Social Media Safety Parent Handout

SOCIAL SKILLS OBJECTIVE: Students will share situations when they have used social media and not been quite sure how to navigate safely. Instructors will read the book and do one of the following activities.

BOOK: Cyberbullying: Deal with it and Ctrl Alt Delete It by Robyn MacEachern / The Mouse Who Went Surfing Alone by Risa Vetri Ferman; Cyberbullying (Tech Safety Smarts), by Heather Schwartz


GAME: Social Media Safety

FOLLOW UP AT HOME: Discuss with your child those things that might get them into trouble while using the Internet, cell phones, and texting. Follow these links for helpful information. http://www.internetsafety101.org/predatorwarningsigns.htm https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/social-networking-tips

Warning Signs your child may be in contact with an online predator if he or she:

- Becomes secretive about online activities
- Becomes obsessive about being online
- Gets angry when he or she can’t get online
- Receives phone calls from people you do not know or makes calls to numbers that you do not recognize
- Receives gifts, mail, or packages from someone you do not know
- Withdraws from family and friends
- Changes screens or turns off computer when an adult enters a room
- Begins downloading pornography online

“One of the devices that predators use in the interactions with kids is sending them explicit photos of themselves. What they’re trying to do is sort of deaden the nerve endings. They’re trying to beat down the resistance. It’s part of the grooming process to normalize what they’re trying to do. And it’s pretty insidious.” — Ernie Allen, President & CEO, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Dangers of the Social Web

In the offline world, communities are typically responsible for enforcing norms of privacy and general etiquette. In the online world, new etiquette challenges abound. In order to reap the benefits of socializing and making new friends, teens often disclose information about themselves that would typically be part of an acceptable “getting-to-know-you” process offline (name, school, personal interests, etc.). On social network sites, this kind of information is now posted online—sometimes in full public view. In some cases, this information is innocuous or fake. But in other cases, disclosure reaches a level that is troubling
for parents and those concerned about the safety of online teens, and once children put this information online, they will never get it back.

Teens are posting a tremendous amount of information on their online profiles, so it is vitally important that teens use strict privacy settings and are savvy about the individuals they allow to view their social networking profile. Since kids are often trying to catch the attention of and gain approval from their peers, some teens tend to post content to appear popular or to gain a response from others in their online community; teens jockey for status, post risqué pictures, brag about the previous weekend’s adventures, and can easily use this digital space to humiliate others or post inappropriate content. No information is truly private in the online world; an online “friend” can forward any information posted on your child’s site in a moment.

Online Bullying

Gone are the days when a child’s home is a refuge from playground or neighborhood bullies. The Internet is the new playground, and there are no off-hours. Tech-savvy students are turning to cyberspace to harass their peers using a new method of bullying—cyberbullying. The popularity of instant messaging, e-mail, web pages, text messaging, and blogging means that kids are potential targets—all day, every day. Victimization on the Internet through cyberbullying is increasing in frequency and scope. Electronic bullies can remain “virtually” anonymous. Temporary e-mail accounts and pseudonyms in chat rooms, instant messaging programs, and other Internet venues can make it very difficult for adolescents to determine the identity of aggressors. Individuals now have the ability to hide behind some measure of anonymity when using their personal computer or cellular phone to bully another individual.

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is willful and repeated harm (i.e., harassing, humiliating, or threatening text or images) inflicted through the Internet, interactive technologies, or mobile phones.

43% of teens aged 13 to 17 report that they have experienced some sort of cyberbullying in the past year.

http://www.internetsafety101.org/cyberbullying.htm

Cyberbullying tactics:

- **Gossip**: Posting or sending cruel gossip to damage a person’s reputation and relationships with friends, family, and acquaintances
- **Exclusion**: Deliberately excluding someone from an online group
- **Impersonation**: Breaking into someone’s e-mail or other online account and sending messages that will cause embarrassment or damage to the person’s reputation and affect his or her relationship with others
- **Harassment**: Repeatedly posting or sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
- **Cyber Stalking**: Posting or sending unwanted or intimidating messages, which may include threats
• **Flaming:** Online *fights* where scornful and offensive messages are posted on websites, forums, or blogs

• **Outing and Trickery:** Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared online

• **Cyber Threats:** Remarks on the Internet threatening or implying violent behavior, displaying suicidal tendencies


**Cyberbullying**
This post includes content adapted from onguardonline.gov.

Cyberbullying is bullying or harassment that happens online. It can happen in an email, a text message, a game, or on a social networking site. It might involve spreading rumors or images posted on someone’s profile or passed around for others to see, or creating a group or page to make a person feel left out.

http://socialsafety.org/cyber-bullying/

**What to do about it**
• Don’t respond to the bully; they’re looking for a reaction.
• Block or delete the bully. Adjust your privacy settings as necessary.
• Save evidence of the bullying and report it to the appropriate website’s support team as soon as possible.
• If you witness someone else being bullied, report it!

**Parents, Teachers, Caregivers, and Grandparents:** Please read the following scenario regarding *Internet safety*. It is a reminder to all of us to be sure that our children understand the risks of internet chatting. This is a story that turns out positive. Some children are not this lucky.

After tossing her books on the sofa, she decided to grab a snack and get on-line. She logged on under her screen name, by Angel213. She checked her Buddy List and saw GoTo123 was on. She sent him an instant message:

**Angel213:** Hi. I’m glad you are on! I thought someone was following me home today. It was really weird!

**GoTo123:** You watch too much TV. LOL Why would someone be following you? Don’t you live in a safe neighborhood?

**Angel213:** Of course I do. LOL I guess it was my imagination cuz’ I didn’t see anybody when I looked out.

**GoTo123:** Unless you gave your name out on-line. You haven’t done that have you?
Angel213: Of course not. I’m not stupid you know.

