

## 9th-12th Grade

### **Topic: Cyberbullying Internet Safety (30 min)**

**Materials Needed:** Technology resources: Videos, Projector, Computer Lab (optional)  
(in addition) Paper only: Mingle Activity, Court Case Handout

**Lesson Overview:** Cyberbullies use the internet, cell phones, instant messaging and other electronic communication to harass and threaten their victims. Also, making safety mistakes while on the Internet puts students at high risks to be the target of predators and criminals. The focus of this lesson is to help students identify cyberbullying and unsafe Internet practices, understand the impact both can have, and the ways they can prevent and/or stop them.

#### Instructions for Activity:

1. As students enter the room, distribute the words and definitions (Mingle Activity) at random. Direct the students to “mingle” in order to find the match to their word or definition. Once they find their match they may sit down. Review what the vocabulary words mean.
2. Show videos (optional depending on resources available)
  - a. *Can't Take It Back*
  - b. *The 'Net': Violence\_ The Internet* – (Written script available at end if needed)
3. Discussion Questions
4. Point out that the video mentioned that cyberbullying can actually be considered a crime (identified legally as stalking, harassment, verbal assault, defamation or character, and forgery among others. Posting personal information about someone without their permission violates US Data Safety laws and can be prosecuted as a federal crime. Additionally, perpetrators can also be held civilly liable and forced to provide compensation for any financial loss suffered by the victim. Additional fines can also be tacked on to compensate for mental and emotional anguish.
- 5. Complete Teacher survey after the lesson – this must be completed for lesson credit.**

### **Discussion Questions if you utilize the video options with your class:**

- Discuss how they might feel if they were a victim of cyberbullying  
*Upset, angry, hurt, embarrassed*
- Discuss potential effects on the victim of cyberbullying  
*(loss of friends, isolation, changing schools, embarrassment, loss of opportunities including scholarships and jobs, suicide.)*
- Discuss why people may choose to “bully.”
- Discuss actions they can take if they are a victim of cyberbullying  
*Don't retaliate, ignore, block, sign off, tell an adult. “Think Before You Click.” Stop, block and tell!*
- What kind of information, besides personal, should you NOT share with people in cyberspace?  
*Family member's names; mother's maiden name; passwords; school you attend; clubs you belong to; email address; IM username.*
- Why is it dangerous to post personal information on the Internet?  
*It allows predators or cyberbullies to gain access to information that can be used in an inappropriate way. Examples: bullying, humiliation, kidnapping, credit theft.*

- What kind of information can a predator find out about you from what you post on the Internet?  
*Home address, male/female, email address, cell phone number, interests, hobbies, friends and family names.*
- Who can view your online profile?  
*Anyone, including employers, teachers, coaches, club sponsors, college admissions offices, law enforcement.*
- Can what you post online affect you off-line? How?  
*Yes! Images and text can be spread quickly to people beyond your 'friends list' using texting, IM, and e-mail. Inappropriate information could land in the hands of employers, coaches, and law enforcement leading to loss of privileges in school activities, loss of employment, or possibly actions by law enforcement.*
- What kind of potential effects does cyberbullying have on the victim?  
*Loss of friends, isolation, changing schools, embarrassment, loss of opportunities including scholarships and jobs, and suicide.*
- What actions should a victim of cyberbullying take to stop the action?  
*Save or print the evidence, do not respond to inappropriate comments, tell a trusted adult at home or at school.*
- Definition: Sexting is sexual suggestive text messaging via mobile devices.
- What are some consequences of such actions?  
*Public embarrassment, loss of school privileges such as sports teams, college opportunities, being arrested for trafficking in pornography.*
- Review safety practices with students:  
*Don't give out personal information or photos.  
Keep your password private.  
If someone makes you uncomfortable, log off.  
Remember, an Internet friend is still a stranger*
- Never take an image of yourself you wouldn't want everyone (friends and family) to see! Before hitting send, remember that you can't control where this image may travel.**

## **The 'Net: Violence and the Internet – (Script from movie)**

### **JEREMY FARNER:**

Okay. What I want you all to do is, I want you to venture off into a fantasy land. Imagine something that you'd like to be, or a profession you'd like to have, or an age you'd like to be. What I want you to do is to turn to someone sitting on either side of you and introduce yourself as that person that you'd like to be. There's a purpose to this, and we'll explain as we go along.

