

Chapter 4:

Unsafe People and Unhealthy Social Accounts

EDUCATOR FACILITATION GUIDE

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

To provide practical tips and instructions for engaging students and handling difficult discussions on the topic of unsafe people and unhealthy social accounts.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To help students recognize the characteristics of unsafe people and unhealthy online accounts in order to stay safe from predatory people.
- ▶ To teach students how to identify and respond to red flags in online interactions.
- ▶ To empower students to make healthy decisions about who they build relationships with online and in person.

AGE CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Children in this age group are relatively new to the digital world and the concept of predatory people.
- ▶ Kids this age often see adults and older peers as authority figures who are trustworthy by default. They may also take someone's words at face value.
- ▶ In order to teach children in this age group about predatory people, we focus on simple language that describes behaviour—such as safe versus unsafe people and healthy versus unhealthy online accounts. This helps in situations where a predatory person is someone who is close to them in their life or whom they have a relationship with.
- ▶ Children in this age group are more likely to believe what they see, or better yet, who they see online. As primarily concrete thinkers, they require visual demonstrations of how someone can portray a different identity online.

ABOUT THE TOPIC

- ▶ We define a predator as someone who wants to sexually take advantage of a minor and has bad intentions towards them.
- ▶ Grooming is the process where a predatory person builds trust and a relationship with a minor with the intention of committing a sexual offense against them.
- ▶ Oftentimes, predatory people can be someone in a child's or youth's life. Predatory people build trust with their victims and often act as a friend, a mentor, an authority figure, or a romantic interest.
- ▶ While any gender can be predatory, the majority of predators and exploiters are males.
- ▶ In Canada, The median age of men and boys accused of online sexual offences against children was 24 years, and men and boys accused of child pornography had a median age of 29 years. (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00008-eng.htm>)
- ▶ Ultimately, predators are not defined by age or appearance but by their behavior. The standard red flags of grooming by a predatory person includes:
 - Providing gifts such as technology devices, gaming tokens, gift cards.
 - Paying for things such as makeup, designer items, Amazon wish list items.
 - Creating a need for secrecy from parents.
 - Creating emotional distance between trusted people such as family or friends.
 - Love bombing.
 - Engaging in sexual conversations or suggesting sexual behaviours early on (online or in-person). By law, anyone under the age of 12 is not able to provide consent to sexual activity or behaviours of any kind, in person or online.
- ▶ When it comes to the internet, there are 750,000 predatory people online at any given moment looking to connect with minors. (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/02/1084262>)
- ▶ The large majority (84%) of victims of police-reported online sexual offences against children were youth aged 12 to 17. This is why prevention education is key for the younger age groups. (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00008-eng.htm>)
- ▶ There have been instances of group grooming where predatory people will engage in sexual interactions, conversations, or avatar activities with one another on a gaming platform or Discord in order to normalize these behaviours for the minors that are interactive with them.
- ▶ AI has become a powerful tool for predators to target victims through baiting. Baiting involves using deepfake technology to create AI-generated images, videos, or audio recordings that appear genuine. Oftentimes this is to present as someone younger, a romantic interest, or a celebrity. They can use this technology to send photos, facilitate live video calls, create pornography to normalize sexual behaviours or create pornographic content of someone else in order to blackmail them.

SUPPORTIVE MATERIALS



To access the following resources, scan the QR code or [click here](#).

Supportive Resources for Educators

- ▶ GetCyberSafe.Ca
- ▶ Zoe and Molly Online: When Online Games Get Weird
- ▶ Activity Book for Grades 5-6

Articles and Cases for Educators

- ▶ B.C. Man Sentenced for Sexual Assault of 13-year-old Girl
- ▶ Miranda Sings Youtube Star
- ▶ James Charles
- ▶ Group Grooming
- ▶ Omegle: Suing the website that matched me with my abuser

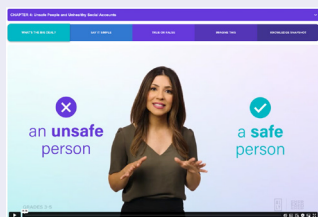
Supplementary Videos for Students

- ▶ Social Media: Ways to Stay Healthy

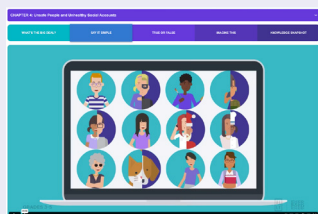
GUIDING DISCUSSION

- ▶ Use inclusive language and terminology that acknowledges these issues can affect individuals of any gender, and ensure the tone remains non-judgmental.
- ▶ Identify any local support resources and organizations on the issue ahead of time, so that you can readily refer students who may need additional support.
- ▶ Providing the class with an anonymous question box might help the students who may not feel comfortable asking important questions.
- ▶ If a question is inappropriate or derails the discussion, gently redirect it back to the main topic.
- ▶ If you don't know the answer, it's okay to admit it! Provide additional resources or take note to look into the question later.

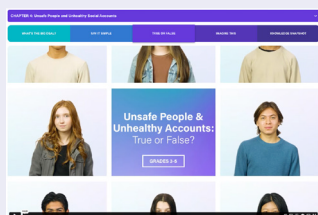
FACILITATION TIPS FOR CHAPTER 4

**What's the Big Deal?**

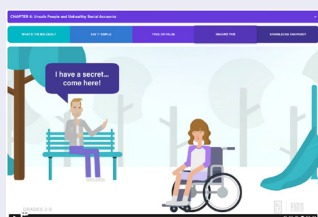
To kick off the chapter, start with an interactive discussion about online safety. Ask students to share their thoughts on how to distinguish safe accounts from unsafe ones online. Encourage them to brainstorm strategies and share any tips they may have learned from their own experiences. Emphasize the importance of staying cautious and vigilant in the digital world, where appearances can be deceiving.

