

Title: Social Media Reflection & Threat Recognition

Age/Grade: 9th grade

Length: 40 minutes

In this lesson, students will:

- Know how their behavior changes when they are online as opposed to offline.
- Understand the impact that the internet has on all of our lives in both a positive and negative sense.
- Build strategies that will improve youth online decision-making in stressful online situations.

Overview:

It is easier to text someone you love than it is to tell them to their face. It is also easier to tell an athlete how much you hate them on Twitter than it is to their face. The internet works in interesting ways on our psyche. At this age, most youth are spending more time online than they are sleeping each day - something that was only magnified over the pandemic. And while the time we are spending online is not automatically bad or unhealthy, what youth are doing with this time and the decisions they make dictate their day-to-day experience in a number of ways. Like a slot machine, each pulldown on the screen to refresh the page is another spin for something new and exciting, or dangerous and costly. This lesson will aim to reflect on our relationship with technology and who we are when we go online. After reflection, we are going to expound on the factors that can impact our online decisions and the potential for risk this can cause, before building core skills in keeping safe and healthy through our own decisions and behaviors as digital citizens.

This lesson seeks to address to following questions:

- What are the positives that the internet offers me day-to-day?
- What risks are we taking online and how are we reacting to those presented to us?
- What is my role online in keeping myself and others safe?
- What skills can I improve to ensure my experience online remains positive and safe?
- How are the environments online and offline similar and different?

Materials:

Social Media Paradox cards

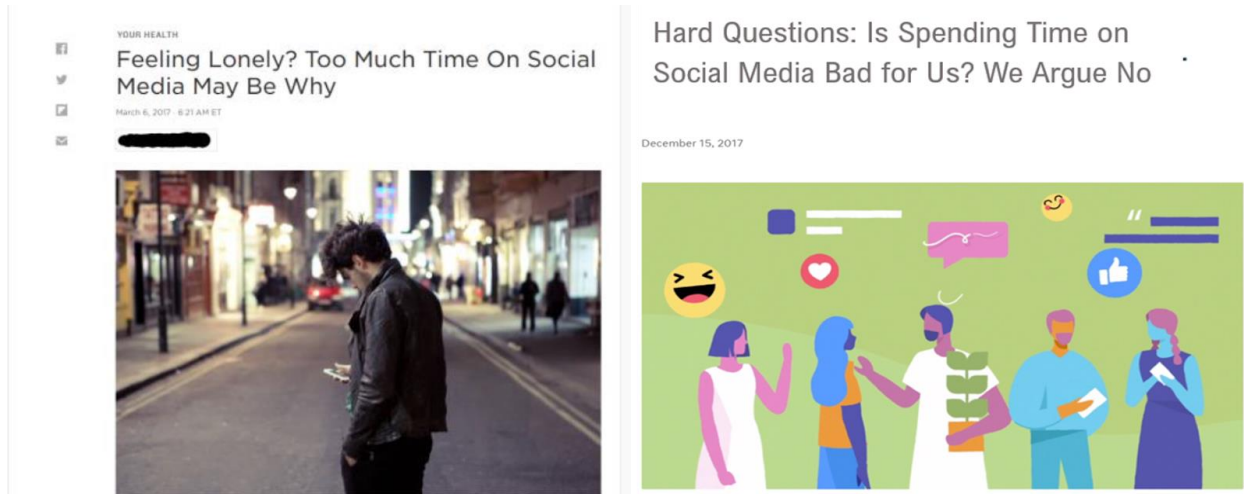
Red/Green Cards

Slides with scenarios

Introduction - Activity & Discussion

8-minutes

At this step, we want to establish a rapport with the students over their relationship with social media and the internet. How we are going to do this is by breaking students into pairs and running a brief activity. Next, we will give half the students a headline to an article, and the other half a different headline. These two headlines are below.



Once you assign the pairs their article title, give them 3 minutes to develop a defense of their article, even if they don't personally believe it (this will come later). You want the students to think about all the positives and negatives that can come along with their relationship with social media and develop a reasoning for whichever side they are assigned.

Once the students have discussed with their partner for 3-minutes, ask if one of the groups would be willing to share their argument for why the article is correct, first. Once they have done so, ask the other groups with that same article if they would like to share their opinions or if they have anything they wish to add. Once the first article is discussed, then do the same for the second article. Once both sides of the argument have been presented by the students, open up the class for discussion and ask which of these articles the students actually agree with. Allow the students time to explore their experiences online.

Discussion: Reflecting on the risks

5-minutes

After discussing the pros and cons of social media in the first activity, you want to move toward specific situations and threats that exist online. Start by asking the students what online risks exist online and where they are. Allow the students to respond and write these on the board. You want the students to identify what they are worried about and what makes up a "risk" to them.

If the students struggle to come up with any responses, ask about what they think of when you say “online threat” or “online risk”. Again, you are aiming to gather what needs to happen for the students to identify it as being a risk.