### **MALE STUDENT:**

Um, I'm a WWF superstar, and my name is The Magnificent Clown, and I wear a little red nose with green hair. And I have ten girlfriends, and I make a lot of money. I have a big, giant house, with a big pool shaped as a, clown, and I drive a Ferrri...

### **GABRIEL HATCHER**

I can go online and I can pick a name like Model 16. Everybody goes, "Wow! You're a model!" I go, "Yeah, I'm a model. Wow!" So, everybody has this image in their mind that you're a really beautiful person.

**DAN ALTMAN:**

The point of the activity we just did was to make you guys realize one of the most important differences between the *real* world and the computer world. And someone think about that for a second and raise their hand and tell me—what is that difference?

**MALE STUDENT:**

You could be anything you want.

**DAN ALTMAN:**

Okay. In the computer world...

**MALE STUDENT:**

You could be anything you want.

**DAN ALTMAN:**

You could be anything you want.

**BRIAN**

I met this girl, and her and I had talked for a good, solid month. We got on regularly, talked to one another, chatted about our personal lives. And so we finally decided, hey, let's meet, you know? I would really love to meet you. And, she lived not too far from here. And I said, okay, cool. Sounds good.

**DAN ALTMAN:**

A lot of young people get on the Internet and they meet people in chat rooms, they meet people in different internet sites, and they want to make friends, and that's great. There's nothing wrong with making new friends. A lot of times though, those friends they meet are not who they represented they were.

**BRIAN**

Here I am, I'm waiting to meet this 18-year-old girl, and some guy, some middle-aged guy, and he's got a button-up shirt and a pair of khaki's, and he comes walking over to me and says, "Hi, that's me." You know, what are you supposed to do, what are you supposed to think?

**DAN ALTMAN**

When you meet somebody, realize, yeah, it's possible I am talking to the most attractive member of the opposite sex that's ever existed, but it's also possible I'm talking to some ugly old guy staying at home, who's got nothing better to do than to sit and to talk to me on the computer.

**BRIAN**

And at first I was, like, "Excuse me?" And, he says, "Yeah, that's me." And in a way he'd already started apologizing, saying things like, "I'm sorry I didn't tell you earlier. But I'm still the same person that you've been talking to all this time," and I'm still this, I'm still that, and I'm still all these things that you had thought I was. And I said, but you're missing the point—you're not a girl!

**GABRIEL HATCHER**

I know a story of an eighteen-year-old girl, who met someone online and she made a date with him offline. They went out to a restaurant. After the restaurant, she went back to his place. She got raped. Now, should she have met him? Well, she could have met him safely, but she met him dangerously. The problem there was, she didn't understand the rules, she didn't understand the dangers.

**BRIAN**

I stood up on a bench, and I yelled and ranted a little bit about, "Hey everybody, this guy right here is supposed to be an eighteen-year-old teenager," and made a big scene, and I made sure that I got a lot of attention, and that everyone can see. He took about a good thirty or forty seconds of that before he took off. And then ever since, it's like—okay, maybe I need to be a little safer on the Internet.

**GABRIEL HATCHER**

You feel like nobody loves you, so you go online and you find someone who loves you, and guess what? That might be a good friend, or it could be a predator. And the problem online is, you don't know which is which. You cannot tell.

**DAN ALTMAN**

But let's say you really, really had your heart set on meeting this person. You want to meet them in a public place, you want to meet them with some of your friends, you want to meet them in a place where, if you're uncomfortable, you could easily leave. And you definitely want to let someone know that you're gonna have a link-up with someone you met on the Internet.

**GABRIEL HATCHER**

You really are in control. When you're online, you are really, totally in control of what happens to you, and no one can harm you unless you let them in. And, if you let them in, it's because you're making safety mistakes or errors, and you really have the power to rectify that.

**SAFETY TIPS**

- Keep your password private.
- Don't give out personal information or photos.
- If someone makes you uncomfortable, log off.

Additional or Alternate Activity:

Materials/Internet Site: Halligan Court case.doc

Divide students into three groups. Group 1 represents the attorneys and victim in the case of Halligan vs. Martin (attached sheet.) Group 2 represents the attorneys and alleged bully. Group 3 is the jury. Have students conduct a mock trial based on the information given in the case description and the law as described above. (At the end of the trial, you may choose to tell students that this is based on a true case except that the defendant was never prosecuted. The victim, 13 year old Ryan Halligan, committed suicide as a direct result of the bullying.)

