

Lesson:
Internet Safety

Length of lesson:
45 Minutes

Materials:

- **Computer with internet access**
- **Videos or online videos about online safety**
- **Paper**
- **Pens and pencils**

Discussion Summary:

The internet has created new ways for people to communicate and be connected. Through the internet and other computer technology, young people have the opportunity to gain media literacy, become technically savvy, construct identities, socialize, and be connected to people all over the world. Despite the benefits of computer innovation, cyber-bullying and the spread of rumors and gossip on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snap Chat, as well as through chat room, instant messaging, and email, are growing problems. 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 young people about online safety is as important as teaching them about the benefits of computer technology.

Discussion Question:

- **How can you stay safe on the internet?**

- 1.** Begin a discussion about internet use. Ask participants: Have you ever used the internet before? What do YOU use the internet for? What CAN the internet be used for? (ex: research/learn about things, get/share news, chat with friends, look up the bus/train/airplane schedule, watch movies/TV shows, play computer games, listen to music, look up books at the library, check the weather, look up sports scores, find a job, etc.)
- 2.** Explain that although the internet can be used for all of these amazing purposes, sometimes it is used to hurt others. Explain it is important to learn about the potential dangers of the internet so you can use it for all its benefits while staying safe.
- 3.** Show videos or online videos about online safety. Show public service announcements about cyber-bullying, stories of spreading gossip or photos that have led to suicide, and stories about kidnapping or someone getting hurt that happened as a result of meeting someone online.
- 4.** Ask participants to think about the videos they saw and answer: What do you need to be careful about on the internet? Explain they need to be careful about: Predators—people aren't always who they say they are, people might lie to you, people might try to entice you with something they know you like and then trick you into meeting them; Bullying—if you

wouldn't say it out loud, why say it online?; Website content—if you see something that makes you uncomfortable, report it to a trusted adult.

5. Help participants understand the Internet is forever: everything they post online is tracked and stored and will follow them to future job interviews and college entrance interviews. Also, explain that victims/targets of bullying should not respond to the messages, but should print out the messages or pictures as evidence and report it to a trusted adult.

6. Ask if there are any questions about anything they have heard or seen today.

7. Pass out paper and pens. Have participants create a rule sheet about internet safety to post by a computer. Assist as necessary. Have participants write 5 to 10 rules to remind them how to be safe when using the internet. Use the “Online Safety Rules for Kids” by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and ikeepSAFE.org as examples:

- I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone numbers, parent's work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school to anyone online.
- I will tell my parent/guardian right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will never agree to get together with someone I “meet” online. If my parents/guardians agree to a meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my parent/guardian along.
- I will never send someone my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents/guardians.
- I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way makes me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will print out the messages or pictures as evidence and report it to a trusted adult.
- I will talk with my parents/guardians so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon a time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

8. Have participants post their rules next to computers in the space, at school, or at home.