

Let's Meet Up

EXERCISE-IN-A-BOX LESSON PLAN (16-17 years old)

OVERVIEW

This lesson educates students about the dangers of catfishing and online predators, equipping them with the tools and knowledge to navigate the digital world safely. Emphasising the seamless integration of online and offline lives, students will learn to recognize and avoid unsafe and risky online behaviours.

Discretion Advised: Teachers are advised to review the lesson plan and slides as this topic may not be suitable for all school environments.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Develop an understanding that people may not be who they say they are online and identify the realities of catfishing
 - Identify examples of unsafe or risky behaviours in the digital world and their potential consequences.
 - Understand common myths and misconceptions related to online predators and its implications on society
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DURATION

60 minutes

KEYWORDS

- **Catfishing:** Catfishing is when someone pretends to be someone else online by using a fake identity, often with the intention of deceiving others.
 - **Unsafe or Risky Behaviour:** Unsafe or risky behaviours online refer to actions that can potentially expose someone to harm, such as sharing personal information with strangers, clicking on suspicious links, or engaging in inappropriate communication.
 - **Myths of Online Predators:** Myths of online predators are false beliefs or misconceptions that people may have about strangers who use the internet to harm others, such as the belief that all online predators are old men or that they can only be found on specific websites.
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INTERNET INDEPENDENT FRAMEWORK

The learning objectives in this workshop are aligned with the **Online Relationships** pillar of the Internet Independent Framework. Visit cyberlite.org for more information.

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WARM-UP 5 MINUTES

Slide 1

Say: Today, we will be learning about online relationships and how you connect with others online. Many students your age are on social media and interacting with adults on these platforms, which is why it's important to learn how to protect yourselves online.

Slide 2

Ask: What are some online behaviours you would consider unsafe or risky? *Unsafe or risky online behaviours include sharing personal information with people you don't know or trust, meeting up with strangers, engaging in cyberbullying, and accessing inappropriate content.*



DEFINE THE KEYWORDS 15 MINUTES

Slide 3

Ask: Does anyone know what catfishing, unsafe or risky behaviours, and the myths of online predators are? *Allow students to guess or extrapolate meanings. Guide them to think about it in the lesson's context of online relationships.*

Slide 4

Read the contents of the slide aloud.

Discuss: What are some warning signs that you may be talking to a catfish? *When you meet someone online, it is hard to verify their true identity. Some warning signs include if the person refuses to video chat or meet up in person, if they seem too good to be true, or if their stories or photos seem inconsistent.*

Slide 5

Read the contents of the slide aloud.

Discuss: Why is it important to report unsafe or risky online behaviours to a trusted adult? *Reporting unsafe or risky online behaviours to a trusted adult (like a parent, teacher, counsellor, or older sibling) can help prevent harm and provide support. Adults can take steps to block or report harmful individuals, help you stay safe online, and provide guidance on how to navigate difficult situations.*

Slide 6

Read the contents of the slide aloud.

Discuss: What are some common myths about online predators that are untrue?

Some common myths include the idea that predators are always strangers, that they are only interested in young children, or that they are easy to spot. In reality, predators can be anyone and may use grooming tactics to gain trust.



INVESTIGATE THE SCENARIO

30 MINUTES

Slide 7

Say: In this next section, we will explore a sensitive scenario about Lily's online relationship with Max. Remember to keep the keywords we've just learned in mind. I will be showing you five pieces of evidence which we'll investigate together. Think critically about the information we're examining and consider the discussion questions.

(Optional) Select five students to read as these characters: Lily, Max, Casey, "Sophie", and Mrs. Stevens.

Slide 8

Read this text exchange between Casey and Lily.

Discuss the following questions:

1. Can someone be a catfish even if they don't intend to trick anyone? Why or why not?

Yes, someone can be considered a catfish even if they don't intend to trick anyone. If they are presenting themselves as someone they are not online, they are still misrepresenting themselves and potentially deceiving others.

2. What do you think is Lily's motivations for setting up a fake online profile?

Lily says she has set up this fake online profile just to see what her older sister and her friends are up to. However, Lily's motivation may also include wanting to explore a different online identity or persona, or seeking attention from people she doesn't know in real life.

