

Online Safety

CASEL Core Competencies: Relationship skills, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6, Standard 7

Learner/Participant Objectives: Self-efficacy (personal boundaries/assertiveness, safe media use/technology, gender norms)

Content Warnings: Online predators and predatory behavior

Facilitator Tips: Recruitment for human trafficking largely takes place online. Since the pandemic, virtual schooling and many social interactions have moved online, increasing the amount of time and comfortability youth experience online. To protect youth from online predators, it's important to give them the tools necessary to recognize and report unsafe interactions.

Key Terms: Online Safety, Online Predator, Personal Information

Time: 60 minutes

Materials needed: Butcher paper or white boards, markers or other writing utensils, chairs (enough for the number of students in the group)

Background: The internet has created new ways for people to communicate and stay connected. Through the internet and other technology, young people can gain media literacy, become technically savvy, construct identities, socialize, and connect to people all over the world. Despite the benefits of computer innovation, social media platforms are one of the common ways that children and youth will be contacted and groomed for trafficking. Approximately 95% of teens between ages 12–17 years old are online. One in five teenagers who utilize the internet regularly report receiving unwanted sexual solicitation via the internet, only 25% told a parent. Internet sexual predators are known to target teens aged 11 to 15 years old. Teens are increasingly willing to share more personal information online. The FBI reports that by the age of 14, 77% of teens have been contacted by a predator online, 12% of teenage girls admitted to eventually meeting strangers they first met online in person, and chat room strangers are implicated in nearly 20% of cases of missing teens aged 15 to 17 each year. Teaching children how to navigate the internet and social media platforms safely is extremely important as internet use and social media sites become more integrated into everyday lives.

References: Adapted from Rise Above "PHE School Zone – Rise Above – Overview." [Overview] | Campaign Resource Centre. Retrieved July 18, 2018, from <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview#onlinestress>.

This activity was adapted from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's NetSmartz Workshop. <http://www.netsmartz.org>

Procedure

- Begin a discussion about internet use. For example: To share and/or obtain news, connect with friends and family, watch movies/TV shows, play games, listen to music, check the weather, watch sporting events, and apply for college or a job. Ask Participants:
 - Have you ever used the internet before?
 - How often do you use the internet?
 - What do you use the internet for?
 - What can the internet be used for?
 - In what ways are the internet useful?
 - How can the internet become dangerous?
- Continue the discussion with a focus on social media. Explain that although the internet can be used for a variety of purposes, sometimes it is used in negative ways to deceive or exploit people. Explain that learning about the internet’s potential dangers, specifically social media, is important to stay safe while enjoying its benefits. Ask Participants:
 - What is social media?
 - What are popular social media sites? (TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter).
 - Why do people use social media?
 - Who can use social media?
 - How can you access it? From where?
 - What information do people share on social media?
- Now show “5 Internet Safety Tips for Kids” video clip (00:43)
 - [Privacy and Internet Safety Parent Concern | Common Sense Media](#)
- After the video, ask Participants to work in groups to create rules to safely use the internet. Rules could include:
 - Do not give out personal information: home address, school name, or phone number
 - Never send pictures to strangers
 - Keep passwords private except from parents
 - Do not download anything without permission, it may contain a virus
 - Tell an adult if you receive a mean or strange message
 - I will tell my trusted adult if anything makes me feel sad, scared, or confused.
 - I will ask my trusted adult before sharing information like my name, address, and phone number.
 - I will not meet face-to-face with anyone from the internet.
 - I will always use good netiquette and not be rude or mean online (digital citizenship).
 - Let the groups come back together and share their safety rules.

- Continue the discussion by asking Participants what a stranger is. Come up with a simple, easy definition as a group and write it on a visible location. Explain that personal information should not be shared with strangers.
- Transition into the next step and explain to the group that you will be playing musical chairs (*see instructions below*).
- After the activity, ask Participants to recap today’s activity and encourage them to share or add any of their own experiences relating to internet safety.

Musical Chairs Set-Up

Instruct Participants to organize chairs in a circle in the center of the room. Use the “Internet Safety: Musical Chairs Questions” guide on the following page.

- Ask Participants if they have ever previously played musical chairs? If they haven’t, please explain the basic rules. Then, explain that in this version of musical chairs you will be adding a step.
- Extra step: if you are the person left standing, I am going to ask you a question based on what we have been learning or give you a scenario, then you are going to tell me if this 1) raises a red flag and 2) what you would do.
- If the person does not know the answer or guesses incorrectly, I will ask the same question again to the next person, so don’t say it aloud!
- If you get the question correct you can stay in the game, if you get the question wrong, you’re out of the game.

Remind Participants of a few safety guidelines before beginning:

- Keep your hands to yourself
- Be gentle (no pushing, shoving, etc.)
- Be respectful of others
- Do not answer the question for someone else

Internet Safety: Musical Chairs Questions

Questions do not need to be asked in order. Mark off the answers that Participants have given so that you do not repeat the same questions.

- There are five rules from the “5 Internet Safety Tips for Kids” video we watched, what is one of the rules? *(You may ask this question until Participants have named each rule)*
 - Do not give out personal information
 - Never send pictures to strangers
 - Keep passwords private
 - Do not download anything without permission
 - Tell an adult if you receive a mean or strange message

- What is one example of personal information? *(You may ask this question several times)*
 - Name
 - Address
 - School Name
 - Password
 - Phone number
 - E-mail
 - Age
 - In some instances, personal thoughts and feelings

- What information is okay to share with an online friend and what information is not okay to share with an online friend?
 - Okay to share favorite food, color, movie, toy, game, book.
 - NOT okay to share personal information (see question 2)

Red Flag Scenario Questions

- **Q:** You forgot to message your online friend today. The next time you get online, he/she makes you feel guilty.
- **A:** Red flag! Your friend could be trying to control you by manipulating your feelings.

- **Q:** Your online friend asks for your home address because they want to send you a gift.
- **A:** Red flag! This is personal information!

- **Q:** Your online friend asks you what your favorite movie is.
- **A:** No flag.

- **Q:** Your online friend offers to send you a cell phone.
- **A:** Red flag! Accepting gifts from people can make it hard to tell them no.

- **Q:** Your online friend asks for a picture of you.
- **A:** Red flag! This is personal information.

- **Q:** Your online friend tells you something that makes you uncomfortable and asks you to keep it a secret.
- **A:** Red flag! No one should ask you to keep a secret that makes you uncomfortable.

- **Q:** Your online friend sends you a popular music video.
- **A:** No flag.

- **Q:** Your online friend offers to send you a bus ticket so that you can visit them.
- **A:** Red flag! No one should try and meet you without your parents'/caregivers' permission.

- **Q:** Your online friend asks if you want to play her/him in an online game.
- **A:** No flag.

- **Q:** Your online friend does not want your trusted adult to know about him or her.
- **A:** Red flag! No one should ask you to keep secrets from your trusted adults.

- **Q:** You play basketball and so does your online friend. He/she asks to come watch one of your games.
- **A:** Red flag! This could be a sneaky way of trying to meet face-to-face.

- Give me an example of something an "online fake" would say that would raise a red flag? (*You may ask this question several times*)
 - What's your home address?
 - Let's just keep this between you and me.
 - Why won't you tell me? Don't you trust me?
 - Do you want to meet in person?