**The State vs. Martin**

**Charge: Defamation of Character, Verbal Assault**

**Victim: Ryan Halligan**

Ryan Patrick Halligan was enrolled in a public school located in this state on or about October 7, 2003. Ryan made friends easily and was known for his smile and sense of humor. Ryan suffered from a slight speech impediment and slightly delayed speech and motor skills. He received Special Education services through the fourth grade at which time he was determined to be academically on-level. Ryan and his family moved to a new town during Ryan's fifth grade year. Christopher Martin was enrolled in Ryan's homeroom and began to pick on Ryan... frequently calling him clutz, stupid, and other verbal insults. As time went by the verbal insults grew increasingly hateful and more frequently. Ryan's parents taught him to ignore the insults, walk away, and remember his good friends. The insults tapered off during sixth grade and then picked up again in 7th grade, at which time the insults grew much worse. Ryan's father wanted to report Christopher to the principal but Ryan was horrified, he feared it would make the bullying worse. He asked his father, instead, to teach him how to fight. Ryan began Taebo Kickboxing lessons shortly after Christmas that year.. His father reminded him repeatedly to never start a fight, but that he had permission to defend himself if needed. Ryan and Christopher were involved in their first fist fight during February of that year which was broken up by the principal. A few months later Ryan informed his parents that he and Christopher were now friends. Soon after, Ryan confessed (in a moment of hilarity) to silly incident that once happened when he was 3. Christopher took the information and spread it around as proof that Ryan was gay. Ryan hooked up with a pretty girl online and they "chatted" all summer. When he met her in the fall, in front of her friends she told him he was a "loser" and that she didn't want anything to do with him. She was only joking online as a favor to Christopher. Later Ryan's parents found that she had copied and pasted their IM exchanges onto her MySpace page for her friend's entertainment. Christopher took the same comments and created a webpage to which he added photos he had taken of Ryan over the years. As a result Ryan received scores of emails and text messages over a period of 3 months. His cell phone bill for text messages sent to him soared to over \$700 a month. His parents were forced to change all family phone numbers and move Ryan to another school to stop the harassment. The webpage and MySpace page are still in existence today. The state requests that the plaintiff take down his webpage and use due diligence to make sure that the page is removed from all ISP caches and linked sites. Additionally, the plaintiff is asked to make financial restitution to the victim in the amount of \$5000 (\$2,100 in cell phone bills, \$300 for charges incurred which changing numbers, \$500 for charges incurred in assisting Ryan in changing schools and \$2,100 for emotional trauma and distress.)

## Mingle Activity

Forms of cyberbullying may include: hacking, flaming, hate mail, tormenting via game sites, posting provocative messages on hate sites, issuing threats, copying or forwarding messages containing threats or hate messages, posing as the victim and using their password to access their websites, spreading lies, sending multiple text messages. Cyberbullying is longer lasting than typical bullying and follows the victim home via their cell phone and computer. It is also very difficult to stop once it has begun. Other students could be unwitting accomplices by forwarding messages about other students.

## **MINGLE ACTIVITY**

Instant Messaging	(IM) Real time communication over the Internet
IM Slang	New word phrase or abbreviation invented for faster online communication
Username	Usually not someone's real name, but the name a person uses in a chat room
Private Message	A message privately sent to a fellow chatroom participant only.
Community Chat	Online chatroom conversation in which all members participate publicly

Petitions	Online surveys about current events or social issues frequently forwarded through spamming
Flaming	Sending messages meant to hurt someone's feelings; also typing in all caps to indicate yelling or shouting
Spamming	Sending a message to many email addresses of people you don't know
Cyberstalking	Stalking or harassing someone online
Forward	A message, article or joke sent to you by someone who did not write the original message
Netiquette	Polite, courteous online behavior
Chatrooms	A virtual "room" in which you send messages that appear almost instantly on the computer monitors of the other people who are in the chat or discussion

Texting	A form of IM that typically occurs over a cell phone or PDA
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Extension Activity:

6. Choose a high-traffic area in your school and have students create a pledge wall. Have students create slogans, instructions, pictures or messages to encourage Cybersafety (or discourage cyberbullying.) Invite other classes to participate and post their messages.