GoTo123: Did you have a softball game after school today?

Angel213: Yes and we won!!

GoTo123: That’s great! Who did you play?

Angel213: We played the Hornets. LOL. Their uniforms are so gross! They look like bees. LOL

GoTo123: What is your team called?

Angel213: We are the Canton Cats. We have tiger paws on our uniforms. They are really cool.

GoTo123: Did you pitch?

Angel213: No I play second base. I got to go. My homework has to be done before my parents get home. I don’t want them mad at me. Bye!

GoTo123: Catch you later! Bye

Meanwhile…GoTo123 went to the member menu and began to search for her profile. When it came up, he highlighted it and printed it out. He took out a pen and began to write down what he knew about Angel213 so far.

Her name: Shannon
Birthday: Jan. 3, 1985
Age: 13
State where she lived: North Carolina
Hobbies: softball, chorus, skating and going to the mall.
Besides this information, he knew she lived in Canton because she had just told him. He knew she stayed by herself until 6:30 p.m. every afternoon until her parents came home from work. He knew she played softball on Thursday afternoons on the school team, and the team was named the Canton Cats. Her favorite number 7 was printed on her jersey. He knew she was in the eighth grade at the Canton Junior High School. She had told him all this in the conversations they had on-line. He had enough information to find her now!!!

Shannon didn’t tell her parents about the incident on the way home from the ballpark that day. She didn’t want them to make a scene and stop her from walking home from the softball games. Parents were always overreacting and hers were the worst. It made her wish she was not an only child. Maybe if she had brothers and sisters, her parents wouldn’t be so overprotective.

By Thursday, Shannon had forgotten about the footsteps following her.
Her game was in full swing when suddenly she felt someone staring at her. It was then that the memory came back. She glanced up from her second base position to see a man watching her closely.

He was leaning against the fence behind first base and he smiled when she looked at him. He didn’t look scary and she quickly dismissed the sudden fear she had felt.

After the game, he sat on a bleacher while she talked to the coach. She noticed his smile once again as she walked past him. He nodded and she smiled back. He noticed her name on the back of her shirt. **He knew he had found Angel213!**

Quickly, he walked a safe distance behind her. It was only a few blocks to Shannon’s home, and once he saw where she lived, he quickly returned to the park to get his car.

Now he had to wait. He decided to get a bite to eat until the time came to go to Shannon’s house. He drove to a fast food restaurant and sat there until time to make his move.

Shannon was in her room later that evening when she heard voices in the living room. “Shannon, come here,” her father called. He sounded upset and she couldn’t imagine why. When she went into the room to see, the man from the ballpark sitting on the sofa! “Sit down” her father began, “this man has just told us a most interesting story about you.”

Shannon sat back. How could he tell her parents anything? She had never seen him before today! “Do you know who I am, Shannon?” the man asked. “No,” Shannon answered.

“I am a police officer and your on-line friend, GoTo123.” Shannon was stunned. “That’s impossible! GoTo is a kid my age! He’s 14. And, he lives in Michigan!”

The man smiled. “I know I told you all that, but it wasn’t true. You see, Shannon, there are people on-line who pretend to be kids; I was one of them. But while others do it to injure kids and hurt them, I belong to a group of parents who do it to protect kids from predators. I came here to find you to teach you how dangerous it is to talk to people on-line. You told me enough about yourself to make it easy for me to find you. Your name, the school you went to, the name of your ball team, and the position you played. The number and name on your jersey just made finding you a breeze!”

Shannon was stunned. “You mean you don’t live in Michigan?” He laughed. “No, I live in Raleigh…it made you feel safe to think I was so far away, didn’t it? She nodded. “I had a friend whose daughter was like you. Only she wasn’t as lucky. The guy found her and murdered her while she was home alone. Kids are taught not to tell anyone when they are alone, yet they do it all the time on-line. The wrong people trick you into giving out information a little here and there on-line. Before you know it, you have told them enough for them to find you without even realizing you have done it. I hope you’ve learned a lesson from this and won’t do it again. Tell others about this so they will be safe too?” “It’s a promise!” Shannon said.

**For further information regarding internet safety go to:** [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

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<tr>
<th>The problem</th>
<th>What you can do</th>
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<td>There has been a crime or someone is at immediate risk of harm.</td>
<td>Call 911.</td>
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<td>Someone is feeling hopeless, helpless, thinking of suicide.</td>
<td>Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline online or at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). The toll-free call goes to the nearest crisis center in our national network. These centers provide 24-hour crisis counseling and mental health referrals.</td>
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<td>Someone is acting differently than normal, such as always seeming sad or anxious, struggling to complete tasks, or not being able care for themselves.</td>
<td>Find a local counselor or other mental health services</td>
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<td>A child is being bullied in school.</td>
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<td>The school is not adequately addressing harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or religion.</td>
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<td>Contact:</td>
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<td>1. Teacher</td>
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<td>3. School principal</td>
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<td>4. School superintendent</td>
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<td>5. State Department of Education</td>
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<td>See more on working with the school.</td>
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<td>Contact:</td>
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<td>• School superintendent</td>
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<td>• U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights</td>
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<td>• U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division</td>
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