



4-H RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Online Consequences

KEY CONCEPT:

Understanding the possible consequences of sharing information online

LEARNING & LIFE SKILLS:

- Decision making
- Self-Responsibility

AUDIENCE:

Age range: 12 and older

Skill Level: Beginning

TIME:

20-30 minutes

SETTING:

A room with tables and chairs

MATERIALS:

- A variety of different news articles about recent consequences youth have faced due to information shared online. View the news article list at the end of this activity for samples.
- Pens or pencils (one per participant)
- Blank or scrap paper
- Flipchart or other large paper



BACKGROUND:

According to “Teens, Social Media and Technology Overview 2015” by the Pew Research Center, nearly three-quarters of teenagers ages 13–17 have access to a smartphone. Of those teens, 92 percent report going online daily, and 71 percent say they use more than one social networking site (Lenhart, 2015). Young people should be aware that there are consequences to their online actions. Anything digital can be stored, copied and shared, even if you intend to only share it privately.

OVERVIEW:

In this social media activity, participants will explore the various consequences youth have faced because of information they shared online. They will explore the concept of how a quick “like” of something or a tweet, status update, snap or other action could have negative consequences. This activity pairs well with other lessons on responsible social media usage.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing this activity, the participants will be able to:

- Consider the possible risks of sharing information online.
- Think critically about what they choose to post and share online.

PROCEDURE:

Before the meeting:

1. Review the background information and activity directions.
2. Print off news articles of your choice for every group of two to four participants. Provide a copy for each person in the group.



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3. Create a table on flipchart paper titled “Article Summaries.” The top row should include the following column headings: “Article,” “Platform,” “What Was Shared?” “Consequences,” “Short-Term Consequences” and “Long-Term Consequences.” (See example in “During the Meeting” number 5.)

During the meeting:

1. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

How many of you have snapped a photo to someone, liked someone’s online content, shared a photo online, or created a YouTube Video? Now let’s take a moment. I am going to ask each of you to stand (or raise your hand) in answer to the following questions:

- ***Has anyone experienced a negative consequence from posting something online?***
- ***Does anyone know someone that has experienced a negative consequence from something they have posted online?***
- ***Has anyone regretted something they have posted online?***
- ***Does anyone know someone that has regretted something they have posted online?***

2. Continue to read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Let us take a moment to look around the room. As you can see, most of us have experienced or know someone who has experienced a negative outcome due to something that was shared on a social media platform.

3. At this time have the group break into groups of two to four participants. Provide each group with a news article that you have printed off. Each group should have a different article. Explain to each group that their task is to read the article. They should be ready to give a summary of the article and also to answer these questions:
- What platform did the individual(s) in the article use (such as Facebook or Twitter)?
 - What did the individual(s) share online?
 - What consequences occurred?
4. Allow the groups 5 to 10 minutes to read the news article. Walk around and answer any questions that may arise and help groups that may be experiencing problems with the article.
5. When the groups are finished reading the articles, have each group summarize their article and answer the three questions given in “During the Meeting” number 3. While groups are sharing, start filling out the table you prepared on flipchart paper. After each small group presents, get feedback from the entire group on whether they feel the consequences were short or long term. Then ask what some additional short- or long-term consequences might be beyond what is listed in the article (for instance, obtaining a criminal record, finding it harder to get a job, breaking trust with parents, shattering friendships and similar ideas).

Article Summaries

Article	Platform	What was	Consequences	Short-term	Long-term

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6. Pass out pens or pencils and paper to each participant. Now take a minute to have everyone individually reflect on the last five things they have shared online, liked or overall engaged with on a social media platform including any snaps that were sent. Ask participants to list the five things on their papers. Let them know that the papers will not be collected and that they do not need to share unless they want to.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

- **Looking at each of those five items, decide if they support or harm the positive image you want others to have of you. Next to each one, write “Yes” if the item supports a positive image of you, and write “No” if it does not support a positive image of you.**
- **Are there possible short-term or long-term consequences that could come from your sharing or posting this? List those next to each of the five items listed.**
- **Knowing what you know now, would you still post or share this information?**

Give everyone a couple of minutes to reflect and then ask if anyone wants to share.

7. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Technology changes, apps come and go, and the next wave in social media platforms will come about. Although changes in media may occur, we still need to think about the information we share online and how we engage in the online content of others. Everyone enjoys sharing information through social media, so it is important to understand the impact of what people choose to share. The consequences could be short term or even long term. Others can use the information that people share to start making assumptions that could have negative consequences.

8. Guide participants through discussion and process questions to wrap up the activity.

TALKING IT OVER:

Ask the group the following questions:

- Why do you think the posts people make on social media tend to continue, even when they may prefer they didn't?
- What kinds of posts online might be good for your future reputation if they are posted online now?
- What kinds of posts online might be harmful to your reputation?
- What are the advantages of using online communication or social media tools? What are the disadvantages?
- What are some boundaries that you may need to consider when interacting online?
- How can something be shared online and taken out of context? When might this occur? What are ways to prevent this?
- What is one thing you would advise a friend about responsible social media usage?
- How will you change what you post or share as a result of today's activity?

KEY POINTS REGARDING SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Social media is another tool that people can use to communicate with one another. You can use social media sites to continue discussions that were started face-to-face, share ideas about activities, set meeting times, give feedback to others and communicate in many other ways.

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- Anything we post online could continue to be posted for years to come. Online postings could affect school choices, scholarship opportunities or even future jobs. It is important to build a positive online image.
- The internet should generally be considered public because “private” information can become public if passed on. Posts in many online communities are public by default.
- Most information posted online can be searched; seen by huge, invisible audiences; and copied, altered and sent to others. It is persistent and almost impossible to take down as it can start to spread the minute it is posted.
- Posted information can get out of control fast, so consider the consequences before posting.
- The consequences of oversharing (that is, inappropriate sharing) can range from being just a little embarrassing to being very devastating to one’s reputation. Students can be denied entrance to college, lose jobs or have their reputations tarnished.
- Only post things that will build a positive online image.
- When sharing information online, it is permanent. Even if you delete it, other people could have seen the information and shared it. Even deleted pieces of information can often be recovered.
- Text speak, poor grammar and consistently poor spelling sends a message. It may cause people to second-guess your communication and writing skills.
- If you wouldn’t say something face-to-face, you shouldn’t write it online. There have been many instances of gossip started because of information shared online – when in doubt, don’t write it.
- When you use apps such as [Snapchat](#) in which photos disappear, you need to understand the photo you post isn’t necessarily gone. Once you send a photo to another person, that person can easily share the photo with others. You should never assume your content is 100 percent safe from other people taking the information and sharing with someone else.
- The simple action of liking someone else’s content needs to be considered carefully as what you like can be seen by others and can impact your image as well.

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