Based on the students’ responses, make a judgement as to what type of risks the students are most concerned about. The four main categories of risks are:

1. Physical safety
2. Emotional health
3. Information safety
4. Belief/idea safety

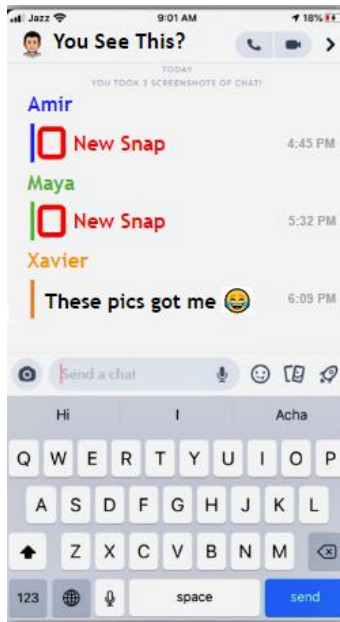
After this, mention what trends you are seeing and point them out to the students. Discuss briefly about the four “buckets” we typically put risks into, and mention any of the buckets that they did not mention. Ask if there are any examples of those risks that they might be able to think of or have seen online.

Before transitioning to the next part of the lesson, ask what their confidence is at identifying risks online.

Identifying Risk

7-minutes

What makes up a risk and how do we react to them? In the next activity, you are going to present situations and scenarios to the students that have a number of different risks. Bring back the four classifications of risks from the previous discussion and write them onto the board. Show a very quick example of an online situation.



Someone starts a private Snapchat to send embarrassing photos they take of their classmates to their friends.

1. Who is this hurting?
2. What is this a risk to from the 4 risk-types?
3. What can you do about it to help?

This is meant to be an easy example that the students are able to recognize is a risk, can be harmful to people, and get them thinking about ways they can get involved to help.

Activity: Identifying & Acting

15-minutes

After you briefly discuss the Snapchat example just to get the students' frame of mind right, now go around the classroom and handout a red card and a green card each student. Explain that you are going to project a couple of examples of being online that may or may not present risk. When explaining each situation, you will be asking whether the situation is RISKY (red card) or SAFE (green card). If the students determine something to be RISKY, you want to discuss *why, to who,* and eventually *what can we do about it?*

Situation 1 (on slides):

↑ r/MeetPeople · Posted by user382 8 minutes ago

Vote 15M [chat] [friendship] Looking for someone to chat and help me through some stuff

DM's Open

I've been very lonely lately I feel a ton of stress and anxiety and I can't find any1 to talk to about it.

I can talk on Discord or we can DM on here maybe. It don't matter to me.

I am 15 years old in the US, I am from a small town, I don't have a ton of friends but I am close with the ones I have. I watch hours of YouTube usually and listen to music on my new record player.

I am stressed out to talk about some stuff happening in my life with my friends because I know I am close with them but they might judge me. I don't know. Any1 help?

27 Comments Share Save Hide Report 100% Upvoted

Is this (above) a risk or threat? Allow time for the students to think and raise their cards. Ask why or why not?

Sonnys00b · 6h

Hey man! Sorry to hear your feeling a little alone right now I am happy to chat... I DM'd you but am cool with talking on discord or something. Im from NH so we can talk about that and stuff.

2.7k Reply Share Report Save

user382 · 4h 🍌

Thanks Ill respond. Need something new right now

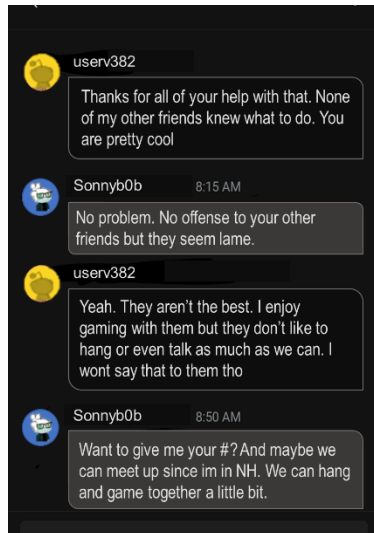
1.3k Reply Share Report Save

Sonnys00b · 4h

Sounds good dude..

868 Reply Share Report Save

Is this (above) a risk or threat? Allow time for the students to think and raise their cards. Ask why or why not?



Is this (left) a risk or threat? Why or why not?

Students should identify this scenario as a threat for a couple of reasons. (1) the other person is trying to isolate them from their friends by putting them down. (2) also, aiming to potentially meet-up and give-up that private and personal information as well.

Further the conversation with the students to understand which of the risk-types it is, and also discuss what can be done to stay safe in a situation like this. Explain that people who are attempting reach out and have malevolent intentions online are more likely to do so online because they are comfortable (and so are the students). And during that time of comfort, they will employ tactics to make them comfortable in situations that you wouldn't online.

Further the conversation with the students to understand which of the risk-types it is, and also discuss what can be done to stay safe in a situation like this. Before moving forward, ask the students if they can give examples of real-life situations that might be classified as a different form of risk. Are there situations of risks to one's belief/ideas that they might encounter day-to-day? Once this conversation concludes, move the discussion to taking action in the final stage of the lesson.

Conclusion

5-minutes

To close the lesson, you want to review the actions that the students just developed as “action plans” for situations like the ones discussed in the last activity. Ask the students whether they believe they are doing enough to keep *others* safe when online. Allow time for the students to respond and ask the students what actions they could take, big or small, that would impact other's safety online (whether they know about it or not). Return to some of the risks discussed at the beginning of the lesson – and think about how they might be able to take action to help others in those situations.