts as challenges of the game.

The game inspires teenagers/ children / any other user (the player), to add unknown contacts on WhatsApp by the name of 'Momo'. Once the contact is added, the image of the terrifying Japanese 'Momo' doll with bulging eyes appears in contact. The game controller than entices player to perform a series of challenges and playing the game are threatened with violent images, audios or videos, if player do not follow instructions.

Look out for following Signs and Symptoms :

1. Becoming withdrawn from friends and family
2. Persistent low mood and unhappiness
3. Looking worried that stops him/her from carrying out day to day tasks
4. Sudden outbursts of anger directed at themselves or others
5. Loss of interest in activities that they used to enjoy
6. Visible marks like deep cuts or wounds on any part of the body of the child.

How to protect your child from this game:

1. Check in with your child, ask how things are going. Ask if there have been things stressing them, or anything that has them worried. If your child is talking about any level of distress, do not hesitate to ask them about changes in mental health.
2. Unless there is reason to believe your child already knows of or has played the game, don't discuss about the Blue Whale game. By doing so, you increase the chance that your child will search for it on their own.
3. Monitor your children's online & social media activity to ensure they are not engaging with this game.
4. Keep your eyes open for:
 - a) Unusually secretive behaviour, mostly related to their online activity
 - b) A sudden increase in the time they spend online, especially social media
 - c) They seem to change screens on their device when approached
 - d) They become withdrawn or angry, after using the internet or sending text messages
 - e) Their device suddenly has many new phone numbers and email contacts
5. Install a good cyber/mobile parenting software which helps them in monitoring your children.
6. Parents should take reports from child counsellor present in the school at regular intervals.
7. If you fear your child may be at risk, get professional help right away.
8. Remind your child that you are there and will support them as they face life challenges.

References :

- (a) <http://infosecawareness.in/family/>
- (b) <https://indianexpress.com/article/what-is/what-is-momo-challenge-5302916/>
- (c) <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/prevetina-absue/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>
- (d) <https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738?hl=en-GB>
- (e) <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304>
- (f) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/lifestyle/health-fitness/health-news/after-blue-whale-it-is-momo-whatsapp-sucide-game-thats-risking-your-teens/articleshow/65335762.cms>
- (g) <https://www.news.com.au/technology/online/social/where-the-creepy-image-for-the-memo-challenge-came-from/news-story/535560edbd2ad95656216d626030fa29>