



Instructing Today's Youth About Being "Safe" in the Land of Social Media

Where to Go for Help

Unit 2 Lesson

What to do and How to Get Help?





“A bully really doesn't have life. Why? Because he is so focused to live in yours.” ~ Smith

“Bullies and cowards are the two names of a same person.” ~ Unknown

“Some bruises are on the inside. Stop bullying.”

What to Do When You Are the Target?

- **STOP!**

Stop all communication. Calm down!

- **BLOCK!**

Block all contact and communication

- **AND TELL!**

Immediately tell a trusted adult to avoid facing the situation alone.

Scenarios

And Discussion Questions

Scenario # 1

Two female sixth graders, Katie and Sarah, are exchanging malicious instant messages back and forth because of a misunderstanding involving a boy named Jacob.

The statements escalate in viciousness from trivial name calling to very vicious and inflammatory statements, including death threats.

Discussion Questions

- Should the police be contacted?
- Are both girls wrong?
- What should the kids do in this instance?

Scenario #2

Lindsay has just moved to town from Oregon and enrolls in the local middle school. Very pretty, outgoing, and funny, she quickly wins the attention of a number of the school's football players—much to the chagrin of the school's cheerleaders.

Bonnie, the head cheerleader, is concerned about Lindsay stealing away her boyfriend Johnny, who plays quarterback. With the help of her cheerleader friends, Bonnie decides to create a “We Hate Lindsay” Web site, where girls can post reasons why they hate Lindsay and why they think she should move back to Oregon. Soon, the entire school becomes aware of the site's Web address, and many others begin to post hurtful sentiments about Lindsay. Desperately wanting to make friends in a new town, Lindsay is crushed and begins to suffer from depression and a lack of desire to do anything aside from crying in bed.

Discussion Questions

- If you were Lindsay, what would you do?
- What might the school do to help Lindsay?
- If you were her best friend, what might you say or do to help?

Scenario #3

Chester, a tall, skinny teenager who excels in math and science classes, feels embarrassed when he has to change into gym clothes in the boy's locker room at school because he lacks muscularity and size. Other, more athletic and well built teens notice Chester's shyness and decide to exploit it.

With their camera enabled cellular phones, they covertly take pictures of Chester without his shirt on and in his boxer shorts. These pictures are then circulated among the rest of the student body via cellular phone. Soon enough, boys and girls are pointing, snickering, and laughing at Chester as he walks down the school hallways. He overhears comments such as "There goes Bird Chested Chester" and "Wussy Boy" and "Chicken Legs Chester" and "Stick Boy." These words cut him deeply, and the perception that his classmates have of him begins to affect his math and science grades.

Discussion Questions

- What can Chester do to deal with the harassment—now and in the future?
- How can his harassing classmates really understand how much pain they are causing with their words and actions?
- What would you do if you were a bystander?

Scenario #4

Karen is a very devout teenager who leads a prayer meeting every morning by the high school flag pole. Many boys and girls are simply drawn to Karen as a friend because of her sweet nature and hopeful innocence.

Other girls in her school, however, feel threatened by Karen's piety and commitment to holy living, and they begin to drum up ideas to expose her as a fraud. Specifically, they begin to spread rumors via the High School's social network on MySpace.com that Karen is sleeping around with the boy's track team.

Karen is alerted to the online rumors by a close friend and is heartbroken. She tells her teachers and pastor, who then contact the school administration.

Discussion Questions

- What would you do if you were Karen?
- What would you do if you were Karen's close friend and really wanted to help?
- How could those who spread the rumors understand how hurtful their actions were?

Additional Resources

- www.cyberbullying.us
- http://www.internetsafety101.org/get_help_now.htm
- <http://www.enough.org/>
- <http://www.protectkids.com/dangers/onlinepred.htm>
- <http://www.makeadifferenceforkids.org/>