Slide 9

Read this direct message conversation between Max and "Sophie".

Discuss the following questions:

1. What are some warning signs in this conversation that suggest Max may not have good intentions?

Max is significantly older than Sophie, which could indicate predatory tendencies. He is very forward and flirty with Sophie, which could suggest he is more interested in her physically than emotionally. Max is also trying to pressure

Sophie into meeting him in person and coming up with excuses to deceive her parents, which is a sign of manipulative and potentially dangerous behaviour.

2. What are some potential risks of meeting someone you've only talked to online?

It is dangerous to meet someone in real life because they could turn out to be a very different person from the persona they've presented online. They could also have harmful intentions such as wanting to physically harm or assault the other person. Meeting someone in person can put you in a very vulnerable and dangerous situation.

Slide 10

Read this phone call transcript between Lily and Max.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What are some red flags in this conversation between Lily and Max?

Some red flags in this conversation are Max's age, his persistence in wanting to meet Lily even after finding out she is 13, and his comment that he prefers younger girls. It is highly inappropriate for Max to be speaking to Lily in the first place, which indicates extreme predatory behaviours.

2. What kind of unsafe or risky behaviour is Lily engaging in?

Lily is engaging in unsafe and risky behaviour by giving Max her phone number in the first place and speaking to him. She has also told Max which school she goes to, which makes it easy for him to find her in real life. Lily also agrees to meet Max after school, even though she has said earlier that it will mean lying to her parents. All of this are risky behaviours that could potentially put Lily in a dangerous situation.

Slide 11

Read this chat between Casey and Lily.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What are some potential risks of meeting someone in person who you met online?

Meeting someone in person that you don't know in real life or that you've only known online is risky because the person could be a predator. If Lily meets up with Max, she would be putting herself in a dangerous situation that she might not get out of if the situation turns bad.

2. Do you think Max is in love with Lily because of their strong connection? Is Casey right in thinking Max could be a groomer?

No, it is unlikely Max is in love with Lily. It is more likely that Max is manipulating Lily into thinking they have a strong connection in order to get her to agree to meet him physically. Casey may be right in thinking Max is a groomer because he is an adult man who wants to meet Lily, a 13-year-old minor and displays highly inappropriate behaviours.

3. What are some myths about online predators that need to be debunked?

A myth about online predators that needs to be debunked is the idea that predators and groomers are significantly older men who lie about their ages and send creepy messages to young girls. This scenario illustrates that anyone at any age can be a predator, and that they don't necessarily lie about their age. They can also appear "normal" and "nice", but use covert manipulation tactics to groom their targets into getting what they want.

Slide 12

Read this email conversation between Casey and Mrs. Stevens.

Discuss the following questions:

1. Do you think Casey did the right thing by telling the school counsellor, Mrs. Stevens?

Yes, Casey did the right thing by reaching out to the school counsellor because she is right to worry about her friend. She is being an upstander to her friend, looking out for her as she feels Lily may be putting herself in danger. Casey also recognises that she may not have the right power to help Lily to safety, so she rightly seeks support from Mrs. Stevens.

2. Why is it important to trust your instincts and listen to your gut?

It's important to trust your instincts because they can help you identify potentially unsafe or risky situations. Gut feelings are often our subconscious minds processing information that we may not be fully aware of.

3. Why is it important to tell a trusted adult if you or someone you know is in an unsafe online relationship?

It's important to tell a trusted adult because they can provide support and guidance, and help you navigate the situation safely. They can also take steps to protect you or your friend, such as reporting the person to the appropriate authorities.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**
10 MINUTES

Slide 13

Say: Here are some things we've learned from this lesson.

1. There are common myths and misconceptions about what an online groomer or predator should look like, but in reality they can be anyone.
2. It is dangerous to meet up with someone you've only communicated with online, because you never know who you're talking to on the other side of the screen. They could be a catfish or an online groomer.
3. Unsafe or risky behaviours can lead to dangerous situations. Always be alert and use critical judgement before you put yourself in harm's way.

Ask: What are some key takeaways you've learned from this lesson?
Call on volunteers to share what they've learned.