Chapter 5:
Being a Safe Person

EDUCATOR FACILITATION GUIDE

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

To provide practical tips and instructions for engaging students and handling discussions on the topic of being a safe person.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

▶ To define what makes someone a safe person in order for children to know who the safe people in their lives are.

▶ To address cyberbullying by encouraging positive and healthy student behaviour amongst peers online and in person.

▶ To facilitate methods of responding to cyberbullying.

AGE CONSIDERATIONS

▶ One of our intentions for this chapter is to prevent children from becoming perpetrators of exploitation as they grow older. Recognizing that children in this age group are generally concrete thinkers, we use clear and straightforward language like 'being a safe person,' along with concrete examples. For instance, we explain why words online have an impact by illustrating that there is another person behind the screen.

▶ At this age, children begin to understand the difference between right and wrong based on consequences. Demonstrating the consequences on an individual who experiences hurtful language and behaviour is an effective way to teach them about the impact of their online actions.

▶ Children in this age group require prompting to develop empathy for others. Activities that encourage perspective-taking can be effective in preventing bullying or peer exploitation.

ABOUT THE TOPIC

▶ Cyberbullying is using digital platforms—like social media, text messages, emails, or online games—to harass, intimidate, or harm someone. This can include spreading harmful or false information, sending threatening messages, or posting mean comments or images.

▶ Unlike bullying in person, cyberbullying can happen 24/7, the perpetrator can remain anonymous, and what they say can reach a wide audience.

▶ Forms of cyberbullying include: sending rude or insulting messages to someone online, excluding someone from an online game or group, sharing someone's secrets or pictures online without their consent, pretending to be someone else to spread rumors online, and cyberstalking.

▶ Trolling is when someone is mean or annoying online just to upset others or get attention. Trolling can also be a form of cyberbullying.

▶ Cyberbullying can lead to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and even suicidal thoughts in victims.

▶ Being a silent bystander contributes to the negative behaviours—encourage students to speak up and/or report this behaviour if they see it happening. .

▶ A safe person can be defined as someone who is non judgmental, respects boundaries, is consistently caring, and a positive example or role model for others.

▶ Words online hurt. It is important to treat others online with the same kindness and respect as you would in person.

▶ When it comes to being a safe person online, share with students that they should consider how their posts, comments, and messages might be perceived by others. They should avoid posting anything that might hurt or embarrass someone else. It is important to always ask themselves if what they are sharing is true, necessary, and kind.

SUPPORTIVE MATERIALS

To access the following resources, scan the QR code or click here.

Supplementary Videos for Students

▶ Finding An Adult You Can Trust

▶ Teasing: Not Just Harmless Fun

Supportive Resources for Educators

▶ Safety Rocks Activity Book (Grades 3 and 4)

▶ Friendship Worksheet

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 5
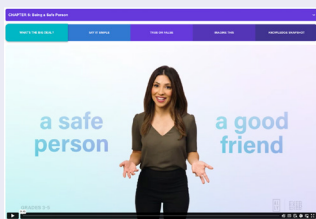
What's the Big Deal?

Begin the chapter with an open discussion about what it means to be a safe person. Ask students to share their thoughts on the qualities of a good friend or a safe individual. Encourage them to brainstorm ways they can contribute to creating a positive and safe environment both online and offline. Emphasize the importance of empathy, kindness, and respect in fostering healthy relationships and communities.
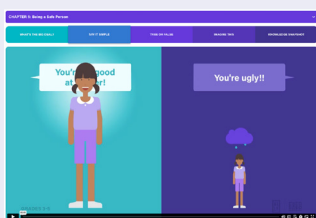

Say It Simple

After introducing the chapter, lead a group activity where the students create a "Safe Person Pledge" together. Provide materials such as colorful paper, markers, and stickers for them to write down and decorate their pledges with promises to be kind, respectful, and supportive to others. Encourage them to display their pledges in a visible place as a reminder of their commitment to being safe people in their social circles.
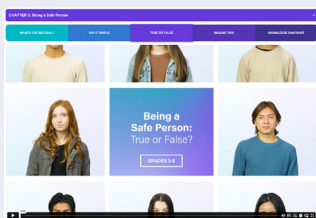

True or False

Transform the "True or False" segment into an interactive discussion where students respond to thought-provoking questions about kindness and respect. Pause the video at various points to present scenarios challenging their understanding of being a safe person. Encourage them to share their thoughts and experiences related to each scenario, fostering open dialogue and critical thinking about online and offline behavior.
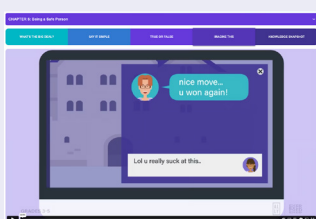
Imagine This

After watching the video, facilitate a group reflection activity where students share their own experiences of being safe people online. Provide prompts such as instances where they've stood up for someone or spread kindness through their actions. Encourage them to brainstorm additional ways they can contribute to creating a positive online environment for everyone. This activity promotes self-awareness and empathy while reinforcing the importance of being mindful of our online interactions.
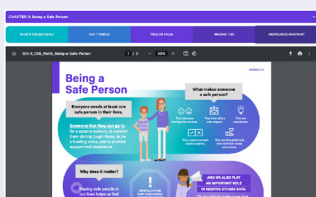
Knowledge Snapshot

Hand out the activity page to the students along with some colorful markers, glitter pens, and stickers. Encourage them to use these fun materials to express their thoughts on being a safe person. Ask them to jot down their ideas, draw symbols representing kindness and respect, and decorate their reflections in a creative way. After they finish, invite them to share their artwork and discuss what it means to be a safe person with the group.

FAQ'S AND RESPONSES TO GET YOU THINKING

Q: Can a friend be a safe person or does it always have to be an adult?

R: Friends can definitely be safe people in our lives and should be safe people in our lives. Anyone can be a safe person by ensuring that they treat others with respect and kindness. It is great to have friends that you feel safe confiding to. However, when it comes to situations where you are seeking advice, have experienced something hurtful, or are stuck in a situation, it is important that you confide in an adult that is a safe person. Adults have more experience, resources, and authority to protect you and address serious issues.

Q: What should I do if someone is not being a safe person to me online?

R: If someone online is making you feel uncomfortable, pressuring you to do something you don't want to, or being mean, stop interacting with them. You do not owe anyone a response, especially if they are hurting your feelings or making you feel uncomfortable. Save or screenshot the messages so that you have them as reference when you talk to a safe adult about it and whether it is something that you want to report. A safe adult can then guide you on how to block or report the person on the platform where the behavior occurred.

Q: Is it okay to report someone who is being mean online, even if they're my friend?

R: This can be a tricky situation because you might worry about hurting your friend's feelings or damaging your friendship. However, being a good friend sometimes means helping the other person understand when their behavior is harmful. Before reporting, you can consider asking your friend to stop or apologize for what they said. If the behavior doesn't stop, or if you're uncomfortable addressing it directly, reporting it is absolutely acceptable. You have the right to feel safe online, and telling someone isn't tattle tailing—it's taking care of yourself. As always, if

You are unsure about how to handle a situation, a trusted adult can provide guidance and support you through the process.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

▶ Create a "Safe Person" pact on a poster where students contribute the qualities of being a safe person online.

▶ Hold a classroom discussion where you ask students to identify bullying behaviours online and in person, and follow up by asking them how it would feel to be on the receiving end of those behaviours.

▶ Create scenarios of someone not being a safe person online and have students come up with how they would address the situation as a bystander and what they would say.

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.