**Say It Simple**

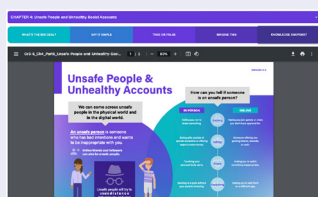
After watching the video, organize a role-playing activity where students take turns pretending to be either safe or unsafe individuals online. Provide scenarios for them to act out, such as receiving friend requests or messages from strangers. Encourage them to use the tips shared in the video to identify red flags and respond appropriately. This activity reinforces the importance of trusting their instincts and seeking help from trusted adults when encountering suspicious online behavior.

**True or False**

Before starting the video, distribute true/false paddles or red and green flags to each participant. Instruct them to hold up the corresponding paddle or flag to indicate whether they believe each statement presented in the video is true or false. Pause the video after each statement to discuss their answers and reasoning as a group.

**Imagine This**

After watching the video, lead a guided visualization activity where the students imagine themselves encountering various online scenarios. Provide prompts such as receiving a friend request from someone they don't know or being asked to share personal information. Encourage them to visualize how they would respond in each situation and discuss their thoughts and feelings afterward. This activity helps reinforce the importance of applying real-world caution to their digital interactions.

**Knowledge Snapshot**

Provide students with the activity page along with additional materials such as stickers, glitter pens, and colorful markers to enhance their creativity and guide them through reflecting on what they've learned about online safety. Encourage them to jot down their thoughts on personal boundaries and indicators of unsafe people or accounts online. After completing the activity, invite them to share their ideas and artistic creations with the group.

FAQ'S AND RESPONSES TO GET YOU THINKING

Q: What if I've been talking to someone online for months and nothing bad has happened? They have been super nice to me.

R: An unsafe person can spend months, or even a year, building trust before engaging in harmful or unsafe behavior. Just because something bad has not happened yet, doesn't mean that it can't or won't happen. It always feels safe until it isn't. Ask yourself 'why would someone who doesn't know me care about me so much?'. Are they comforting you when you complain about people in your life like your parents or friends? Are they giving you a lot of compliments? Are they offering to help you get things that you want such as gaming tokens or a device? Nice does not always equal safe. This is why it is important to know the red flags of unsafe people and unhealthy online accounts, and to make sure you don't switch platforms, meet with someone in person, accept gifts, or share any personal information with someone online.

Q: Can someone online be unhealthy even if they have a lot of followers? For example, Miranda Sings.

R: Influence doesn't equal safety. There are many celebrities and influencers who have been predatory and unsafe people. While a large number of followers can give the impression that an online account is trustworthy, that's not always the case. Sometimes, people with lots of followers might even use their influence to take advantage of their fans.

Q: How can someone online harm me? Let's say they are creepy, so what?

R: Harm can look like many different things. It can look like creating an inappropriate deepfake of you and threatening to share it with others, it can look like blackmailing you or scamming you for money, and it can also look like finding out where you live so they can hurt you in person. Just because something is only happening when you are online, does not mean that it can not cause you harm.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Create a red flag/green flag game where students guess which behaviour descriptions are predatory or healthy.
- ▶ Talk about case studies of "unsafe people" and discuss what made the individuals' actions unsafe. Reference Supportive Materials for some article ideas that you can adapt for your classroom.
- ▶ Have students create a personal safety plan for if they ever encounter an unsafe person. This plan should include steps on who to talk to, what to say to someone and how to keep safe.
- ▶ Continue learning—build on the material from the previous chapters and introduce [Chapter 5](#) to learn about how to be a safe person to others.

DISCLOSURES AND REPORTING

As a teacher, you may be one of the first trusted adults a student confides in about these topics. While some may be brief personal stories shared casually, others may require a more serious intervention.

- ▶ Be calm. Reacting with your own shock or disapproval creates further emotional distress.
- ▶ Listen attentively and without interrupting the student.
- ▶ Validate their feelings and acknowledge their courage in speaking up.
- ▶ Avoid making any promises about keeping things confidential or how their parent/ guardian may react. Provide them with comfort that you will continue to be a support and be sensitive to their worries.
- ▶ Ask them if anyone else knows about this already. If a trusted adult in their life already knows, you can simply engage in empathetic listening and ensure that you follow your school/organization's protocols. If a minor is currently at risk of harm or is being harmed, it is your duty to report it to your local child welfare services.
- ▶ Document the disclosure per your school/ organization's best practices.
- ▶ Provide continued support by checking in or providing them with other resources that are available to them.
- ▶ There may be times where a student does not feel comfortable coming forward or is not yet aware that they are experiencing a form of sexual exploitation. The following are signs to look out for as possible indicators:
 - Appearing more tired than usual;
 - Device addiction;
 - Not hanging around their usual group of friends;
 - Isolating themselves;
 - Having profiles on apps that are not age appropriate;
 - Being involved in intimate image sharing; or
 - Having newfound mental health struggles.
- ▶ If you notice any of the above behaviours from a student, make sure to take note and voice your concerns to a school counsellor or administrator.

THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD PROTECTION

▶ <https://www.protectchildren.ca/>